

The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ

by J.G. Bellet

The sermon explores the moral glory of Jesus Christ, emphasizing His perfect character and the balance of humility and intrinsic worth in His life and interactions.

Scripture: Luke 2:52, John 4:27

Topics: "Christology", "Moral Perfection"

Description

J.G. Bellett preaches about the Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, highlighting His perfect character and the wondrous subject of His moral beauty. Bellett reflects on how Jesus' personal, official, and moral glories shone through His interactions with various individuals and situations, showcasing His wisdom, grace, and perfect responses. Jesus' life exemplified a balance of strength and gentleness, wisdom and simplicity, as He navigated through different circumstances with grace, dignity, and moral perfection, always reflecting the divine nature in human form.

Transcript

The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ

J G Bellett

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 innocence.

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.

A SHORT MEDITATION on the MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"And when any will offer a meat-offering, 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."

-Lev. 2: 1, 2.

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 path of ours.

It has been said of the Lord-"His humanity was perfectly natural in its development." This is very beautiful and true. Luke 2: 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, 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 1 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 distinguished 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 was 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 waters that bringeth forth his fruit in his season (Psalm 1.); 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 becomes 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 2: 51; Luke 8: 21; John 19: 27). And, as we afterwards track Him, 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 are 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 9: 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 20. 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 9. At the outset of that action, in the sense of His personal glory, He anticipated His being "raised up," as He actually was afterwards (Mark 16: 19; 1 Tim. 3: 16; the Greek word is the same); 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. 2.) 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 other side of it.

Thus He knew "how to be abased," and just so do we again see Him in Matt. 21. He enters the city as Son of David. All that could set Him off in that dignity surrounds and accompanies Him. He is in His earthly honour now, as He had been in His heavenly glory on the holy hill. It was His without robbery; and when the moment demanded it, He can wear it. But the unbelief of Jerusalem now, as the unbelief of Samaria before, changes the scene, and He who had entered the city as her king has to leave it, to seek a night's lodging, so to speak, where best He could find it. But there He is, outside Jerusalem, as before He had been outside the Samaritan village, knowing "how to be abased."

What perfection! If the darkness comprehend not the light of His personal or official glory, His moral glory shall only find occasion to shine the brighter. For there is nothing in morals or in human character finer than this combination of willing degradation in the midst of men, and the consciousness of intrinsic glory before God. We see it in some of the saints beautifully. Abraham was a willing stranger in the midst of the Canaanites all his days, not having a foot of land, nor seeking to have it; but when occasion served, he would take headship even of kings, conscious of his dignity in God's sight, according to God's own counsel. Jacob would speak of his pilgrimage, of his few and evil days, making himself nothing in the reckoning of the world; but he would at the same moment bless him who at that time was the greatest man on the earth, conscious that, under God, and before him, he was "the better," the greater man of the two.

David would ask for a loaf of bread, and ask for it without shame. But, with all that, he would accept the homage due to a king, receiving the tribute of his subjects, as in the person of Abigail. Paul was bound with a chain, a prisoner in the palace, and would speak of his bonds; but at that same moment he would let the whole court and high estate of the Roman world know, that he knew himself to be the blest man, the only blest man, in the midst of them.

It is this combination of willing degradation before man, and conscious glory before God, that gets its highest, brightest, nay (when I consider who he was), its infinite illustration in our Lord.

And there is still further moral beauty in this knowing how to abound, and how to be abased, how to be full, and how to suffer need; for it tells us that the heart of him who has learnt that lesson is upon the end of the journey, rather upon the journey itself. If the heart be on the journey, we shall not like these accidents and difficulties, the rough places and the hilly places; but if it be on the end, it will in proportion overlook such things. It is surely a secret rebuke to some of us to trace all this.

But there are other combinations in the Lord's character that we must look at. Another has said of Him, "He was the most generous and accessible of men." We observe in His ways a tenderness and a kindness never seen in man, yet we always feel that He "was a stranger." How true this is! He was "a stranger here"-a stranger as far as revolted man was filling the place, but intimately near as far as misery or need demanded Him. The distance He took, and the intimacy He expressed, were perfect. He did more than look on the misery that was around Him, He entered into it with a sympathy that was all His own; and He did more than refuse the pollution that was around Him,-He kept the very distance of holiness itself from every touch or stain of it. See Him as exhibiting this combination of distance and intimacy in Mark 6. It is an affecting scene. The disciples return to Him after a long day's service. He cares for them. He brings their weariness very near to Him. He takes account of it, and provides for it at once, saying to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." But, the multitude following Him, He turns with the same readiness to them, acquainting Himself with their condition; and having taken knowledge of them, as sheep that had no shepherd, He began to teach them. In all this we see Him very near to the rising, varied need of the scene around him, whether that need be the fatigue of the disciples, or the hunger and ignorance of the multitude. But the disciples soon resent His attention to the multitude, and move Him to send them away. This, however, will in no wise do for Him. There is immediate estrangement between Him and them, which shortly afterwards expresses itself by His telling them to get into the ship while He sent the multitude away. But this separation from Him only works fresh trouble for them. Winds and waves are against them on the lake; and then in their distress He is again near at hand to succour and secure them!

How consistent in the combination of holiness and grace is all this. He is near in our weariness, our hunger, or our danger. He is apart from our tempers and our selfishness. His holiness made Him an utter stranger in such a polluted world; His grace kept Him ever active in such a needy and afflicted world. And this sets off His life, I may say, in great moral glory; that though forced, by the quality of the scene around Him, to be a lonely One, yet was He drawn forth by the need and sorrow of it to be the active One. And these activities were spent on all kinds of persons, and had therefore to assume all kinds of forms. Adversaries, the people, a company of disciples who followed Him (the twelve), and individuals; these kept Him not only in constant, but in very various activity; and He had to know, as surely He did to perfection, how to answer every man. And beside all this, we see Him at times at the table of others; but it is only that we may still notice further various perfection. At the table of the Pharisees, as we see Him occasionally, He is not adopting or sanctioning the family scene, but being invited in the character which He had already acquired and sustained outside, He is there to act in that character. He is not a guest simply, under the courtesy and hospitality of the master, and therefore He can rebuke or teach. He is still the Light, and will act as the Light; and thus He exposes darkness within doors as He did abroad. (Luke 7: 11).

But if He thus entered the house of the Pharisee again and again, in the character of a teacher, and would then, acting as such, rebuke the moral condition of things which He found there, He entered the house of the publican as a Saviour. Levi made Him a feast in his own house, and set publicans and sinners in His company. That is, of course, objected to. The religious rulers find fault, and then the Lord reveals Himself as a Saviour, saying to them, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; but go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Very simple, but very striking, and full of meaning, this is. Simon the Pharisee objected that a sinner should enter his house and approach the Lord Jesus; Levi the publican provided such as these to be the fellow-guests of the Lord Jesus. And accordingly, the Lord in one house acts as a reprover, in the other, discloses Himself in the rich grace of a Saviour.

But we are to see Him at other tables still. We may visit Him in Jericho and Emmaus. (See Luke 19 and Luke 24) It was desire that received Him on each of these occasions; but desire differently awakened-awakened, I mean, under different influences. Zaccheus had been but a sinner, a child of nature, which is, as we know, corrupt in its springs and its activities. But he had been just at that moment under the drawings of the Father, and his soul was making Jesus its object. He wished to see Him, and that desire being commanding, he had pressed his way through the crowd, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, if he might but just see Him as He passed by, The Lord looked up, and at once invited Himself into his house. This is very peculiar, -Jesus is an uninvited, self-invited guest in the house of that publican at Jericho !

The earliest strivings of life in a poor sinner, the desire which had been awakened by the drawings of the Father, were there in that house ready to welcome Him; but sweetly and significantly He anticipates the welcome, and goes in-goes in, in full, consistent, responsive character, to kindle and strengthen the freshly-quickened life, till it break forth in some of its precious virtue, and yield some of its own good fruit. "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." At Emmaus, desire had been again quickened, but under different conditions. It was not the desire of a freshly-drawn soul, but of restored saints. These two disciples had been unbelieving. They were returning home under a sorrow that Jesus had disappointed them. The Lord rebukes them shortly after He joined them on the road, but so orders His words as to kindle their hearts.

When their walk together ends at the gate of their dwelling, the Lord makes as though He would go further. He would not invite Himself as He had done at Jericho. They were not in the moral state which suggested this, as Zaccheus had been; but, when invited, He goes in-just to kindle further the desire which had here invited Him-to gratify it to the full. And so He does; and they are constrained by their joy to return to the city that night, late as it was, to communicate it to their fellows.

How full of various beauty all these cases are! The guest in the house of Pharisees, the guest in the house of publicans, the guest in the house of disciples,-the invited and the uninvited guest in the person of Jesus, sits in His place, in all perfection and beauty. I might instance Him as a guest at other tables; but, I will now look only at one more. At Bethany, we see Him adopting a family scene. Had Jesus disallowed the idea of a Christian family, He could not have been at Bethany, as we see He was. And yet, when we get Him there, it is only some new phase of moral beauty that we trace in Him. He is a friend of the family, finding, as we find to this day among ourselves, a home in the midst of them. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus," are words which bespeak this. His love to them was not that of a Saviour, or a Shepherd, though we know well He was each of these to them. It was the love of a family friend. But though a friend, an intimate friend, who might whenever He pleased find a welcome there; yet He did not interfere with the arrangements of the house. Martha was the housekeeper, the busy one of the family, useful and important in her place; and Jesus will surely leave her where He finds her. It was not for Him to alter or settle such matters. Lazarus may sit by the side of the guests at the family table, Mary may be abstracted and withdrawn as in her own kingdom, or into the kingdom of God within her, and Martha be busy and serving. Be it so. Jesus leaves all this just as He finds it. He who would not enter the house of another unbidden, when entered into the house of those sisters and brother will not meddle with its order and arrangements and in full moral comeliness this is. But if one of the family, instead of carrying herself in her family place, step out of it to be a teacher in His presence, He must and will resume His higher character, and set things right divinely, though He would not interfere with or touch them domestically. (Luke 10: 38-42)

What various and exquisite beauty! Who can trace all His paths? The vulture will have to say, it is beyond even the reach of his eye. And if no human eye can fully see the whole of this one object, where is the human character that does not aid in setting off its light by its own shadows and imperfections? We none of us think of John, or of Peter, or of the rest of them, as hard-hearted or unkind. Quite otherwise. We feel that we could have entrusted them with our griefs or our necessities. But this little narrative in Mark 6, to which I referred, shows us that they are all at fault, all in the distance, when the hunger of the multitude appealed to them, threatening to break up their ease; but, on the contrary, that was the very moment, the very occasion, when Jesus drew near. All this tells us of Him, beloved. "I know no one," says another, "so kind, so condescending, who is come down to poor sinners, as He. I trust His love more than I do Mary's, or any saint's; not merely His power as God, but the tenderness of His heart as man. No one ever showed such, or had such, or proved it so well-none has inspired one with such confidence. Let others go to saints or angels, if they will; I trust Jesus' kindness more." Surely, again I say, this is so-and this occasion in Mark 6, betraying the narrow-heartedness of the best of us, such as Peter and John, but manifesting the full, unwearied, saving grace of Jesus, verifies it. But further: there are in Him combinations of characters, as well as of virtues or graces. His relationship to the world, when He was there, exhibits this. He was at once a Conqueror, a Sufferer, and a Benefactor. What moral glories shine in such an assemblage! He overcame the world, refusing all its attractions and offers; He suffered from it, witnessing for God against its whole course and spirit; He blessed it, dispensing His love and power continually, returning good for evil. Its temptations only made Him a conqueror; its pollutions and enmities only a sufferer; its miseries only a benefactor. What a combination? What moral glories shine in each other's company there!

The Lord illustrated that word that is among us, "in the world, but not of the world"-a form of words which, I suppose, has been derived from what He Himself says in John 17: 15: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." He illustrates this condition all through His life; for He was ever in the world, active in the midst of its ignorance and misery, but never of it, as one that shared its hopes or projects, or breathed its spirit. But in John 7. I believe He is eminently seen in this character. It was the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, the crowning joyous time in Israel, the antepast of the coming kingdom, the season of ingathering, when the people had only to remember that they had been in other days wanderers in a wilderness, and dwellers in camp. His brethren propose to Him to take advantage of such a moment, when "all the world," as we speak, was at Jerusalem. They would have Him make Himself important, make Himself, as we again speak, "a man of the world." "If thou do these things," they say, "show thyself to the world." He refused. His time had not then come to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. He will have His kingdom in the world, and be great to the end of the earth, when His day comes; but as yet He was on His way to the altar, and not to the throne. He will not go to the feast to be of the feast, though He will be in it; therefore, when He reaches the city at this time, we see Him in service there, not in honour, not working miracles as His brethren would have had Him, that He might gain the notice of men; but teaching others, and then hiding Himself under this, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me."

Very peculiar and characteristic indeed all this in And all this was some of the moral glory of the Man, the perfect Man, Jesus, in His relation to the world. He was a conqueror, a sufferer, and a benefactor-in the world, but not of it. But with equal perfectness do we see Him at times distinguishing things, as well as exhibiting these beautiful combinations. Thus, in dealing with sorrow, which lay outside, as I may express it, we see tenderness, the power that relieved; but in dealing with the power of disciples, we see faithfulness as well as tenderness.

The leper in Matt. 7 is a stranger. He brings his sorrow to Christ, and gets healing at once. Disciples, in the same chapter, bring their sorrow also, their fears in the storm; but they get rebuke as well as relief. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" He says to them. And yet the leper had but little faith, as well as the disciples. If they said, "Lord, save us, we perish;" he said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." But they are rebuked, while he is not, just because there was a different thing before the mind of the Lord, and justly so.

It was simply sorrow in the one case; it was the soul as well as the sorrow in the other. Tenderness, unmixed tenderness, was therefore His answer to the one; faithfulness must form part of the other. The different relationship to Him, of disciples and strangers, at once accounts for this, and may show how perfectly He distinguished things that came very near each other, but still were not the same. But further, as to this perfection. Though He Himself rebuke, He will not allow others lightly to do it.

As in earlier days, Moses may be humbled by the Lord, but the Lord will not allow Miriam and Aaron to reproach him. (Num. 11, 12.) Israel in the wilderness will be chastened again and again by the hand of God, but in the face of Balaam, or any other adversary, He will be as one that has not seen iniquity in His people, and will not suffer any enchantment to prevail against them. So the Lord Jesus will beautifully and strikingly step in between the two disciples and the rebuking ten (Matt. 20.), and though He sent a word of warning and admonition to John the Baptist, as in secret (such a word as John's conscience alone might understand), He turns to the multitude to speak of John only with commendation and delight.

And still further, as to this grace in distinguishing things that differ. Even in dealing with His disciples, there did come a moment when faithfulness can be observed no longer, and tenderness alone is to be exercised. I mean in the hour of parting, as we see in John 14: 16. It was then "too late to be faithful." The moment would not have admitted it. It was a time which the heart claimed as entirely belonging to itself. The education of the soul could not go on then. He opens fresh Secrets to them, it is true, secrets of the dearest and most intimate relationships, as between them and the Father; but there is nothing that is to be called rebuke.

There is no such word as, "O ye of little faith!" or "How is it that ye do not understand A word that may sound somewhat like that, is only the discharging of a wound which the heart had suffered, that they might know the love He had for them. This was the sacredness of the sorrow of a moment of parting, in the perfect mind and affection of Jesus; and we practise it ourselves in some poor manner, so that we are at least able to enjoy and admire the full expression of it in Him. "There is a time to embrace," says the preacher, "and there is a time to refrain from embracing." This is a law in the statute-book of love, and Jesus observed it.

But again. He was not to be drawn into softness, when the occasion demanded faithfulness, and yet He passed by many circumstances which human sensibilities would have resented, and which the human moral sense would have judged it well to resent. He would not gain His disciples after the poor way of amiable nature. Honey was excluded from the offering made by fire, as well as leaven. The meat offering had none of it (Lev. 2: 11); neither had Jesus, the true meat offering. It was not the merely civil, amiable thing, that the disciples got from their Master. It was not the courtesy that consults for the ease of another. He did not gratify, and yet He bound them to Him very closely; and this is power. There is always moral power when the confidence of another is gained without its being sought; for the heart has then become conscious of the reality of love. "We all know," writes one, "how to distinguish between love and attention, and that there may be a great deal of the latter without any of the former. Some might say, attention must win our confidence; but we know ourselves that nothing but love does." This is so true. Attention, if it be mere attention, is honey, and how much of this poor material is found with us! and we are disposed to think that it is all well, and perhaps we aim no higher than to purge out leaven, and fill the lump with honey. Let us be amiable, perform our part well in the courteous, well-ordered social scene, pleasing others, and doing what we can to keep people on good terms with themselves, then we are satisfied with ourselves and others with us also. But is this service to God? Is this a meat offering? Is this found as part of the moral glory of perfect man? Indeed, indeed it is not. We may naturally judge, I grant, that nothing could do it better or more effectually; but still it is one of the secrets of the sanctuary, that honey was not used to give a sweet savour to the offering

Thus, in progress, in reasonableness, in combinations, and in distinctions, how perfect in moral glory and beauty were all the ways of this Son of Man!

The life of Jesus was the bright shining of a candle. It was such a lamp in the house of God as needed no golden tongs or snuff-dishes. It was ordered before the Lord continually, burning as from pure beaten oil. It was making manifest all that was around, exposing and reproving; but it ever held its own place uncondemned.

Whether challenged by disciples or adversaries, as the Lord was again and again, there is never an excusing of Himself. On one occasion disciples complain, "Master, carest thou not that we perish ?" But He does not think of vindicating the sleep out of which this challenge awakes Him. On another occasion

they object to Him, "The multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" But He does not need this inquiry, but acts upon the satisfaction of it. At another time Martha says to Him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." But He does not excuse His not having been there, nor His delaying for two days in the place where He was; but instructs Martha in the wondrous character which His delay had given to that hour.

What a glorious vindication of His delay that was! And thus it was on every like occasion; whether challenged or rebuked, there is never the recalling of a word, nor the retracing of a step. Every tongue that rises in judgement against Him, He condemns. The mother rebukes Him in Luke 2; but instead of making good her charge, she has to listen to Him convicting the darkness and error of her thoughts. Peter takes upon him to admonish Him: "This be far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." But Peter has to learn, that it was Satan himself that in Peter prompted the admonition. The officer in the palace of the High Priest goes still further, correcting Him, and smiting Him on the cheek. But he is convicted of breaking the rules of judgement, in the very face and place of judgement.

All this tells us of the way of the perfect Master. Appearances might have been against Him at times. Why did He sleep in the boat when winds and waves were raging? Why did He loiter on the road when Jairus's daughter was dying? or why did He tarry where He was when His friend Lazarus was sick in the distant village of Bethany? But all this is but appearance, and that for a moment. We have heard of these ways of Jesus, this sleep, this loitering, and this tarrying, but we also see the end of Jesus, that all is perfect. Appearances were against the God of Job in patriarchal days. Messenger after messenger seemed too much, unrelenting, and inexorable; but the God of Job had not to excuse Himself, nor has the Jesus of the evangelists.

Therefore, when we look at the Lord Jesus as the lamp of the sanctuary, the light in the house of God, we find at once that the tongs and snuff-dishes cannot be used. They are discovered to have no counterpart in Him. Consequently, they who undertook to challenge or rebuke Him when He was here, had to go back rebuked and put to shame themselves. They were using the tongs or snuffers with a lamp which did not need them, and they only betrayed their folly; and the light of the lamp shone the brighter, not because the tongs had been used, but because it was able to give forth some fresh witness (which it did on every occasion) that it did not need them.

And from all these instances we have the happy lesson, that we had better stand by, and let Jesus go on with His business. We may look and worship, but not meddle or interrupt, as all these were wrong in their day-enemies, kinsfolk, and even disciples. They could not improve the light that was shining; they had only to be gladdened by it, and walk in it, and not attempt to trim or order it. Let our eye be single, and we may be sure the candle of the Lord, set on the candlestick, will make the whole body full of light.

But I pass on. And I may further observe, that as He did not excuse Himself to the judgement of man in the course of His ministry, as we have now seen, so in the hour of His weakness, when the powers of darkness were all against Him. He did not cast Himself on the pity of man. When He became the prisoner of the Jews and of the Gentiles, He did not entreat them or sue to them. No appeal to compassion, no pleading for life is heard. He had prayed to the Father in Gethsemane, but there is no seeking to move the Jewish high priest or the Roman governor. All that He says to man in that hour, is to expose the sin with which man, whether Jew or Gentile, was going through that hour.

What a picture! Who could have conceived such an object! It must have been exhibited ere it was described, as has been long since observed by others. It was the perfect Man, who once walked here in the fulness of moral glory, and whose reflections have been left by the Holy Ghost on the pages of the evangelists. And next to the simple, happy, earnest assurance of His personal love to ourselves (the Lord increase it in our hearts!) nothing more helps us to desire to be with Him, than this discovery of Himself. I have heard of one who, observing His bright and blessed ways in the Four Gospels, was filled with tears and affections, and was heard to cry out, "O that I were with Him! "

If one may speak for others, beloved, it is this we want, and it is this we covet. We know our need, but we can say, the Lord knows our desire.

The same preacher whom we quoted before, says, "There is a time to keep, and a time to cast away." (Ecc. 3: 6.) The Lord Jesus both kept and cast away, in the due season.

There is no waste in the services of the heart or the hand that worships God, be they as prodigal as they may. "All things come of thee," says David to the Lord, "and of thine own have we given thee."

The cattle on a thousand hills are His, and the fulness of the earth. But Pharaoh treated Israel's proposal to worship God as "idleness," and the disciples challenge the spending of three hundred pence on the body of Jesus as "waste." But to give the Lord His own, the honour or the sacrifice, the love of the heart, the labour of the hands, or the substance of the house, is neither idleness nor waste. It is chief work to render to God.

But here I would linger for a moment or two.

Renouncing Egypt is not idleness, nor is the breaking of a box of ointment on the head of Christ waste; though we thus see, that a certain kind of reckoning among the children of men, and even at times (and that too frequent) among the saints of God, would charge these things as such. Advantages in life are surrendered, opportunities of worldly promise are not used, because the heart has understood the path of companionship with a rejected Lord.

But this is "idleness" and "waste," many will say: the advantages might have been retained by the possessor, or the opportunities might have been sought and reached, and then used for the Lord. But such persons know not. Station, and the human, earthly influence that attaches to it, is commended by them, and treated almost as "a gift to be used for profit, and edification and blessing." But a rejected Christ, a Christ cast out by men, if known spiritually by the soul, would teach another lesson.

This station in life, these worldly advantages, these opportunities so commended, are the very Egypt which Moses renounced. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

The treasures of Egypt were not riches in his esteem, because he could not use them for the Lord. And he went outside of them, and the Lord met him there, and used him afterwards, not to accredit Egypt and its treasures, but to deliver His people out of it.

I follow this a little here, for it is, I feel, important to us.

All this renunciation, however, must be made in the understanding and faith of a rejected Lord; it will otherwise want all its fine, and genuine, and proper character. If it be made on a mere religious principle, as that of working out a righteousness or a title for ourselves, it may well be said to be something worse

than idleness or waste. It then betrays an advantage which Satan has got over us, rather than any advantage we have got over the world. But if it be indeed made in the faith and love of a rejected Master, and in the sense and intelligence of His relation to this present evil world, it is worship.

To serve man at the expense of God's truth and principles is not Christianity, though persons who do so will be called "benefactors." Christianity considers the glory of God, as well as the blessing of man; but as far as we lose sight of this, so far shall we be tempted to call many things waste and idleness which are really holy, intelligent, consistent, and devoted service to Jesus. Indeed, it is so. The Lord's vindication of the woman who poured her treasure on the head of Jesus tells me so (Matt. 26.). We are to own God's glory in what we do, though men may refuse to sanction what does not advance the good order of the world, or provide for the good of our neighbour. But Jesus would know God's claims in this self-seeking world, while He recognized (very surely, as we may know), His neighbour's claim upon Himself.

He knew when to cast away, and when to keep. "Let her alone," He said of the woman who had been upbraided for breaking the box of spikenard on Him; "she hath wrought a good work on me." But after feeding the multitudes He would say, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

This was observing the Divine rule, "There is a time to keep, and a time to cast away." If the prodigal service of the heart or hand in worship be no waste, the very crumbs of human food are sacred, and must not be cast away. He who vindicated the spending of 300 pence on one of these occasions, on the other would not let the fragments of three loaves be left on the ground. In His eyes, such fragments were sacred. They were the food of life, the herb of the field, which God had given to man for his life. And life is a sacred thing. God is the God of the living. "To you it shall be for meat," God has said of it, and therefore Jesus would hallow it. "The tree of the field is man's life," the law had said, and accordingly had thus prescribed to them that were under the law-"When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down to employ them in the siege: only the trees that thou knowest are not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down" (Deut. 20). It would have been waste, it would have been profaneness, to have thus abused the food of life, which was God's gift. And Jesus in like purity, in the perfectness of God's living ordinance, would not let the fragments lie on the ground. "Gather up the fragments that remain," He said, "that nothing be lost."

These are but small incidents; but all the circumstances of human life, as He passes through them, change as they may, or be they as minute as they may, are thus adorned by something of the moral glory that was ever brightening the path of His sacred, wearied feet. The eye of man was incapable of tracking it; but to God it was all incense, a sacrifice of sweet savour, a sacrifice of rest, the meat offering of the sanctuary.

But again. The Lord did not judge of persons in relation to Himself,-a common fault with us all. We naturally judge of others according as they treat ourselves, and we make our interest in them the measure of their character and worth. But this was not the Lord. God is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. He understands every action fully. In all its moral meaning He understands it, and according to that He weighs it. And, as the image of the God of knowledge, we see our Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of His ministry here, again and again. I may refer to Luke 11. There was the air of courtesy and good feeling towards Him in the Pharisee that invited Him to dine. But the Lord was "the God of knowledge" and as such He weighed this action in its full moral character.

The honey of courtesy, which is the best ingredient in social life in this world, should not pervert His taste or judgement. He approved things that are excellent. The civility which invited Him to dinner was not to determine the judgement of Him who carried the weights and measures of the sanctuary of God. It is the God of knowledge that this civility has on this occasion to confront, and it does not stand, it will not do. O how the tracing of this may rebuke us! The invitation covered a purpose. As soon as the Lord entered the house, the host acts the Pharisee, and not the host. He marvels that his guest had not washed before dinner. And the character he thus assumes at the beginning shows itself in full force at the end. And the Lord deals with the whole scene accordingly; for He weighed it as the God of knowledge. Some may say, that the courtesy He had received might have kept Him silent. But He could not look on this man simply as in relation to Himself. He was not to be flattered out of a just judgement. He exposes and rebukes, and the end of the scene justifies Him. "And as He said these things unto them, the scribes and Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things, laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him."

Very different, however, was His way in the house of another Pharisee, who in like manner had asked Him to dine. (Luke 7) For Simon had no covered purpose in the invitation. Quite otherwise. He seemed to act the Pharisee too, silently accusing the poor sinner of the city. and his guest for admitting her approach. But appearances are not the ground of righteous judgements. Often the very same words, on different lips, have a different mind in them. And therefore the Lord, the perfect Weighmaster according to God, though He may rebuke Simon, and expose him to himself, knows him by name, and leaves his house as a guest should leave it.

He distinguishes the Pharisee of Luke 7 from the Pharisee of Luke 11, though He dined with both of them. So we may look at the Lord with Peter in Matthew 16. Peter expresses fond and considerate attachment to his Master: "This be far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." But Jesus judged Peter's word's only in their moral place. Hard indeed we find it to do this when we are personally gratified. "Get thee behind me, Satan," was not the answer which a merely amiable nature would have suggested to such words.

But again, I say, our Lord did not listen to Peter's words simply as they expressed personal kindness and goodwill to Himself. He judged them, he weighed them, as in the presence of God, and at once found that the enemy had moved them; for He that can transform Himself into an angel of light is very often lurking in words of courtesy and kindness. And in the same way the Lord dealt with Thomas in John 20. Thomas had just worshipped Him. "My Lord and my God," he had said. But Jesus was not to be drawn from the high moral elevation that He filled, and from whence He heard and saw everything, even by words like these.

They were genuine words, words of a mind which, enlightened of God, had repented toward the risen Saviour, and, instead of doubting any longer, worshipped. But Thomas had stood out as long as he could. He had exceeded. They had all been unbelieving as to the resurrection, but he had insisted that he would be still in unbelief till sense and sight came to deliver him. All this had been his moral condition; and Jesus has this before Him, and puts Thomas in his right moral place, as He had put Peter.

"Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Our hearts in such cases as these would have been taken by surprise. They could not have kept their ground in the face of these assaults, which the good will of Peter and the worship of Thomas would have made upon them. But our perfect Master stood for God and His truth, and not for Himself. The ark of old was not to be flattered. Israel may honour it, and bring it down to the battle, telling

it, as it were, that now in its presence all must be well with them.

But this will not do for the God of Israel. Israel falls before the Philistines, though the ark be thus in the battle; and Peter and Thomas shall be rebuked, though Jesus, still the God of Israel, be honoured by them.

Angels have their joy over the repentance of sinners. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." It is happy to have this secret of heaven disclosed to us, and to read one illustration of it after another, as we do in Luke 15.

But there is something beyond this. The joy there, though in heaven, is public. It utters itself, and has companionship. Very proper that it should be so; very proper that the whole house should share it, and find it a common joy. But there is something beyond this. There is the joy of the Divine bosom, as well as this joy of heaven. John 4: 27-32 gives it to us, as Luke 15 gives us the public joy of heaven. And this joy of the Divine bosom, I need not say, is the deeper thing. It is full, silent, and personal. It asks not to be raised or sustained by others. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," is the language of the heart of Christ, as He tasted this joy. The glory was filling the house, so that the ministers of the house must stand by for a time. The Shepherd had but just brought home the stray one of the flock, having laid it on His shoulders rejoicing, and as yet the joy was all His own. The household had not been called to rejoice with Him, when the woman left Him a saved and happy sinner. Disciples felt the character of the moment. They would not trespass. The fat reserved for the altar, the richest portion of the feast, "the food of God," was spread, and the disciples were silent, and stood apart. This was a wondrous moment- not many like it. The deep, unuttered joy of the Divine bosom is known here, as the public ecstatic joy of heaven is known in Luke 15.

But He that could be thus feasted was weary betimes, and hungry, and thirsting. This is seen in the same chapter, John 4; as again in Mark 4. But there is this difference in the two cases: He finds sleep for His relief and restoration in Mark 4. He is independent of it in John 4. And why was this? In Mark 4. He had gone through a day of toil, and in the evening He was weary, as nature will be after labour. "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening." (Ps. 106) Sleep is then provided for him, to restore him to his service when morning returns. Jesus proved all this. He was asleep on the pillow in the boat. In John 4 He is weary again, hungry and thirsty too He sits at the well, like a tired traveller, waiting till the disciples came from the neighbouring village with food. But when they come, they find Him feasted and rested, and that too without food, or drink, or sleep. His weariness had had another refreshment than what sleep had brought Him. He had been made happy by fruit to His labour in the soul of a poor sinner. The woman had been sent away in the liberty of the salvation of God. But there had been no woman of Samaria in Mark 4, and He has therefore to use the pillow in His weariness.

But how true all this is to the sensibilities of our common humanity! We all understand it. The Lord's heart was merry, as I may say, in John 4; but there was nothing to make it merry in Mark 4. And we are taught to know (and our experience sets to its seal that the word is true) "that a merry heart doeth good like medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones." (Prov. 17: 22.) So that the Master can say in the one case, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," while in the other, He will use the pillow which care for His weariness had provided.

How perfect in all its sympathies was the humanity the Son had assumed! Surely, indeed, it was the common humanity, apart from sin.

"Touched with a sympathy within,

He knows our feeble frame."

But again. There is a temptation in the time of confusion to cast up all as hopeless and gone; and to say, it is endless and needless to be still distinguishing. All is in disorder and apostacy; why then attempt to distinguish?

But this was not the Lord. He was in the confusion, but not of it, as He was in the world, but not of it, as we said before of Him. He met all sorts of people, in all sorts of conditions, heaps upon heaps, where all should have been compact together; but He held His even, narrow, unsoiled and undistracted way through it all. The pretensions of the Pharisee, the worldliness of the Herodian, the philosophy of the Sadducee, the fickleness of the multitude, the attempts of adversaries. and the ignorance and infirmities of disciples, were moral materials which He had to meet and answer every day.

And then the condition of things, as well as the characters of persons, exercised Him; the coin Of Caesar circulating in Immanuel's land; partition walls all but in ruins; Jew and Gentile, clean and unclean, confounded, save as religious arrogance might still retain them after its own manner. But His one golden rule expressed the perfectness Of His passage through all- "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The remnant in the day of captivity, a like day of confusion, carried themselves beautifully, distinguishing things that differed, and not hopelessly casting all up. Daniel would advise the king, but not eat his meat: Nehemiah would serve in the palace, but not suffer the Moabite Or the Ammonite in the house of the Lord: Mordecai would guard the king's life, but would not bow to the Amalekite: Ezra and Zerubbabel would accept favours from the Persian, but not Samaritan help nor Gentile marriages: and the captives would pray for the peace of Babylon, but would not sing Zion's songs there. All this was beautiful; and the Lord, in His day, was perfect in this remnant character. And all this has a voice for us; for ours is a day, in its character of confusion, not inferior to these days of the captives, or of Jesus. And we, like them, are not to act on the hopelessness of the scene, but know still how to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

All His moral beauty becomes a pattern to us. But then we see Him stand in God's relationship to evil also, and that is a place which, of course, we never could fill. He touched the leper, and He touched the bier, and yet He was undefiled. He had God's relationship to sin. He knew good and evil, but was in Divine supremacy over it; knowing such things as God knows them. Had He been Other than He was, these touches of the bier and of the leper would have defiled Him. He must have been put outside the camp, and gone through the cleansing which the law prescribed. But nothing of this kind do we see in Him. He was not an unclean Jew; He was not merely undefiled, He was undefileable; and yet, such was the mystery of His person, such the perfection of the Manhood in company with the Godhead in Him, that the temptation was as real in Him as was the undefileableness.

But we pause. Our place towards much of this needed, though mysterious and deeply precious truth, is to receive it and worship, rather than to discuss and analyse it. [His death, I may here take occasion to say, was the perfecting of His moral glory, of which I speak. (Phil. 2.) Of course, I know it Divas a great deal more than that also. But, among other things, it was that.] It is happy, however, to one's own spirit, to mark the Yearnings of some souls, who give you the impression that it is Himself that is before them. We oftentimes traffic with truths in such wise as in the end leaves with us a rebuking conviction that we did not reach Himself, though so occupied. We find out that we had been loitering in the avenue.

The Lord was "poor, yet making rich,"-"having nothing, and yet possessing all things." These high and wondrous conditions were exhibited in Him, in ways that were and must have been peculiar-altogether His own. He would receive ministry from some godly women out of their substance, and yet minister to the need of all around Him out of the treasures of the fulness of the earth. He would feed thousands in desert places, and yet be Himself an hungered, waiting for the return of His disciples with victuals from a neighbouring village. This is "having nothing, and yet possessing all things." But while thus poor, both needy and exposed nothing that in the least savoured of meanness is ever seen attaching to His condition. He never begs, though He have not a penny; for when He wanted to see one (not to use it for Himself) He had to ask to be shown it. He never runs away, though exposed, and His life jeopardized, as we speak, in the place where He was. He withdraws Himself, or passes by as hidden. And thus, again, I may say. nothing mean, nothing unbecoming, full personal dignity attaches to Him, though poverty and exposure were His lot every day.

Blessed and beautiful! Who could preserve under our eye such an Object, so perfect, so unblemished so exquisitely, delicately pure, in all the minute and most ordinary details of human life! Paul does not give us this. None could give it to us but Jesus, the God-Man. The peculiarities of His virtues in the midst of the ordinariness of His circumstances tell us of His Person. It must be a peculiar Person, it must be the divine Man, if I may so express Him, that could give us such peculiarities in such common-place conditions. Paul does not give us anything like it, again I say. There was great dignity and moral elevation about him, I know. If any one may be received as exhibiting that, let us agree that it was he. But his path is not that of Jesus. He is in danger of his life, and he uses his nephew to protect him. Again, his friends let him down the wall of the town in a basket. I do not say he begs or asks for it, but he acknowledges money sent to him. I say not how Paul avowed himself a Pharisee in the mixed assembly, in order to shelter himself; or how he spake evil of the high priest that was judging him. Such conduct was morally wrong; and I am speaking here only of such cases as were, though not morally wrong, below the full personal and moral dignity that marks the way of Christ. Nor is the flight into Egypt, as it is called, an exception in this characteristic of the Lord; for that journey was taken to fulfil prophecy, and under the authority of a Divine oracle.

But all this is really, not only moral glory, but it is a moral wonder- marvellous how the pen that was held by a human hand could ever have delineated such beauties. We are to account for it, as has been observed before and by others, only by its being a truth, a living reality. We are shut up to that blessed necessity. Still further, as we go on with this blessed truth, it is written: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Our words should prove themselves as thus, always with grace, by ministering good to others, "grace to the hearers." This, however, will often be in the pungency of admonition or rebuke; and at times with decision or severity, even with indignation and zeal; and thus they will be "seasoned with salt," as the Scripture speaks. And having these fine qualities, being gracious and yet salted, they will bear witness that we know how to answer every man.

Among all other forms of it, the Lord Jesus illustrated this form of moral perfectness. He knew how to answer every man, as with words which were always to his soul's profit, whether men would hear, or whether they would forbear, but at times seasoned, nay, seasoned highly with salt.

Thus, in answering inquiries, He did not so much purpose to satisfy them, as to reach the conscience or the condition of the inquirer.

In His silence, or refusal to answer at all, when He stood before the Jew or the Gentile at the end, before either the priests, or Pilate, or Herod, we can trace the same perfect fitness as we do in His words or answers; witnessing to God, that at least One among the sons of men knew "a time to keep silence, and a time to speak."

Great variety in His very tone and manner also presents itself in all this; and all this variety, minute as it was as well as great, was part of this fragrance before God. Sometimes His word was gentle, sometimes peremptory; sometimes He reasons; sometimes He rebukes at once; and sometimes conducts calm reasoning up to the heated point of solemn condemnation; for it is the moral of the occasion He always weighs.

Matthew 15 has struck me as a chapter in which this perfection, in much of its various beauty and excellency may be seen. In the course of it, the Lord is called to answer the Pharisees, the multitude, the poor afflicted stranger from the coasts of Tyre, and His own disciples, again and again, in their different exposure of either their stupidity or their selfishness; and we may notice His different style of rebuke and of reasoning, of calm, patient teaching, and of faithful, wise, and gracious training of the soul: and we cannot but feel how fitting all this variety was to the place or occasion that called it forth. And such was the beauty and the fitness of His neither teaching nor learning, in Luke 2, but only hearing and asking questions. To have taught then would not have been in season, a child as He was in the midst of His elders. To have learnt would not have been in full fidelity to the light, the eminent and bright light, which He knew He carried in Himself; for we may surely say of Him, "He was wiser than the ancients, and had more understanding than His teachers." I do not mean as God, but as One "filled with wisdom," as was then said of Him. But He knew in the perfection of grace how to use this fulness of wisdom, and He is, therefore, not presented to us by the evangelist in the midst of the doctors in the temple at the age of twelve, either teaching or learning; but it is simply said of Him, that He was "hearing and asking questions." "Strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God upon Him," is the description of Him then, as He grew up in tender years; and when a Man, conversing in the world, His speech was always with grace, seasoned with salt, as of one who knew how to answer every man. What perfection and beauty suited to the different seasons of childhood and manhood!

And further. We find Him, besides this, also in various other conditions. At times He is slighted and scorned, watched and hated by adversaries, retiring, as it were, to save His life from their attempts and purposes. At times He is weak, followed only by the poorest of the people; wearied, too, and hungry and athirst, debtor to the service of some loving women, who felt as though they owed Him everything. At times He is compassionating the multitude in all gentleness, or companying with His disciples in their repasts or in their journeying, conversing with them as a man would with his friends. At times He is in strength and honour before us, doing wonders, letting out some rays of glory; and though in His person and circumstances nothing and nobody in the world, a carpenter's son, without learning or fortune, yet making a greater stir among men, and that, too, at times in the thoughts of the ruling ones on earth, than man ever made.

Childhood, and manhood, and human life in all its variousness, thus gives Him to us. Would that the heart could hold Him! There is a perfection in some of the minute features that tell of the Divine hand that was delineating them. Awkward work would any penman, unkept, unguided by the Spirit, have made of certain occasions where these strokes and touches are seen. As when the Lord wanted to comment on the current money of the land, He asked to be shown it, and does not find it about Himself. Indeed, we may be sure He carried none of it. Thus, the moral beauties of the action, flowed from the moral perfection of His

condition within.

He asked His disciples in the hour of Gethsemane, to watch with Him; but He did not ask them to pray for Him. He would claim sympathy. He prized it in the hour of weakness and pressure, and would have the hearts of His companions bound to Him then. Such a desire was of the moral glory that formed the human perfection that was in Him; but while He felt this and did this, He could not ask them to stand as in the Divine presence on His behalf. He would have them give themselves to Him, but He could not seek them to give themselves to God for Him. Thus, He asked them again, I say, to watch with Him, but He did not ask them to pray for Him. When shortly or immediately afterwards, He linked praying and watching together, it was of themselves and for themselves He spoke, saying, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Paul could say to his fellow-saints, "Ye also helping together by prayer to God for us: pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience." But such was not the language of Jesus. I need not say, it could not have been; but the pen that writes for us such a life, and delineates for us such a character, is held by the Spirit of God. None other than the Spirit could write thus.

He did good, and lent, hoping for nothing again. He gave, and His left hand did not know what His right hand was doing. Never in one single instance, as I believe, did He claim either the person or the service of those whom He restored and delivered. He never made the deliverance He wrought, a title to service. Jesus loved, and healed, and saved, looking for nothing again. He would not let Legion, the Gadarene, be with Him. The child at the foot of the mount, He delivered back to his father. The daughter of Jairus He left in the bosom of her family. The widow's son at Nain He restores to his mother. He claims none of them. Does Christ give, in order that He may receive again? Does He not (perfect Master!) illustrate His own principle-"Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again"? The nature of grace is to impart to others, not to enrich itself: and He came, that in Him and His ways, it might shine in all the exceeding riches and glory that belong to it. He found servants in this world; but He did not first heal them, and then claim them. He called them, and endowed them. They were the fruit of the energy of His Spirit, and of affections kindled in hearts constrained by His love. And sending them forth, He said to them, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Surely there is something beyond human conception in the delineation of such a character. One repeats that thought again and again. And very happy it is to add, that it is- in the very simplest forms this moral glory of the Lord shines forth at times-such forms as are at once intelligible to all the perceptions and sympathies of the heart. Thus He never refused the feeblest faith, though He accepted and answered, and that too with delight, the approaches and demands of the boldest.

The strong faith, which drew upon Him without ceremony or apology, in full immediate assurance, was ever welcome to Him; while the timid soul, that approached Him, as one that was ashamed and would excuse itself, was encouraged and blessed. His lips at once bore away fro

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jg-bellet/the-moral-glory-of-the-lord-jesus-christ/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net