Showers on the Grass

Being a few brief letters & papers, addressed to C. E. M. Paul, of Exeter,

by the late J. G. Bellett, of Dublin.

London: G. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row, E. C.

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." — Deut. 32: 2.

Preface.

It has been a pleasant recreation to gather up and arrange these few simple papers for the press. There is living water here. The heart testifies to the unvarying freshness of the matter.

The reader will quickly perceive that there does not exist any special narrative interest in the *letters* — they are given for the sake of the touching sympathy and hallowed tone expressed in them. How truly they were found to the patient and tried one to whom they were addressed to be as showers upon the grass.

May the Master be pleased to use them for spiritual refreshment to any whose lot may be cast in a similar path of affliction.

C. McA.

London, 1865.

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Papers.

LETTER 1.

Leamington, Aug. 12, 1839.

I trust His own peace has been keeping you abundantly, as it has been wont to do, and as, I doubt not, it will keep you to the end. I trust He has been giving you some sweet, and rich kidneys of wheat at times, some happy little cups full of fresh milk from the pure word of His grace. It will be happy, beloved, when you know the fresh and over-flowing springs that rise in Himself. Jesus is to be your prophet even in the glory. There He will feed your still enlarging thoughts with Himself, as here He has begun to do. The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed you even then as now. Love Him, dear sister, for He is worthy; and your delighted eyes by and by will be satisfied with His beauty, as your ears are listening to His praise from the great congregation.

Let us now meditate together on a little Scripture.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

The Church of Galatia was the scene of a conflict between the law and the gospel, or Sarah and Hagar. We have in the progress of Scripture many such scenes. The house of Abraham was such. There Hagar and Sarah for a season dwelt together, but in sad discord and strife. Again, the family of Jacob presented the same. Leah and Rachel, the two wives, dwelt together, but between them there was again the same disturbance, upbraiding and envy. Elkanah's house was the same. Peninnah and Hannah were the Leah and Rachel again — pride and provocations from the one, and constant sorrow of heart from the other. And all these scenes were the expression of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, or the law and the gospel, of which conflict the Church in Galatia was the scene, when we reach the times of the apostolic ministry. The trouble was brought in through unbelief, and could be removed only by *strengthening the freewoman.* Thus it was Sarah's unbelief that brought Hagar into the family. Had she, in the patience of faith, waited the Lord's time, and not given her maid to Abraham, she would have been spared fourteen years of sorrow from Hagar and Ishmael. It was Jacob's craft on Isaac that brought down Laban's craft on himself in giving him Leah, and thus his getting her into his house as well as Rachel. Had his faith been more simple, his faith would have been more undistracted. And nothing healed all this sorrow and quieted this disturbance, but the fruitfulness of the beloved, or the freewoman. Then Sarah gets rid of Hagar, Rachel rejoices, and Hannah sings her song of holy triumph. So Israel brought the law, or the bondwoman, on themselves by their unbelief and self-confidence (Ex. 19); and Galatia, and the flesh in each of us, is the same cause of trouble. And nothing drives it away, nothing heals the house, the Church, or the heart, but strengthening the spirit, the gospel, or the freewoman, thus giving fruitfulness to the seed of God, the spirit of adoption, the principle of liberty in us. Bring forth Isaac, and then send away Ishmael, and dwell in an undivided house, breathe the pure element of liberty, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Indeed we ought to do justice (may I so speak?) to the wondrous love of our God. It claims our *happy confidence,* our *filial confidence.* To render it merely a diffident or suspicious glance, as it were, is treating it unworthily. May the Sarah in our hearts cry out, and cry out lustily, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son."

LETTER 2.

January 11, 1840.

MY BELOVED SISTER,

I know not dear G . . . 's address exactly, and this gives me this happy occasion of writing a little word to you, as you will kindly give the enclosed to Mrs. B and she will forward it for me.

I should be glad to be paying you a visit now and then, dear sister, to tell to one another of the blessed Jesus. But the principal thing I could tell you of would be discoveries of my weakness and poor, poor faith. We find out that much of energy and grace that may appear in us passes off like chaff before the wind. O, dear sister, we are brought to learn humbling lessons at times. But I am sure some of us are too, disposed to look at the *death* in Adam, rather than the *life* in Christ; the ruin and sorrow that have come in through the first man, rather than the mighty, everlasting relief that has been introduced by the Second.

What a thought it is, that *corruption* and *glory* so closely touch each other in us! We carry within us the seeds of both. What an illustration is poor Lazarus of that: one moment the feast of dogs at the gate of a rich neighbour; the next, the holy, happy charge of angels carrying him to bright and glowing scenes on high. And this is comforting; and it should help to withdraw our eye from the seed of corruption to the seed of glory in us. Some of us are tempted to brood over the one, and scarcely to lift ourselves up to the other. But Jesus in resurrection invites our eye, and there faith turns.

Our united love awaits you. O, dear sister, I desire to know the power of a little truth, rather, far rather, than increase the stock of truths. Farewell. The Lord be with your spirit. A little letter would be pleasant to me, but I do not put it on you. Believe me, very unfeignedly,

Ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

LETTER 3.

Limerick, April 10, 1840.

The reading of your last letter, beloved sister, was indeed very sweet to my mind, and it has come into my heart to write to you again, though far in the country at present, having come to a small prophetic meeting in the county Tipperary. We have, however, been very happy together. All peace among us, and much valued truth communicated, and a strong sense of this precious doctrine — that nothing intervenes between the present moment and the catching of the saints into the air, but the *fulness* of the body of Christ. I shall not be in Dublin, please God, for another fortnight, but through the unwearied love of my heavenly Father (who, knowing my weakness, deals with me in constant tenderness), I hear comfortably of all there. However, accept our united love, dear sister, for indeed it is easy to remember you with love. I should like, indeed, to see you all again, but that desire is not to determine any movement.

Tell dear . . . . (and surely he has my love as well as my message), that the thought of building a house troubles some of his Irish brethren. Several (indeed well-instructed brothers) think it is sadly departing from the spirit of the dispensation, and that, sooner or later, Satan will get advantage of all such houses — perhaps into them, dear sister. I was always indisposed to ours in Dublin. I could, indeed, greatly desire "the upper rooms" still; but I only just tell what many felt and expressed at our meeting.

The accounts you give of the Lord's good hand are very sweet.

ROMANS 8: 19-22.

Look with me, beloved sister, at Romans 8: 19-22. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

There is a propriety in the creation waiting for the manifestation of the *sons* of God, because the "*earth* hath he given to the *children of men*." And thus creation travels her history with them. In their innocency creation was blest, in their transgression it was cursed, and so *again it is* when *they* are manifestedly glorified, *creation* will be delivered into the glorious liberty with them. The Church has the same connection with her Head. In this world, where He was rejected, she finds no place, but when He appears, they also shall appear with Him in glory. *His* ways determine those of the Church or saints. *Man's* ways or state determines creation's.

I do not judge that this "manifestation of the sons of God" will take place at the opening of the millennium, but at the close.[?] There will be something of it in the land of Judea then, but not throughout creation. The Church will be in some sense manifested in glory over Jerusalem all through the millennial age. The golden city will descend and take her millennial place in the air above the earthly city of the Great King. And, in that measure, creation will rejoice. That is, "nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain." The glory resting there, the corresponding glorious liberty of creation, will be known there. But the whole creation will not, I judge, be called into such liberty till a fuller and more universal manifestation of the sons of God takes place, in the new heavens and new earth. The liberty of creation will be commensurate with the manifestation of the sons. When the *heavens* are new, the *earth* will be new. When the morning stars shine, as it were, throughout the hemispheres, and not merely in the skies of Judea, then creation will enter into her complete rest in glory. And Judea in the millennium will thus be a sample of the new earth that is to be afterwards.

And I see a great beauty and fitness in Paul's looking out to the last and wider manifestation. The Jewish prophet, when anticipating for a moment "the new heavens and the new earth," could at once turn to Israel and say, "For, behold I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." (Isaiah 65: 17, 18.) And again: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." (Isaiah 66: 22.)

It was duly the way of the Spirit rather to *contract* the vision then and fix it on the land of the people whom He was addressing.

But Paul was not the prophet of Israel, but of *creation*, being the apostle of the Gentiles, and therefore he at once *enlarges* the vision, and passes by that subordinate and previous exhibition of "glorious liberty" which Jerusalem and the land of the Jewish prophet was to rejoice in, looking outward and onward to the manifestation of the sons of God in the eye of the whole creation.

Farewell, my dear sister; your poor body feels the pressure, but the Lord is under the load with you. There is a helper of infirmities. May His comforts refresh your soul.

LETTER 4.

January 16, 1841.

It is a small thing to say, my dear sister, that I have my little visits to you in sweet remembrance, when we used to speak together of that blessed One who had united us. Bad it is that the heart should ever be dull and cold — but oh, its stupidity, its lifelessness, its distance from the atmosphere of the Canticles, is known and felt every day; the shallowness and narrowness of the flowings of the Spirit through us are well understood in the secret of the soul within us. I am not sure that we have not been a little hasty after knowledge, and the soul in its search has not been given space to pour itself out over the word with sufficient desire. Better to break the *heart* over *one* truth than get *many* truths in the *mind.* But you, beloved sister, may not be so sensitive of this as I am. Your retirement has its privations, but it has its many holy advantages also. But, indeed, we know also the high blessedness of speaking of the precious word of God, and were it not for the contendings of wretched carnal affection, the joy of such occupation would be unmixed. But oh, the vanity, the strife, the disorder, that the flesh casts up! May the Lord be with you, my dear sister, and so plead with the pains of nature as to give you more ease. The bigger the cloud swelled over Job — though he judged it big with rain, and wind, and lightning — it was only the fuller of blessing for him at last, for the flocks that were scattered by it were replaced with larger, and the children who were slain by it were succeeded by fairer ones. And instead of being habituated to look at God as at the source of human sorrows, should we not the rather remember the griefs of Jesus over them, and in these griefs and tears see the *divine* mind, while contemplating such a scene of travail in pain as this whole creation is?

I have considered some of the scriptures, dear sister. The Lord keep us that our growth in *knowledge* may be healthful. In many souls I believe *knowledge* is doing *mischief* rather than good.

1 SAMUEL 1 - 7.

There is a beautiful line of truth through 1 Samuel 1 - 7. It was a time of the full ruin of the whole system, standing, as it then did, in man's strength, and its restoration by the sovereign grace and power of God, who takes up the barren woman, and the babe, and suckling, to be the vessels and instruments of His gracious working. In the course of all this, the people are brought to repentance, and confession, and the sign of this is, the mystic action of spilling the water on the ground, denoting the good-for-nothingness of flesh, that all it is fit for is to return to the dust out of which it came. Jesus speaks of being "poured out like water," "brought into the dust of death." (Psalm 22)

I would just take leave to aid your meditations on this lovely scripture by the following short analysis of it.

1 Samuel 1. Israel's personal inability is here presented in a mystery, and God's interference in grace.

1 Samuel 2. Israel's progress in sin, while the Lord is preparing His mercy.

1 Samuel 3. The Lord gets His instrument of mercy and salvation ready.

1 Samuel 4. Israel's ruin.

1 Samuel 5 - 6. God rises to plead His own cause, the glory of His own name against the enemy, though His people had sold it.

1 Samuel 7. The Lord's instrument, already prepared for mercy and salvation, does its work effectually, and EBENEZER is raised.

GENESIS 49, AND DEUT. 33.

It is natural to contrast these passages; but I understand a decided difference in the words of Jacob and of Moses over the twelve — the one regarded them as *children*, and the other as *tribes of the Lord;* the one was anticipating *their own* conduct and history, the other was putting them severally in that place of honour and blessing which God had settled and secured for them. Thus, in the words of Moses, you get nothing but blessing. No mention of any fault or evil of their own, but God disposing of them all according to His own purpose of grace. It is the tribes under the covenant of promise in the latter day. There may be, and are, divers glories among them, but all are blessed. No mention of any evil they had committed. All that is forgotten. Jehovah findeth none. No iniquity in Jacob — no perverseness in Israel. Their tents are all goodly, under the favour and light of the Lord! It is the blessing, as from mount Gerizim, being under God's covenant, as just before it was the curse from Ebal under their own. (Deut. 28) And on the mount, as it were, the God of Jeshurun is riding in his magnificence for their help. Happy are such a people. But Jacob anticipates their ways, ways which they have *already*, generally, ran, and ended; sin, shame, loss, apostacy, marking nearly all, more or less.

"From thence," in the prophetic word on Joseph I understand to mean this, that from the one whom the archers had shot at comes the stone and shepherd of Israel; i.e., the *glories* of Jesus result from His *sufferings*, as *typified* in the history of Joseph. Not that Christ came from Joseph as a tribe, but follows him as a type. I do not see that the stone here has connection with the pillar in Genesis 28. But the stone is a great title of Christ in Scripture — the foundation or chief corner-stone — the disallowed stone — the head of the corner that is to break the image in pieces — the living and the precious stone. And I judge as the stone in these its different aspects, it might be thus presented. First. He came to Israel as the Foundation-stone, but was rejected by them. The builders would not use Him. Secondly. Being rejected or disallowed by Israel and the earth, He has been lifted up as the Head of the corner, communicating the *life* and the *preciousness* that He has to all who will by faith own and use Him in His disallowed condition, and thus they become living stones and *precious* stones like Himself. (1 Peter 2) He communicates His *life* and *value* to them. Thirdly and finally, as Head of the corner. — He will, after He has thus communicated His life and preciousness to all the stones of His heavenly elect house, fall on the great image, the full concentration of all those worldly powers that once rejected Him, and grind them to powder. The pillars were witnesses of God, memorials of His ways, standing, abiding memorials. Thus, "the God of Bethel" is Jacob's God, the God in whom mercy rejoiced over judgment. Jacob learnt Him as such at Bethel and held Him in that character ever after — worshipped Him as such. Joshua erected the stones on the other side of Jordan the very *first* thing he did, that God's glory might be first provided for, that the inheritance of Israel might thus be taken first to God's praise, and *then to* the people's joy and blessing. As Noah when he stept out from the ark first erected his altar and offered his offerings. And the pillar in the midst of the waters, as on the shores of the promised land, may intimate that Christ will leave the memorial of His power and victory in the place of death on the enemy, as in the regions of life and glory — as the *graves were opened*, as well as the *veil rent*, when the blood was shed.

LETTER 5.

May 8, 1841.

MY BELOVED SISTER,

I have been just asking myself, how far I really see "form and comeliness" in the rejected and despised Jesus; and I am assured that while the soul is under the power of things seen, this cannot be;

because the marred visage, the thorny crown, the carpenter's son, the penniless, homeless stranger, the One spit upon, the patient sufferer of wrongs and reproaches daily heaped upon Him, is no object of "form or comeliness" before the eye of mere man. If the soul, therefore, be under the power or pressure of things seen, what is Jesus to it? It is faith alone that can admire Him. It is the eye trained and practised by the Holy Ghost that alone can see the beauty of the smitten form of the low-estated Galilean. O, dear sister, this tells loudly against the constant currents of our hearts. May we be more and more lifted above the admiration of, or delight in, the things seen, the fair shows of the flesh. Such glances of our hearts, of which they are so guilty, weaken our power to perceive this only real "form and comeliness."

So, where is the ear for the Shepherd's voice? Surely only in that which the Spirit has, in like manner, opened. And if the flesh and the world be practising it with its music and soft words, beloved sister, its readiness and skill to catch that unearthly voice will, in like manner, decline and be impaired. Another solemn thought for our souls, another humbling reflection on the too easy and constant ways of our senses, arises here.

This was in my mind just now, and so I have put it down. But I had it in my mind to write to you, to get some one in . . . . to give me a line and tell me how the dear Miss . . . . are. Give my love to them, and to all besides, accepting it yourself, dear sister, with that of all united with me here. I hope my dear brother . . . . got my last, which I wrote in answer to one he sent me, accompanying the pleasing letters from . . . . I have just returned from a happy meeting of about 100 at Parsonstown. For two days we were considering some holy and precious truth, and all were edified and comforted, I think. I find the dear brethren in the country walking in much peace and union. But we have just lost a much-loved man, who kept a large country shop at Nenagh. His end was *all* peace. He told the apothecary, "he would not give one thought of Jesus for all that was in his shop." Thus joy and sorrow mingle together in our hearts, dear sister. His dear widow has been greatly supported. Pray for her. Tell the dear . . . . that we have also lost dear . . . . I do not know whether I mentioned her death to them.

We know nothing yet as to seeing England this summer. It was expected that there might be some meeting at . . . ., but I am not so sure of that now. But may we, dear sister, have no desire to promote anything of our own, and watch against all tendencies that way. They are very subtle. The teaching of Nicodemus, and the Lord leading him back to the brazen serpent, evidently shows us that the new life is the life of a *sinner saved by the grace of God and blood of Jesus.* The word of the gospel is consequently the seed of that life. (1 Peter 1) This shows the *character* of the new birth or life, as clearly as the Lord's words show *the need* of it. And this makes it exceedingly simple; and that which is thus produced is *spirit.* Because Jesus, the Second man, is a *quickening spirit,* and this new life is life derived out of Him, or a poor dead sinner getting life from Jesus the Saviour, who gave His flesh and His blood as atonement for sin for the life of the world.

JOHN 3.

"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This is our new and glorious life-blood — a life that stands both in the Head and members in victory over all the power of death. And it is blessed to see this new life, and the seed of it, the same from the very beginning. Adam had brought in death. God revealed the woman's seed in the character of *a Redeemer.* That must be remembered. The woman's seed was not spoken of as a teacher, or as a lawgiver, or as a king, but as *a redeemer.* And in that character the faith of Adam received Him, for he called his wife "the mother of all living," thus owning that all around was death; that he himself, though the first man, appointed to be the father of the human

family, had forfeited that place and honour, and that life was now to spring and flow from other sources and through other channels altogether, that the promised seed of the woman, the promised *Redeemer*, alone held and carried it for man; and that if any lived unto God, they must live to Him *as poor sinners saved by the virtue of the bruised woman's seed.* Here was the new head of life revealed in the promise of God, and apprehended by the faith of Adam. And such is the family likeness, the blood relationship, between Adam and the last and weakest of the redeemed sinners. I need not trace the same life in Abraham. It is well understood amongst us. He owned himself as dead, but trusted God as a quickener of the dead. He lived, as a helpless, strengthless sinner, in the promise and power of God meeting his need as such. His is the pattern-faith of all the redeemed family. (See Rom. 4) Against hope all of them believe in hope, and thus give all the glory of their life to God, while they walk in the joy and certainty of it themselves.

And the word is, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There is no entrance into that kingdom for any but a poor sinner thus taking Jesus as a Saviour. For such an one only is born again, as we have seen, and only those born again get entrance there. There are no righteous ones, no wise ones, no rich ones, in that kingdom. None who so stand in any confidence in the flesh, but those who are born again, born of water and of the Spirit; born, being dead sinners themselves, by the quickening virtue of Jesus the Saviour.

This truth is thus largely established. Blessedly too for our joy and stability of heart. And the opening of the Lord's sermon on the mount tells us of *the need* of this new birth, as His discourse to Nicodemus does. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for *theirs* is the kingdom of heaven." It belongs to none else. The kingdom of heaven is the possession of the poor in spirit, but of such only. None but those "born again," none but those who are "poor in spirit," have title to it or place in it. The Lord by that word which opened His mouth as prophet of God to Israel (Matt. 5: 3), must have crossed the fond thoughts of that people. The flesh of Abraham, they judged, gave them title. Circumcision, as they boasted, was the pledge of their inheritance. But, no; the kingdom was only for dead sinners, who trusted in the value of Jesus the Saviour; for the poor in spirit, who, disowning all title in themselves, received the kingdom from the hand of a Saviour. And while this is very decisive, how happy is it to know that the poor in spirit shall possess it. The word that says, except we be born again we cannot enter it, clearly thereby tells us that if we are born again we shall enter it. If we will take (drawn, doubtless, by the secret drawing of the Father) the place of poor convicted sinners, and receive the word of salvation from the Son of God; if we but look by faith at the brazen serpent as bitten Israelites, then the kingdom is already entered; life is now had, and glory shall be had through the virtues of the uplifted Jesus.

Farewell, my dear sister. Our love to your dear mother and sisters. I hope they are well, and dear little . . . . still looking for beauty in the smitten One, of which I have spoken. The Lord be with your spirit, and refresh your hours with His divine presence.

Believe me, ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

Let me soon get a letter from some one, please.

LETTER 6.

August 1, 1842.

MY VERY DEAR SISTER,

I got your welcome little word, in company with dear Miss B . . . .'s, some weeks since, and have quite purposed to answer it, but was not quite up to do so till now, when I feel disposed to sit with you for an hour. The Lord has laid you much aside, and are we not debtors in Him to pay you a visit now and again; and has it not often been my own comfort to do so? Indeed it has, dear sister; and may the blessed One Himself ever keep us in one spirit till we be together, with all saints, in one house of many mansions for ever.

We are this day taking leave of a much-loved brother, who has for years walked among us in sweet and blameless grace, so that his absence will indeed leave a gap in the midst of us that may not be easily supplied. He purposes to go to Demerara. His health has been bad, but appears now to be much restored. These separations are not as "nature would desire," like much beside. But a gracious, skilful hand holds all things.

JACOB AT PENIEL.

I was looking a little last evening into the beautiful truths contained in the mystery of Jacob at Peniel. It is clear, I judge, that his faith had failed. Instead of remembering the promise and passing on in the quietness of faith, his soul, through unbelief, gets into great exercise. Instead of looking at God's host, he looks at Esau's host; he fears, and prays, and calculates, and settles all according to man's best device. Here was exercise when all should have been stillness. "Stand still and see the salvation of God." And often it is unbelief that raises exercise of spirit. There is such a thing as *religious* unbelief, *praying* unbelief. We have an instance of it here. Jacob was in exercise of heart, he was praying, when he should have been still as a stone, asleep in the promise; for so God gives His beloved sleep. With all this, of course, the Lord is at issue. He has a controversy with all this. Accordingly He comes out to wrestle with Jacob. But this wrestling and all that accompanies it has deep meaning for the soul. I might look at this in a few particulars. First. The first thing learnt is that which I have already noticed; that *the Lord has a quarrel with Jacob.* So hath He with us all. His truth or word addresses us in the very first instance, as those who have departed from Him, and with whom He has a very serious question to settle. In His word He withstands us to our face, He convicts us, He tells us that all is far indeed from being peace between Him and us. Secondly. But in the wondrous management of this quarrel, *the Lord allows Jacob to prevail,* and he has to sue for, and even purchase deliverance from his grasp. So with us. If the Lord pleased He could consume us. He could let out His righteous anger and destroy us. The mere touch of His hand withered Jacob's thigh, so one charge of ten thousand would undo us, and leave us in hopeless condemnation. But He did not deal according to His strength with Jacob, neither does He deal with us sinners according to His righteousness. He allows Himself to be prevailed over. It is all His grace, all His own counsel and doing, but so it is, He allows Himself to be prevailed over, *He has committed Himself to a promise which ties up His strength.* He has revealed a gospel in the blood of His dear Son which decides His way towards us in peace. He cannot deny Himself. He has put Himself in such an attitude before us, that faith must prevail and get the blessing. No victory is so sure as when *a willingly emptied and unresisting enemy is against us.* If I were to fight with a Goliath, knowing that he meant to lay aside his arrows and his strength, my victory would be surer than if I were to meet the weakest boy in the camp. For in the latter conflict, I should still have to measure strength and to think of the chances, though they might be never so much on my side; but in the former conflict, I need not count on chances at all, the victory was already and altogether sure. So here with Jacob, so in the gospel with us sinners. We have to do with One who has laid aside His strength and His weapons of war; who says, "My terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee." He has provided a way whereby He way fold up all His instruments of

death, lay aside His angry righteousness and fiery vengeance of law, which He might so justly have drawn out against us, and He has given the sinner, like Jacob, to prevail for a blessing through that promise by which He has put Himself before us in an attitude of gracious or voluntary impotency. The gospel, when He has taken up His position, hides all that would destroy us. And such is the way of this divine Stranger with Jacob here. Thirdly. We then see *the nature of the blessing.* His name is now Israel, for he has power with God, and this secures him power over man, and all beside. And so is it with the believer. He can say, all is his; he has got, through grace, the key to divine fulness — all that God is and has is for him. And he can, in the sense of this, say (as Jacob, after he became Israel, might have said of Esau), "If God be for me, who can be against me?" He is conscious of this. The sense of it is attached to him. In spirit he has power with God and with man, and has prevailed — and thus every believer is an "Israelite." Faith prevails. It hushes Sinai, it answers the accuser, it pleads Christ to the demands of the law, and thus satisfies them; it meets the Father in the Beloved, and delights Him; it shouts a triumph over death, because of Christ's resurrection; it assures itself of all glory, because of Christ's oneness with His poor people. The believer thus prevails — is thus "Israel." All are prevailed over, all give place to the power of faith. Fourthly. We see *the natural slowness in understanding* this — in apprehending God in the gospel of His grace. "Tell me thy name," says Israel to God. This is to be rebuked. "Wherefore dost thou ask after my name." "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip." But in no other way will God be known, save in the blessing of the gospel, in the revelation of His grace in Christ. As the Lord here blesses Jacob in answer to the inquiry, "What is thy name?" and as we are now to turn from other witnesses, and to learn "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." We may be *slow* like Jacob, but God is *sure.* Fifthly. After this we see the happy issue of it all. Jacob now learns that *he has been with God, and yet, a wonder to himself, his life is preserved.* His thigh may halt, but his life is preserved. And all this gives us a striking view of the issue of a poor sinner's faith in the gospel, now simple, full, and established. He knows that he has the face of God bright upon him, not to consume, but to cheer and, bless him. That glory that would have been intolerable to man or to flesh is welcome to the believer. He knows God's righteousness remains unmitigated, but he knows that he has it in Him, and thus no glory is too bright for him. He can see God and live. He can stand in His presence, and rejoice instead of tremble. He bears in his spirit, it is true, the pledge of being but a saved sinner, one whom God might righteously and easily have consumed, but one whom grace has put in a place, not of defeat, but of victory; not of death, but of life. He is a *halting conqueror.* Such was Jacob. Such is every believer. And such will he be for ever. Life and victory will be his, but he will never forget that he is debtor to grace for it all.

I dare say my dear sister will go along with me quite in these simple comments on this little place in Jacob's wondrous history. I should be glad to pay you a visit, not as thus with pen and, ink, but face to face. However, I see no present prospect, but it may be that the path of our feet may again lie toward you. You will give my love to many around you, whom I remember in all love, especially dear . . . ., from whom I used to hear occasionally; dear M . . . . and C. B . . . .

The Lord be with your spirit, dear sister, His hand under your head, and then will the other one be embracing you, His strength and gentleness being both yours.

Believe me ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

Accept the united love of all here for yourself, dear mother and sister, and our young friend. Some weeks since I had a welcome letter from dear Miss . . . .

LETTER 7.

THE CASE OF JOB.

September 17, 1842.

It has come into my heart to send you a little scribble on Job. May the meditation refresh your soul. May the Lord keep our souls, by the Holy Ghost, simply and preciously in the power of the truth, in this busy, intellectual day. The case of Job is quite one of every day observation, the principle of it we all understand. He was a man, I judge, who had a true evangelical knowledge of God, but his faith was weak in meeting the discipline of his heavenly Father.

Severe losses and crosses came upon him, and who of us will say, that he would have stood so hard and sudden a shook? In mind, body, and estate, he was tried at the same moment. Bereavement of health, family, and comforts, he knew all together, and the desertion and scorn of the world instead of its honour and flattery. What could much aggravate this? And who of us would have stood it, even as he did, for the seven days? But at length the weakness of faith and the impatience of nature sadly betrayed themselves. But it needed much wisdom and grace to meet a believer in such a state. "One of a thousand" it needed. But he was visited by three of a very poor and ill-instructed class. They evince themselves to be of the Lord's people, for they come and mourn with this His servant, when all the world beside was refusing him. But their standing in the light of the mind of God was low indeed, and therefore all that they could apply to the case of Job only made bad worse. But in what do they betray this ill-instructed state of their souls? Here again, I judge, we have something of every-day recurrence, for the mistakes of these three are as common as is the impatience or weakness of Job. They counted much on religion in a *worldly* way. They reasoned, as though it were true, that honesty is the best policy, that righteousness gets its sure advantages in this world, and, therefore, that all the present sorrow and trouble of their friend was the proof of some secret unconfessed iniquity.

They drew also from *themselves,* deeming that they were men of experience and of observation, and had been much favoured with divine light. And they seem to make their own attainments, as they deem them to be, the great standard; so that poor Job's reputation had no chance at all in their hands, nor had his answers or words any countenance at all, if they would not stand the test of their experiences, or abide the measure of their rules of judging. They were familiar also with the *traditions of the elders,* treating them with the same respect that they did their own experiences and observation. These they cite against Job as determining the case, deeming it folly to suppose that the claims of antiquity could yield to anything he could possibly say. In these ways their minds were much corrupted. Principles like these had been their masters. There was a great religious reverence for God without, that is quite clear. Job himself could not speak abstractedly of God in more self-renouncing style than they, or with deeper expressions of religious fear. But the springs within were all polluted by the principles I have noticed. There was a *worldly* leaven, and a leaven of *spiritual pride,* and a leaven of *traditionary knowledge,* defiling all the exercises of their souls, and debasing all that issued from them. What could a poor believer, tried to the uttermost by the strong hand of his heavenly Father, and sinking through weakness under the pressure, do in the conflict and collision of such minds as these? "Miserable comforters are ye all," were gentle words, words that we might expect to hear from Job, till his soul had been taught and strengthened by the Spirit of God.

There is, however, one feature in this tremendous conflict which I would more particularly notice.

According to their view of the worldly advantages of true religion, or that honesty is the best policy, Bildad, in chapter 18, insists, that as "the light of the wicked is put out," Job must not suppose that in his case any exception will be allowed. He is not to judge that for his sake "the Rock shall be

removed out of his place;" in other words, that the general divine plan will be abandoned through any special favour or respect to him. All this plainly telling Job, that as he was now so great a sufferer, he must be a hypocrite, for it is only the light of the *wicked* that is thus put out.

Now, however weak Job's faith may have been, the whole book and history show us that he had a good conscience. And these things are, morally, very different. We are not extenuating his faults. His fainting under the rebuke of God was very sad; his anger and murmuring were grievous. But still the testimony of his conscience was with him, and not against him. It was not true that he was a hypocrite. It was not true, as these worldly minded men of religion would have it, that he was hiding some sin. A good conscience he had not put away. And it was their great mistake, and it is any one's great mistake, to assume that there can be no affliction to a saint but of a penal or judicial character.

And such a thought is, I believe, offensive to the mind of God, quite contrary to His revealed way. "Whom the Lord *loveth* he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he *receiveth*." This is His common way, and this was His way with Job, that He might make him partaker of His holiness. It was not because He loved Job the less, or found in Job an unsound conscience, that the Chaldeans and Sabeans, the wind and the fire, were allowed their way against him.

The moment there was cause for the Lord (may I say) to vindicate His own principles, and also His servant (Job not having put away a good conscience, had not of faith made shipwreck), the Spirit enables him here, and the Lord entitles him, to make a full and glorious confession of faith (Job 19), a confession which embraces the person, office, and work of Christ, and his full assurance of his own personal interest in all *that*, as a believer or one of God's elect. And in the certainty of all this, he warns his accusers to take care, for that it was a serious thing to meddle thus, as they were now doing, with one of the flock of God.

The Spirit seems to give a deep tone to this confession. A man with a bad conscience may still, in the effrontery of wretched nature, be bold to confess a sound creed. But there will be nothing of the Spirit's unction or light in all that. It will not commend itself as the ready utterance of a soul that has, and knows it has, its warrant in God under the seal of the Spirit. But this confession from Job breaks forth in that character. It comes to us with a seal upon it. It comes from a heart that was full of the truth through the Spirit. And thus it is a witness to us, that if the "good conscience" be not "put away," "faith" need not be "shipwrecked." (1 Tim. 1) For this is a divine principle; and, moreover, it answers Bildad to his face, that there is another way of accounting for the afflictions of the righteous than by assuming that they are hiding some way of iniquity. And, thus, the principles of God, the principles of His words, as well as the person of His poor, weak but upright servant, are blessedly vindicated before the adversary and accuser.

And I cannot but add another thing that shows itself in the progress of this wondrous and valuable book. Elihu, for a long time silent, at length speaks. And in this we observe the modesty and yet holy confidence of one who has consciously the Spirit in him and with him. He waits till "years" had spoken, fully allowing that "years" should know wisdom and speak of understanding. But he finds it far otherwise. Their answers to Job, making only bad worse, had proved this. Then Elihu speaks, not as they had done, from himself, as from his experiences or observations of his own, neither from the dictates of the ancients, or in simple subjection to any authority, however venerable, of man, but from the Holy Ghost. His silence had owned what was due to "years," or to the elders, or the ancients. He did not in pride, or in an insubordinate, revolutionary spirit, refuse the claims which naturally they might put in. But he would not sacrifice the truth or the rights of the Spirit to any one, and if the elders spoke not according to truth, they were not to be regarded. If the carnal intellect, however consecrated by

years, or church place and authority, finds not out the path of understanding, Elihu will not give flattering titles or bow before it.

All this reads our souls a deep and blessed lesson. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." A *false* humility is not to lead us to bow to *carnal authority,* however venerable in the esteem of the world. A *true* humility will hinder our drawing from *ourselves.* These three practised the first but not the second, for they were blindly led by tradition or Church-authority, and also were wise in their own conceits: they drew both from *the ancients* and from *their own experiences.* But Elihu was led of the Spirit, apart from both, and the Spirit ever uses the word of truth and ever teaches us accordingly, forcing its holy path onward after God, through every resistance from the false lights both of men and of our own hearts. Job, however, was to be rebuked. He was suffering, but he traced this suffering up to the mere good pleasure or sovereign will of God. He did not justify God in these sufferings. For God does not *willingly* afflict. He has *a purpose* in all that He does or allows to be done. Job, therefore, was to be rebuked. And Elihu does rebuke him. He stands for God and God's goodness against all that Job had said; and though Job insisted that, as touching this life, it was vain to serve God, for all were equally subject to sorrow, and God made no difference; yet did Elihu insist that there was profit in waiting on the Lord. And the voice from the whirlwind confirms all this judgment of Elihu, and Job is humbled and restored.

I do indeed read these characters in this book with much interest, and it is for our profit to note them. For such things have their claim still. The authority of antiquity, the worldliness of religious profession, or that godliness is gain, and the force of one's own spiritual light and experience, are found themes with men still, and harass much the hearts of wayfaring children of God. These are the flesh and fleshly pretensions, though in different forms. But "let God be true, and every man a liar," our souls should still say, as Elihu in principle said. Nothing should stand with us if the truth be touched. We are debtors to the Spirit in us to assert His rights, though naturally we may be ready to take the lowest place, and let "years" speak, as Elihu did.

And there is still another thing I would notice. Job was more simply and genuinely evangelical than his friends were. The truth of the gospel in his soul was not corrupted, as it was in theirs, though he was impatient under the rebuke of God, and uttered the fruit of that impatience against Him. But he held the faith and a good conscience. And these differences are dealt with at the end. His friends are owned of God then. That is true and happy. But they have to submit to God, and to own the great principle of the gospel which they had been corrupting — that is, to bring their victims in sacrifice as poor guilty ones, and thus to confess that all their hope was in the simple value of that Redeemer and His blood to which Job had made confession. Job, on the other hand, for his faith was sound, had not to repent in that particular. He was to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, and to love his brethren, to "pray for his friends." But he was not called on to learn the gospel itself more perfectly, as his friends were. They had not spoken of God the thing that was right, as he had, *therefore* they were commanded to go to the brazen altar, and there learn the doctrine of the blood. He had only to bow his head to the rod. And all this was the healing of their souls. Jot and his friends were all restored, though differently, according to the different errors, which the course of the history had disclosed, as we have seen.

LETTER 8.

12, Herbert Place, Dublin, October 4, 1842.

I have received both your kind and welcome letters, my dear sister, grieved to hear that dear Charlotte had been so seriously ill. The Lord bless her abundantly. He has laid her aside; but He has

deeply introduced her to the heart of His people. And your dear mother so ill also.

I have a good deal in MS. on the Canticles, and just enclose some meditations which were lying here, copied out by some one; they appear generally correct, but I have not read them over. I do not see any moral value in determining whether the rock or the water out of the rock only followed through the desert. I would not much entertain the enquiry. I believe that Galatians 3: 27 more fixed my judgment as to baptism than any Scripture, for it told me that baptism was the intelligent act of a believer, the personal act of one's own faith, so to express it. I do not see in 1 Peter 3: 21 anything to give the mind a pause. For while it owns that the answer which the conscience is enabled to give, when it reads and receives the value of the resurrection of Jesus, is the great thing, still it implies the putting of a believer's body under water. It seems to me to take that as the granted form of the ordinance.

We have been here all the summer, but in wonted tender mercy we have generally been very well.

I heard of beloved Mr. S . . . . having been at Hereford. Ah, dear sister, how conscious the soul is of its own leanness. "My leanness, my leanness," how unfeignedly may the heart utter, and the richer, simpler grace of others oft brings this to view.

Farewell, my dear sister, believe me, ever yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

J. G. B.

LETTER 9.

February 11, 1843.

MY VERY DEAR SISTER,

Your most kind and welcome letter has remained some weeks unanswered. But since I got it, we have all moved over to Clifton, 5, Richmond Terrace. Several circumstances have led to this, and we are here, please God, for a month, but I have no present prospect of going farther into England. It was not a sister but a cousin we lost some weeks ago. She was united with the Brethren, and died in sweet assured peace. I have indeed, dear sister, been happy in the knowledge of our dear and honoured brother. His simple zeal and confidence in Jesus, humbles me much, and the services he has been doing in the blessed Master's cause. But the recollection that "the small and great stand before God," comes to relieve the heart pressed by the sense of our comparative barrenness. I trust all the dear brethren in Exeter are happy together and individually walking in communion with the Lord. My love to them.

I remember my happy little visits to you, beloved sister, and am thankful that the Lord has put it into our hearts thus at times to say a word to each other on paper. I was sitting with dear . . . . yesterday. Her sister's decline is very gradual. This post has brought me a long letter from dear . . . . at Demerara. But I have not yet read it, beyond the just seeing that he appears, in the Lord's mercy, to be in health.

It was striking me much last evening, how the discovery of the Book of the Law in the days of Josiah has a distinct voice in it, in the way in which his heart was moved by it. He had been serving the Lord according to his light previously, but when he had the book read to him, he began to serve Him in a new spirit and with increased intelligence. (Something in this like Cornelius. See Acts 10) He rent his own garment then. He took the place of a sinner, in a spirit that he had not done before, and then he also makes *the word*, and not his own *religious thoughts*, the rule of his doings. So will it be with the faithful Israel in the latter day, I believe. Josiah's heart became much exercised, when he heard the book of God, and so will theirs when they return to that from the vanities and traditions which have now so long occupied and deceived the nation. There may be previously, as in him, a following of the

light as far as they know it, but when they recover *the word*, when the oracles of God become their care and meditation, their souls will get onward as his does. Psalm 119 will be their experience and utterance just at that time.

But the judgment against the nation is not to be changed by all this. Josiah, as the faithful one, will be spared, but the decreed judgment goes on. So in the latter day. The nation will be judged; the convicted, believing, obedient remnant will be spared.

Farewell, my dear sister. Ready and thankful shall I be to get another little word from you, whenever disposed to write. The Lord be with your spirit; and with united love from all,

Believe me, ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

LETTER 10. 5, Richmond Terrace, Clifton, Bristol.

March 9, 1843.

Another little word came from you, my very dear sister, with a full welcome. I should be glad to be among the dear brethren in Exeter and its neighbourhood again for a season, and to pay you now and then a little visit, as I was wont to do, for my own comfort; and it may be so ere I return, please God, to Dublin. But I do not as yet see the way before me, and I have engagements here that, I suppose, will keep me next week. I will send your little letter to . . . . who will be glad to read it, as I have been.

I enclose a little scribble, but expressing a thought that was refreshing my mind a day or two since. I have had this impression from the Epistle of Jude, that the Holy Ghost is summarily and rapidly glancing at the corruption that was to manifest itself in the progress of the history of the dispensation under the forms of "the way of Cain," "the error of Balaam," "the gainsaying of Core." The first being false religion, or the leaven of self-righteousness, coupled with hatred of the poor self-renouncing remnant, who trust, like Abel, only in the blood of Jesus, and walk in real godliness. The second being a sounder form of religion, real prophetic truth or correctness as to the mind of God, but coupled with worldliness, and a subjection to the powers of the kingdom for reward. The third being a more hold and infidel scorning of all that is divinely sacred, and a setting of oneself up in the place of God's dignities. And there is *order* in these forms of corruption: for the first rather gave character to the earlier times, and the dispensation will close, doubtless, when the pattern of Core be fully copied.

Accept united love, dear, dear sister, for dear mother and sister also. The Lord be with your spirit for rich comfort. I hope to spend part of tomorrow and Saturday in Bath, and to be at Trowbridge for Sunday. My love to dear . . . . and all the brethren. I do not ask you to write to me save as your desire and your strength may lead you.

Believe me, ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

LETTER 11.

June 18, 1843.

MY BELOVED SISTER,

A . . . . O . . . . tells me of your being near him, so that it enters my heart to give you a few lines by way of remembrance; and surely the remembrance is pleasant. Oh! that our bond one to the other, and the bond of all saints together, may be, more than it is, in *the bowels of Christ Jesus.* There is far

too little of this. "What think ye of Christ, is the test to try both your state and your scheme." Thus sang one of the children of Zion in his lovely simple songs some 40 years ago, and I pray that the echo of that music may soften and form our hearts together. We have got into the high regions of *thoughts,* and the warmer, calmer air of *affection* is like to be deserted or contemned as something over which we have soared in our prouder search after loftier objects. The more is the pity, dear sister. Israel was warned to remember *their beginnings* even *to the end: "*That thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life." And so surely are we. (Heb. 3: 6-14.)

I suppose you got my last letter from Clifton. Give my love to dear Mrs. . . . ., and ask her if she got mine also, enclosing a sweet extract from a brother's letter. My dear Mary is but ill today. Indeed, her feebleness is much greater than when you saw her: but faith simple and sure, blessed be His name. Accept all our love. The good Lord keep and bless you, and believe me,

J. G. B.

I do not know whether mother and sister be with you.

Christian love to them and to dear . . . ., when you see her.

LETTER 12.

October 14, 1843.

MY BELOVED SISTER,

Dear Mrs. . . . has told me that you have been again more poorly than usual, and as the remembrance of you is always pleasant to me, so do I desire to give you this little token of it now, and to express our united hope in the Lord that He will abundantly be with you in the sensible joy of His favour, which is better than life.

I hope dear mother and sisters are well, and we would all be remembered in Christian love to them. My dear Mary still retains, we think, something of the benefit she got from her being in England a little, but the poor limbs are still very, very feeble. She rests, however, dear sister, in the constant calm of faith, knowing that all shall be well, and His mercies are sure and abundant every morning. Dear Mrs. . . ., many a happy little visit I paid to her last spring, and knew some of the exercises of her heart. And little, to be sure, did we then count on the path the hand of her heavenly Father was purposing for her. But, it is well.

My love to dear . . . . and others near you, beloved. I wrote to dear . . . . about a fortnight since. We have all need to cultivate the deeper sense of the Lord's presence, and also the joy that springs from the blessed, simple fact of redemption, and the divine love and glory displayed in it. You ask me if I still hold the hope of the Lord's coming as that which is most immediate to us. Yes, dear sister. I have not yet learnt that He has put anything as *necessarily* delaying our going to meet Him. Much *may* happen, I am sure. But He had made, I believe, nothing *necessary*. I would rather have the letting thing of 2 Thess. 2 undetermined. Perhaps we have all been somewhat wrong in suggesting what it is, for the Spirit seems to leave it as a secret. But that rather confirms the thought that the Spirit has not revealed anything as *necessarily* delaying our being caught up. We may have to meet the stake or the lion's den. I do not deny that. And in the principle of our calling we are to court a martyrdom. But necessity in that shape is not laid on us. And I still judge that we are with the Lord before the prophetic action of the Apocalypse begins. May we, however, dear sister, be patient with one another, and let our union be more and more in the bowels of Christ Jesus, and that, too, with *all* saints, and not in favourite points of truth. Dear Mr. . . . . left us on Thursday. He has been among all the brethren in the country, I may say.

Farewell, my dear sister. I enclose a little meditation for some quiet hour. The Lord be with your spirit, and believe me,

Your ever affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

LETTER 13.

December 4, 1843.

MY DEAR SISTER,

It is always grateful to me to have a little communication with dear Charlotte; and tell her, with my Mary's love and mine, how truly we hope she may soon be able to use her pencil again. The good hand of the Lord has dealt peculiarly with her. But His grace and Spirit have dealt blessedly. May you all be kept, in His mercy, unto His kingdom, which grows nearer day by day.

Your mention of the early chapters of Genesis led me to sit down and put my view of them on paper, which I now send you in its rough form. There was much grace and full brotherly love at the meeting of Liverpool. This rather marked it than power; though dear Mr. . . . .'s preaching was truly edifying and comforting. But it is not, dear sister, our stock of knowledge which we need to have increased, but that stock to become more active and lively in our souls, to stir itself there, and make itself a quickening mass, giving character to our minds more and more. Our christian love to your dear mother, and to the dear . . . . I was very glad again to see him, as I did at Liverpool. To dear Miss K . . . give my true christian love also. A little communication with her is also so pleasant. I hope dear . . . . still continues well.

I am sure it is desirable for the soul to enquire after heaven from the Scriptures, to be musing on the notions which they give us of what it is — to cherish them in our hearts, and turn them over in our thoughts. How far, my dear sister, does the imagination hinder or help this? But we want every help to make our religion a religion of delight and of affection, so as to counteract the strong currents of natural delights and desires.

Dear Mrs . . . . . was very welcome in the midst of us, and many have lamented her departure.

The Lord be with your spirit, and believe me,

Ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

Had I even Simeon's righteousness, piety, revelations, and every gift he possessed, I would, with him, (Luke 2: 25-32,) willingly forget and forsake them, living or dying, in order to exchange them for the child Jesus — Israel's only consolation. It is matter of astonishment, adoration, and delight to see how the Lord can induce us to let everything go — every thing appears so frivolous, unsatisfying, trifling, and superficial — even good and spiritual things which formerly gave much gratification, and of which we were so tenacious, but which for that very reason served only to interpose between us and God, and were injurious because they were held so fast. Jesus alone is sufficient, but yet insufficient, when He is not wholly and solely embraced.

O what a treasure it is to set aside all spiritual light and the gifts of grace in order solely to know that God is what He is! It is indeed eternal life to know Him. The desire of men to know much, even in spiritual things, is a powerful proof that they know not God in reality.

LETTER 14.

April 8, 1844.

It has given me much unfeigned pleasure, my beloved sister, to hear now and again through dear . . . . of the sustaining hand of our heavenly Father towards you and dear Harriet. Indeed I may well assure myself that this day of visitation to you is far from what nature would desire; that it touches your heart in some of its most tender affections. But I think I can say for myself that I am increasingly rejoicing in the dear elect ones of God during their journey here; for the darkness is so thick around, the abominations will so multiply, and the distracted state of those who are to be together for ever with the Lord is so apparently without remedy here, that it becomes, beloved, increasingly easy to consent to part with our dear ones in this way. We have lately taken leave of three or four sisters, sweetly finishing their course in the blessed peace of God. And it is not too much to say, that in spirit we may have happier communion with them that are gone than those that remain, for faith sees them, delivered from all that clouded or hindered here, resting and waiting with Jesus for the day of the glory. "Lord Jesus, receive *my spirit*." How precious those words of the servant following his Lord who had before said, "Father, into thy hands I commend *my spirit*." And a countless multitude are already gathered who have found it far better to have departed to be with Him. Dear Harriet, she is strengthening her brethren by witnessing the good hand of her heavenly Father upon her in the hour of nature's weakness. You know what dear Mrs. Graham said to her daughter, just as the dear child's spirit was leaving its tabernacle: "I wish you joy, my darling." How blessed an utterance that was. Give my christian love to your dear mother — may she be abundantly comforted — and love to dear Harriet herself from my Mary and me. The Lord be praised because of His grace towards her; and believe me, beloved sister,

Ever yours affectionately,

J. G. B.

How pleasant to me is the remembrance of my little visits to your sofa five years ago. Dear Sir Christopher was about that time finishing his course.

"Part of the host have crossed the flood,

And part are crossing now."

LETTER 15.

October 19, 1844.

The Lord bless you, my dear, dear sister, and if called on to take the journey somewhat more solitarily than your heart had been wont to count upon, and to know sorrows which had not come within the range of your forebodings, may His hand be with you and its well known staff. "God is His own interpreter." There is no providence by which He deals with us, that He will not interpret by and by, nor is there any promise by which He sustains and comforts, that He will not abundantly make good. There is nothing excessive in the divine descriptions. The spirit of revelation is surely under and not over the mark, though the promises are "exceeding great and precious," and the reality will rather be according to the confession of the Queen of Sheba, "the half was not told me, it was a true report which I heard in my own land." How beautifully does Luke 1 rise upon the heart, in connection with this. It has just struck me very peculiarly. I read it like a new scene of light and joy breaking in after a gloomy and wasted interval and exceeding all that had been in the earlier days or that had been promised by the prophets. There had been most surely a return from Babylon in the times of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and they were good times; the zeal of the servants of God, the

restoration of the house and the city, the revival feasts, and the order and services of the people, made them so. But such times had been clouded. The day was overcast, yea, while it was yet but morning, a change had come, and Malachi gives us an evil account of his time, in which condition, with a bright promise to the remnant, Israel goes on till the times of the New Testament, a dreary and evil interval indeed, without one single ray as from the light of the Lord or the spirit of revelation to animate or cheer it. But though it tarry, wait for it, it will surely come, and come with a bright witness. For such is this exquisite chapter. The morning breaks. The heavens are opened as it were, and the dreary wastes of Israel are revisited. And as in the twinkling of an eye all this takes place. No special harbingers, no marvellous notices, of the coming change; but the priest is at the accustomed altar, and the people in their places according to the manner, and in the ordinary current of everyday life; the women of the land were preparing for espousals (verse 27) when suddenly the heavens open, and visitations are made alike to the temple and the cottage, to the priest and the poor unknown virgin of Nazareth.

The suddenness and the brilliancy of all this is very blessed. And how it tells us, beloved sister, that the distance of heaven from earth is nothing, when the due season comes for bringing them into communion. The ladder is a short one that will reach from heaven to earth by and by. And in this chapter we get a sight of it for a moment, or a sample of some of its happy services. Here the angels of God are ascending and descending. Gabriel enters, without wrong, into the place of the priests, and stands even at the right side of the altar. He does not take the high style of the Angel-Jehovah, and ascend in its flame; nor does he, like Jesus-Jehovah, speak of himself as greater than that temple, but being a heavenly one he enters without *trespass* upon the place of the priest. But so does he enter without *reluctance* into the place of the poor unknown Nazarene. The earth may not be so prepared to receive such visitations, as heaven is to make them, but Gabriel has for both Zechariah and Mary the same healing and gladdening word "fear not." And joy, the most satisfying joy, diffuses itself everywhere, old men and maidens, young men and children, join in the millennial dance; Mary, and Elizabeth, and the child in the womb, and Zachariah, in their several ways attest their joy, and in principle all creation is lighted up in gladness. Here is more than earlier days had known, or voices of prophets foretold. Ezra and Nehemiah had never had such days of heaven upon earth as these, nor had Malachi told the remnant of such tastes of soul-satisfying joy as Elizabeth had when she saluted Mary, and as Mary had when she uttered her song of praise. He had indeed said that they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and thought on His name together, but now in the hearts and on the lips of such a remnant the gladdening light of the Spirit is shed, and the triumphant strains of the Spirit are poured forth. And the suddenness, dear sister, as well as the brilliancy of all this! Who was calculating on a bit of all this the day before? And then the ease with which heaven visits the earth when the due time comes. No *reserve* in coming side by side with the highest; no *reluctance* in coming side by side with the poorest and meanest. The ladder stretches its ample foot across the length and breadth of the land, and down to every point of it "abundant entrance" is administered to the angels in the heavens above. All these features of this communion attract me, dear sister. Would that the soul could wait more in the joy and patience of faith for the great original of all this, for that millennial day, when the ladder shall thus be raised, and the heavens after this pattern shall open on the earth again, when the passage downward shall be thus in full ease and brilliancy again, and if the receivers of the joy that is brought be made so happy by it, what shall be the happiness of them who bear it to them, and who in their measure shall experience the divine prerogative, and know that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." May your heart greatly rejoice, dear sister. He will interpret the doings of His hand, and will outdo the sayings and promises of His prophets. May He graciously hold you up while you are passing the dreary interval. I have not heard from dear sister . . . . for some time. Tell her so, with my love in the Lord, and give the same to dear Mr. N. and his house, the . . . . and others.

Our sisters are again at Clifton, and we were obliged to bring our Johnny to the country this summer, and the change has been of more service than all medicines. I have seen dear Mrs. . . . . occasionally, but she speaks now of very soon leaving Ireland. With Mr . . . . . I continue to have full and unreserved communion; and how painful to think that this should not be the general rule, but the exception. But so it is. Partition walls are thrown up, as well as veils cast over, by the god of this world, where the blood of Jesus and the Spirit of grace would throw down and rend. Accept my dear Mary's love, and ours unitedly also for dear mother if with you. Farewell, my dear sister, the Lord greatly bless and sustain and refresh your spirit. I do not ask you to write, but I doubt not dear sister . . . . will let me hear about you and herself and others. May the assurance of His love fill your heart. No one thought more blessed than that. It is so precious that the Holy Ghost makes it of His special service to impart that assurance to the heart. (Rom. 5) May you abound in hope also longing as for the morning.

He has gathered many and will go on.

"Part of the host have crossed the flood

And part are crossing now."

And believe me, in unfeigned love,

Your brother in Jesus,

J. G. B.

LETTER 16.

May 10, 1845.

I have been waiting from day to day, my loved sister, in hopes of sending you a little book entitled "Heaven and earth," which the brethren in London have printed, as it might remind you of a letter which about twelve months ago passed between us on some of the chapters in Genesis. But as yet we have received no copies of it in Dublin, so that I am determined not to wait any longer. We had a copy of L. S.'s narrative sent to us, and a happy, affecting account it was indeed of the servant's confidence in his Lord, and the Lord's ready and sure care of His servant. In a more lively manner it reminded us of Paul in the Mediterranean than anything I ever read.

How sure I am of the sense of the loss of your dear Harriet. The Lord make it up to you in Himself, for that alone can. A dear sister, lately dying, said, that at times she found such joy in the thought of Christ, that she was compelled to leave off thinking of Him. And then when another said to her, "and what, dear Ann, do you then think of?" "Nothing," she said. I thought that answer was very blessed, and evidenced the reality of the previous precious experience. Your dear doctor, when last you wrote to me, had also fallen asleep. Lord C . . . . wrote to me about it, that the scene was most edifying, and by faith he was able to treat death as nobody. You do not mention dear . . . ., and I should be glad to hear of her, if not from her, for her remembrance is very pleasant to me. When I was in England it would have been unfeigned joy to me to have gone on to Exeter, and seen you and others; but I did not know that it was my path to be among the brethren in Devonshire. The Lord direct our hearts into the deeper affections of the Spirit, that we may be ashamed to think of union save in His truth and bowels, and afraid to pursue any enquiry or seek any knowledge apart from the power of communion with Himself. I saw Mrs. . . . . this day, and told her that I was going to write to you. Till your letter came I did not know who it was that knocked at our door to ask for her address. Her dear uncle is well, and still kind as ever, and she expects her mother here in the summer. Give our united love to your dear mother and dear . . . . How I remember my visits to you in 1839. Love in the Lord also to dear . . . . and

others. I make you a present of the enclosed little MS., but I hold you my debtor in a letter, when desire and power to write be present with you. The Lord be with thy spirit, my loved sister,

And believe me, etc.,

J. G. B.

The lines in Psalm 42: 5 are very tender, and sweet, and soothing.

LETTER 17.

June 5, 1845.

I cordially welcomed again a little *pencil* letter some two or three months since, my dear, dear sister — for the remembrance of our little seasons together, the assurance and experience of our union and fellowship in the Lord, and the sense of the peculiar dealing of His hand with you, all help to bring the heart and the living recurrences of the mind to you. And I was glad also to hear of others around you, and with full unfeignedness you will give my love to them, and dear . . . . whom I so well remember as my companion from Exeter to Countess Weir. I did not see your brother Henry, and I suppose long ere this he has left Dublin. Mrs. . . . . is now with her dear mother in London, I suppose to remain also for some further time. Our weather has become intensely hot, and I rather think a good deal of sickness is abroad. I wonder, does it suit you, dear sister? But, surely, as you say, under all the Father's discipline, the Lord Jesus sits by your side. As a dear soul said to me at Bath, "He does not send the rod, Sir, but brings it."

DEUTERONOMY 8: 7-9; DEUTERONOMY 11: 10-12.

I was musing a little on the beautiful description given to Israel of the land (before they entered it) by Moses, in Deuteronomy 8: 7-9; 11: 10-12. He exhibits it to them in its *positive* and *comparative* excellencies — as it was in itself, and in contrast with Egypt. In itself it was to be full of all manner of good things — *wheat, wine,* and *oil*; (Deut. 8: 8;) of which good things another scripture says, "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man — and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." (Psalm 104: 15.) And not only was the soil or land itself to be thus the *storehouse* of these most needed and best things, but their hills and their stones were to be *warehouses* of brass and iron, wanted in the common traffic and use of life in their place as well as the other. (Deut. 8: 9.) But in contrast with Egypt, dear sister, the character of the promised land is very blessedly described. Egypt was watered by the foot, i.e., by the common industry of her people drawing off the water of the Nile upon their fields and gardens. (Deut. 11: 10.) Their river was everything to them — and all they wanted was to be busy round its banks, and they could supply themselves out of it. But Canaan was to be tilled by the Lord. He would water it from heaven Himself — His heart would care for it, and His eyes would rest on it from one end of the year to the other. (Deut. 11: 11, 12.) As another scripture says, "Thy land shall be married." (Isaiah 62.) A strong figure. The Lord was Himself the *husband or* the *husbandman* (kindred words, no doubt,) of the land of His people. But, beside, Canaan was to be a land "of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills." (Deut. 8: 7.) And this is still blessed, I believe, containing deep intimations of the peculiar glory and joy of Canaan. Egypt had a mighty river that was everything to it, but the source of that river was unknown. Canaan, on the contrary, had no mighty river. A "brook," as it were, was its largest stream — even Jordan compared with the Nile was but as a streamlet to a river. But it had "fountains" springing up in all its hills and valleys. Its currents and channels may have been small, but it was full of the sources and springs of those currents. This was just the opposite of Egypt. There the current was mighty, but the source

unknown; here, the channels were small and unimportant, but the sources were all known and enjoyed, together with their waters and streams. And, as we know, beloved, that these two lands were mysteries: the land of Egypt representing the world, or the place of nature, out of which the redeemed are called, and Canaan, the scene of communion with God into which the redeemed are brought — so we may learn that these features of the two lands have meaning also. For the world can go on, supplying itself from the great current of daily providential mercies, and leave the source or parent of it altogether a secret; while the believer or the Church has to do with the great Source or Parent in all things and in every place; a fountain is to be known in every hill and every valley, and if the little tiny brooks be tasted, it is well known where they rise and from what recess in glen or mountain they broke forth. Has not this a voice in it? The Nile itself commanded the notice of the world, while its birthplace was a mystery. No river in Canaan was worth the geographer's notice, at least in the scale of rivers — but every hill and valley there had its fresh and sweet springs. And we may ask ourselves, In which land are we more at home? Do we like to walk in a place that is full of the presence of God, like Canaan; or would we choose a place like Egypt, where we may get all providential supplies, while keeping the great Source of them at an unknown distance?

The character of heaven too, dear sister, is signified by this Canaan. It will be a *rest* surely so, it will be deliverance from a dreary wasted wilderness, but it is to be a rest *full of the presence of God,* and of the incessant and abiding witnesses of that presence. *The fountain is to be everywhere.* (Rev. 7: 17.) May we the more welcome it, because of this! and the more we can dwell in the presence of the fountain now, dear sister, may we be the better pleased. If we go up to a hill or down to a valley, may the fountain meet our gladdened eye! Perhaps I will not speak now with you on Matthew 20, though in its place and at its season it is indeed an important and interesting lesson for our souls. I *know* the little hymn you sent me, but never till I saw it *in print.* This will tell you that it is not mine. I am not sure that you ever knew dear Mrs. M . . . . She was for some time at Plymouth, but lived rather at Worcester. She came here three weeks ago, and, after spending a week with us, went on to Kilkenny, where her dear son, James (who is also in communion), is employed on the Waterford Railway; but after a few days' illness in fever, her spirit has departed to be with Christ. Sudden and unexpected, dear, dear sister, but happy that another has ended the journey in the peace of the precious gospel.

"There glory sits on every face,

And friendship smiles in every eye;

And every tongue relates the grace

That led them homeward to the sky.

O'er all the names of Christ, the King,

There sweet harmonious voices rove

And golden harps from every string

Record aloud his bleeding love." — WATTS.

It is well to have the mind bearing itself to some distinct thoughts of the heavenly court.

The Lord bless you. Accept for yourself and dear mother our united love. May His Spirit and presence cheer your heart, and believe me, ever your affectionate brother.

LETTER 18.

July 25, 1845.

I had been looking for a little word from you, beloved sister, and your letter was very welcome to me. But do not think yourself *debtor* to me, for I know that you cannot sit easily at the paper with pen and ink as I do. But the Lord is with you, beloved, manifesting Himself, as is the common way of His glory in the weakness and trial of His dear elect ones. I send you a little word on 1 Corinthians 11 and as to the breaking of bread, would only say that I feel a hesitation to break bread save on the first day of the week and in the place of the assembled saints. I may be inapprehensive of the simple and free mind of the Lord in this, as I know that generally brothers find their liberty much beyond this. But I do not and I have a great dread of soiling the simplicity of faith, and introducing to the heart or even to the eye anything to interfere with the precious sufficiency of Christ, or to divide the confidence of the heart between *faith* and any *ordinance.* I always am tempted to fear, if I hear of people taking the Lord's Supper in sick rooms, that there is want of simplicity in the soul's assurance, though I know that this is not the case in many such cases. But my judgment may be below the measure of the light and liberty of the Spirit in this. Our united love to yourself and to your dear mother. She has known her sorrows, but the thought that "Whom He loves He chastens," and that all shall work good when looked at in the light of eternity, are blessed provisions for the soul's comfort. My love also to dear Mr. S . . . . and to Dr. T . . . . , tell him I once breakfasted with him, and was happy with him in the days of Mr. . . . . and Mr . . . .at Tor; he will remember me. I send you a little word on "Hagar." I never print anything, dear sister, but if others like any MS. of mine and wish to do so, I do not object. This has been the history of that on "Heaven and Earth," and "The Scriptures," and I judge it to be a safer plan than putting forth anything on the authority of one's own mind. You may give "Rebecca" and this of "Hagar" to whom you like.

I saw dear Mrs. M. yesterday. Any letter to her had better be directed here, perhaps, as I could send it to her every day. I had not heard of dear W. J . . . .'s illness, and shall be very glad to know that he is better. A gloomy, disappointing scene, beloved, but bright, unspeakably so, to faith and hope. How the death of Sir W. Follett speaks the vanity of human hopes! He and I were the dearest companions at Exeter school in the year 1812. But those days are gone. The Lord bless you, beloved sister.

1 CORINTHIANS 11: 3-16.

Covering is the proper sign of woman. It expresses the *subjection she owes.* But the woman is mystically the Church; and thus, if a woman appear in the congregation covered, she appears duly, with the sign of subjection to Christ or the man. (Eph. 5: 24.) But it expresses also *the protection she receives.* And thus, if she do not appear covered, *she publishes her own shame.* For she does not carry the token of her proper state, but appears rather as a captive, or as a suspected woman. (See Num. 5; Deut. 21) She ought therefore on these two accounts in the congregation to appear covered. But there is another reason why this should be. She should be covered "because of the angels" — for angels are learning lessons from or through the Church (Eph. 3: 10), and the uncovered head of the woman would teach them a wrong lesson. Or, if "the angels" be the elders or ministers, then because of them the woman should be covered, lest she should afterwards have to confess her error. (Ecc. 5: 6.) But the man is *not* to be covered in the congregation, because, mystically, the man is Christ, and "the image and glory of God" — and it belongs not to Christ to bear the signs of either *subjection owed,* or of *protection* claimed — quite different from the woman, who is, mystically, as I said, only the Church, "the glory of the man." Christ is Lord and *Saviour* of the body (Eph. 5: 23.); i.e., *claims my subjection,* and *rendering protection,* instead of *owing subjection* and *claiming protection.* If the man, therefore, were covered, he would sadly dishonour his head, Christ. The covered head, accordingly, is most

suitable to the woman, but most unsuitable to the man, in the assembly; and the Spirit, speaking by the apostle, would not allow it to be neglected, though most graciously he pleads the question with the saints, to lead themselves to approve it.

As to verse 5 of this chapter, I judge that the apostle means simply *the place* where praying or prophesying is going on, as in the Church or assembly of the saints. I do not think that his language implies that the women were *themselves* either to pray or to teach, because in verse 4 the very same words are used as to the man, and we are sure that all the men are equally to be uncovered in the place of prayer, though *most of them may never engage actively in it.* And so also those men, or male brethren, who do at times in the assembly either teach or pray, yet when merely sitting silent in their places, are to be as much uncovered, as when they are actually ministering. So that I judge the Apostle speaks of the *place* of prayer and teaching, or of the *condition of the assembly*. He legislates that, without assuming, that women necessarily are either to teach or to pray. In 1 Timothy 2, on the other hand, it is not the mere condition of things in the place of prayer, or the *mere appearance of the male and female*, the Apostle has in hand, but the *actual services of the assembly* and then he expressly requires the silence of the woman.

LETTER 19.

December 23,1845.

MY VERY DEAR SISTER,

I am more thankful than you are that I went down to see you, so entirely does my soul before the Lord approve the little journey, though to add anything to you or to any soul how unfeignedly do I feel and own my poverty. However, there is refreshment in "the mutual faith," and I have found it at times in looking, as from a distance, at one in whom you know the truth dwells and shall dwell for ever.

I send a copy of the thought on Mark 5: 33, to you, and also another little meditation I have had since I saw you, something connected with it. I will not now say more on Romans 14, 15. It may be so at another time if the heart incline to the subject. Not only to your dear mother, but to dear Mrs. . . . . and family, Dr. . . . ., and the dear . . . . give my love in the Lord Jesus. All would unite in love to you, and my Mary's thanks for your living recollection of her. She had been very poorly, but is up again.

He is dealing with you as one of the stones in His great and various quarry, beloved. The workmanship *there* is very various. The hammer may be heard, or the saw, or the chisel, but the Workman has His purpose in His eye, while His vessel is in the wheel. The Lord give you abundant thought and refreshing, and the stillness of believing.

Ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

Remember me to Mr. and Mrs. T . . . . in christian love, and to dear sister.

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD, MARK 5.

We may receive a benefit from a person and be thoroughly assured of our hearty welcome to it, and yet find ourselves ill at ease in his presence. Nothing is more common than this. Gratitude is awakened in the heart very deeply and very affectionately, and yet reserve and uneasiness as deeply and painfully felt. It calls for something beyond our mere assurance of his good-will toward us and of our full welcome to his service, to make us at ease in the presence of a benefactor. And this something,

I believe, is the discovery that we have an interest in *himself* as well as in his *ability to serve us.* This delineates, as I judge, the experience of the poor woman with the issue of blood.

She knew the Lord's ability to relieve her sorrow, and her hearty welcome to avail herself of it. She therefore comes and takes the virtue out of Him without reserve. But she comes *behind* Him. This expresses her state of mind. She knows her welcome to His service but nothing more. She does not as yet know her title to be in His presence. But the Lord trains her heart for this as He communicated healing to her body. He lets her know that she is interested in *Himself,* as well as in His *power to oblige her.* He calls her "daughter." He owns kindred or relationship with her. This was the communication which alone was equal to remove her fear and trembling. *Her rich and mighty portion is her kinsman.* This is what her heart needed to know; without this, in the spirit of her mind, she would be still "behind him." And the higher the personal dignity or the moral worth of the one who serves us, the more will this reserve be felt, without this knowledge of kindred. This gives ease, and dismisses the fear and the trembling. "Go in peace" may then be said, as well as "be whole of thy plague." The word "daughter" entitled her to know that *His presence* was *her home.* She need not be reserved. Christ does not deal with her as a mere patron or benefactor. (Luke 22: 25.) She has an interest in *Himself* as well as in His *power to bless her.* And this is the gospel. The gospel tells us of our title to the "benefit," and of our interest in the "Benefactor," that He is our *Kinsman* as well as our *Deliverer,* so that we enjoy the blessing with full *ease of heart,* as *before* our God.

LETTER 20.

15, Herbert Place, Dublin,

Feb. 16,1846.

MY VERY DEAR SISTER,

I had long been looking out for your letter, but am always prepared for delay, knowing how uncertain your power to write is. But I was glad to see the *pencil* letter again and the recollection of my little journey to see you is pleasant to me, beloved. The Lord has appointed you a peculiar path through the desert, but they who turn out of their own way to see it may find reason to know that the light of the fiery pillar is not confined to the more ordinary highway of the camp. We had a rough passage of thirty-four hours from Bristol to Dublin, the sea constantly beating over our decks, but a sailor, I suppose, would have thought little of it. However we were brought to the haven, the mercy of the Lord encompassing us around. Accept my dear Mary's love with mine, and to dear mother, when you write to her. I believe that Mrs. M. . . . will leave this tomorrow. My love to dear S. . . . and his. I am glad that I had my little knowledge of him, and to dear Mrs. M . . . . . and hers, and to Dr. T. . . . And be sure when dear Mrs. W. . . . . joins you to remember me with full brotherly love to her. If we had a little more of the fervour of the martyrs in Queen Mary's time, it would be well for us. With what earnest love did they write to each other and to their brethren elsewhere from their prisons. "My dear hearts" was the common language; and John Careless calls his brethren, in writing to them, "Ye elect darlings of God." Ah! dear sister, we are fallen on easy times; and if we watch not, great danger there is of even our little waxing still less. The intellectual (for to a great extent it has not been spiritual) pursuit and acquirement of *biblical* knowledge is yielding some of its distasteful fruit, I fear. I enclose a little scribble, but surely I desire that it may feed your soul with happy thoughts, if so be it can, and nothing less, beloved.

Farewell for the present. May the deep peace and sunny joy of the Lord be with your spirit, and believe me,

Ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

I suppose "the land of the living" would signify the same in resurrection. Messiah uses it again in Psalm 116, where He evidently speaks as risen from the grave.

PATRONAGE.

The nearness to which the Lord invites the soul, the intimacy with which He seeks to invest the heart of the sinner who trusts in Him, it is most blessed to know. Christ does not deal with us in the style of a patron, or even of a benefactor. The world is full of that principle. "They that exercise authority are called benefactors." Man will show kindness and confer benefits in the character of a patron, occupying the distant place of both conscious and confessed superiority. But this is not Jesus. "Not as the world giveth," says He, "give I unto you." He brings His dependent one very near. He lets it be known, that it is the dealing of a *kinsman* with us and not that of a *patron.* But this is all the difference in the world. I am bold to say, *heaven* depends on this difference. The heaven we expect to enjoy, and which in spirit we taste now, depends on the Lord Jesus not acting with us on the principle of a *patron.* Heaven would be then only a well-ordered world of present approved human principles. And, oh! what a thing that would be! Is it the condescendings of a great one that we see in Jesus? "I am among you as one that serveth," says He. Is it the distant and courtly benevolences of a superior that we receive from Him? "Where I am, there ye shall be also," is not the language of such; nor, "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them." He is, it is true, and He would have us know it and own it, "Master and Lord;" but He sits at one table with us. As of old, He could command Moses and Joshua to take off their shoes in His presence, and be worshipped as Lord by Abraham, but He would eat of the patriarch's fare, and speak to Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend. And see it thus with Him in the days of His flesh. How was it then? Every case would answer this. It was never the style of a mere benefactor. It was never the distance or elevation of a patron; never. "He bore our sorrows and carried our sicknesses." Just look at Him at Jacob's well. A woman was there who had the most exalted thoughts of Him. "I know that Messias cometh which is called Christ; when he is come he will tell us all things." This was her high and just sense of Messias, not knowing that He to whom she was speaking could say immediately, "I that speak unto thee, am He." But where was He all the time? Sitting on one stone with her, talking with her as they met together at the well, and when, as to give her the fullest ease in His presence, He had asked her for a drink of water. Was this patronage after the fashion of man? Was this the condescension of a great one? Was this *heaven* or the *world*? Condescension of the world will confer what favour you please, but will have the distance of the benefactor and the befriended kept and honoured. But heaven or love will impart itself with its gifts. Jesus acts as kinsman to them He befriends. He leaves no distance, no sense of place, in the heart He heals, for He *visits* it. It is as a kinsman He acts, and not as a patron. He sits and talks with us. He allows us to invite Him to our house, as He went and dwelt with the Samaritans two days. He asks for a favour at our hands that we may take a favour from Him without reserve. He'll fain drink of our pitcher while opening His wells, and eat of our kid at our tent door, while revealing eternal counsels to us.

LETTER 21.

6, Clifton Place, Exeter,

June 6,1846.

MY VERY DEAR SISTER,

I left Bath on Thursday, designing to come as far as Wellington, but letters there reached me which made it plain to me that I was to come on as far as this. But I know not that I shall be able to get as far as Torquay. I should be glad again to sit by the side of your sofa, and spend a little season with you, if you were able for it. But I suppose this must end in a wish, as I am to be again in Wellington, please the Lord, next Saturday. Assure your dear mother that to see her also would be a great gratification to me, and also dear Mr. and Mrs . . . . . I have heard that you have been increasingly ill again. The Lord will explain all to you, beloved, as of old, "when he was alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." You will yourself be His interpreter, and the thankful, happy advocate of His hand in all that it has been doing. Such was Job; when it came to the end, he found that all was right. The Lord had to make no confession of mistake, but stood vindicated even in Job's thoughts for the fire and the wind and the Chaldeans. The Lord bless you and comfort you. The storm is to be only on the *outside* of your cottage. I left my dear people well in Bath, in the Lord's mercy, and I have lately heard of dear Mrs. M . . . . being still in Dublin. Ever, beloved sister,

Yours affectionately in the Lord Jesus,

J. G. B.

LETTER 22.

MY BELOVED SISTER, *August 10, 1846.*

I grieved to see by your last letter received through Mrs. K. . . that you had been so much in suffering. The Lord bless you and comfort you, as He has done in times past. You ought not to have sent me the seal, you know how easy it is for me to remember you without any memento. And glad should I be at times to visit the side of your sofa, and exchange some thoughts with you, my dear sister. Our united love to you and to dear mother, and give mine to my dear brother S. . . . and his family, Dr. T. . . . and the M. . . . .'s. A native brother from Demerara was with us for some days lately. It is always sweet to me to hear from you, but you know I never exact it from you as payment for my little communications. To cast many a wishful glance beyond the river may well be the exercise of our hearts, beloved, both from the greenness of the fields there, and the aridness of the desert here. The Lord be with thy dear spirit.

Ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

DIVINE INTIMACY.

The intimacy which the Lord has sought with His creature man is in a very blessed way evidenced throughout Scripture. It may have had different expressions or forms, but still it was intimacy. In patriarchal days, it was *personal.* The Lord God walked in the midst of the human family, appearing personally to His elect, not so much employing prophets or angels, but mixing *Himself* in the action as it proceeded. (See Genesis.) In the times of Israel He was not so much in the human guise as before, but in mystic dress. Still however He was *near* them. The glory in the cloud, the Lord in the burning bush, the armed Captain under Jericho, and then the glory filling the temple, or seating itself between the cherubim — all tell this nearness of God to elect man. The God of Israel seen by them on the sapphire throne, and the promise of His own lips to the house built in the midst of Israel, "Mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually;" all this, in like manner, witness this desired and proposed intimacy.

Then, in the progress of His wisdom and counsels, the actual assumption of manhood, this is the witness of witnesses to this precious truth. I need not dwell on it. As we say, it speaks for itself.

But what at this time has the more strongly drawn my mind is, *the intimacy that He so wondrously and graciously seeks and has provided for and secured in this our present age or dispensation.* He has given the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of truth is in us. The Comforter abides with us for ever. Our bodies are nothing less than His temples or dwelling places. And the Son has borne Himself to heaven as our head and representative, and we are there in Him and with Him. No form of intimacy so wonderful as this. And none more true or real. If personally the Lord God would take a kid or a cake as pledges of hospitality to a travelling man, from the hand of Abraham; if in the sight of the congregation, He would let the glory swell itself out and fill the temple courts to show His joy in His new-found dwelling with Israel; if in the manhood of Jesus of Nazareth, He would sit at a well with an elect sinner, or let another press His bosom at supper and ask Him about the secrets that were lodged there. In this our very hour He has us, in the thoughts and purposes of His own heart, up in heaven with Himself, and the Holy Ghost is here in the midst of all the thoughts and purposes of our hearts.

Is this intimacy of a feebler nature? Is this a retracing of His steps and going back again into his own perfections and glories, or amid the principalities and dominions of angels? No. It is pursuing His former purpose of intimacy only in a further stage till He perfect it in the kingdom. For this indwelling of the Spirit tells us that in every pulse of affection that beats, in every duty or service that is fulfilled or performed, the thought of the Lord should mix itself; as in the details of precepts in the Epistle we find it, the Lord, in love to Him and respect to His authority being brought in as the animating and ruling principle.

Is this reserve? Is this withdrawal of Himself? This seeing Him and owning of Him in all human relations and social duties, is this the symptom of a God in thick darkness, a God afar off? Blessed thought! it is the very reverse. It is only a richer pursuit of that same desire for intimacy with us which broke forth in its infant form in the Book of Genesis, and which is to bloom in its perfection in the kingdom. It has been sweetly described by another, that the divine intimacy was preserved by Jesus *risen* as well as by Jesus in the flesh. This appears from his preparing the dinner on the sea-shore Himself, eating in company with His disciples. (John 21) For He would *with Himself* now invest or clothe our spirits. He would relieve our conscience with a peace which *He has made and wrought out* for us Himself to perfection. He would satisfy our hearts with attractions that are divine and ineffable and fitted to teach us that the half could not be told, because they are the attractions which nothing less than *He Himself puts forth.* And He would, as I have already said, bring Himself in amid all our occupations and relationships, that the *recollection of Him and His authority and His grace* may sanctify as well as bless the whole. It is faith that enters into this purpose of God and enjoys it. Faith apprehends a peace made by Himself and therefore perfect, and clothes the conscience with it. Faith apprehends the love and the other blessed attractions that are in Him and gives the heart as a dwelling-place, an unspeakably happy dwelling place in Him. Faith knows Him to be no stranger to the smallest action, and therefore invests the whole course of human life with the sense of His authority and His sufficiency and His gracious and desired fellowship with it all, with all the joys and sorrows and doings and circumstances of His people, as He says, "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is," taking knowledge, thus, of the place and character of our abode. "Send men to Joppa and call for one Simon whose surname is Peter, he lodges with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side."

And here, I might just ask, in closing, does this intimacy appear at the end? In the Apocalypse, redeemed man takes the place of cherubim nearness to the throne — the tabernacle of God is with man, and the Lamb's bride becomes the habitation of the glory while the nations that are saved walk in the

light of it.

LETTER 23.

28, Downshire Hill, Hampstead, 1846.

MY LOVED SISTER,

I am not able now to communicate with you on some little portion of the precious word, as we have often and happily done in other days; for my mind has had other occupation provided for it for several months past. I can only tell you a simple tale of sorrow, and of joy, personal, and within doors, as you know already, beloved, the serious illness and yet assured conversion of our dear, dear Johnny. His poor arm has been now removed and remains as yet unhealed. But though we calculate on this relieving him from much distressful pain, yet we do not tell ourselves that it gives any good hope of length of days with us. Nor would I know, my loved sister, how to ask for that exactly. The renewal of the warfare for him and the danger of soiled garments and of fiery trials in the advance of the present generation, give check to desires and prayers. But he is pleasant to us, and the case would fain hold its desire before it. You know what pain is and sore confinement, sore to flesh and blood; but you know what it is to have the trial come with its best and most blessed relief.

I hope dear Mrs. P . . . . is well, you will give our christian love to her, accepting it from us all yourself, my loved sister. Just as we were leaving Dublin, I received a note from dear . . . . in his own simple and affectionate style, sending me some help for the poor starving Irish. O how we should desire that fervency of spirit that blessedly anticipates and hinders brotherly contention. And I have long judged that our history as a gathering of saints would have been different from what, alas, it has been, had we cherished a more glowing state of the affections, and followed the culture of knowledge a little more continuously. If the staff "Beauty" be broken, the staff "Bands" will soon go also.

My kind christian love to Dr . . . . .

The Lord be with thy spirit, beloved, and believe me, ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

LETTER 24.

March 3, 1847.

I had not heard of the sorrow of my loved sister, till I got dear E. K. . . . 's note. The Lord by His Spirit be abundantly with you, let His hand deal with you as it may. My heart never knew a sorrow so tender as the same to this. The loss of our darling Louisa, now nearly five years ago, gave me one of the deepest touches of grief I ever experienced. But, beloved, it is well. It is increasingly, I may say, the joy and boast of the soul to see or to hear of the dear children of God ending their course in peace and joy, for surely it is temptation and conflict, and a scene of growing, threatening evil. May your heart be greatly comforted, my dear sister. To hear of this was a great surprise, saving, that we learn the uncertainty of life and health so continually. Witness after witness comes forth to keep this ever in remembrance. But we must talk of life and not of death; as a dear one once said to me, it is not in the midst of life we are in death; but, in the midst of death we are in life.

My love in the Lord to your dear mother. Happy to have her dear child safe in the love of her heavenly Father; and His own house delights to make room for all who have taken Jesus for their Jesus.

The Lord be with my dear, dear sister.

Ever your affectionate,

J. G. B.

Accept my dear Mary's love. Our sisters are still at Bath.

Hope must enter within the veil

LETTER 25.

1847.

MY VERY DEAR SISTER,

I have long been feeling as though it was some time since a little remembrance passed between us; but this has arisen I think from the recollection that our dear Mrs. W. . . . . was forming a kind of constant link between us, and through her we heard of each other. It has pleased the Lord to visit you all again. Many a time in your little history, as well as in your own person, dear sister, has this been. But you are abundantly entitled to regard all these dealings of His hands as the visits of a friend, or of one who loves you and would bring Himself near you. They are sore to nature indeed. And He would have them felt to be so. But no interruption of them is to be allowed for a moment, that would leave a speck behind it on the character of His perfect and everlasting grace. The labourers in the vineyard thought that they had the character of their employer at their mercy. He had dealt with them in a way that seemed to defy all vindication. But the next moment was sufficient to give them their answer, and the Lord of the vineyard shows them abundant ground for suspecting, that the error and evil were altogether rather with themselves and not a bit of them with Him.

How sweet a light that is in which to read the way and dealings of the Lord at times. We think that some of His doings are beyond vindication, so unaccountable, so contrary to all the natural sense we might have of righteousness and goodness — like the paying of a labourer the same wages for one hour's work as was paid to another for eleven! For what could appear more monstrous! But it is only to wait, and He will be His own interpreter, as He is in that parable. (See Matt. 20.) He will prove that He has done no wrong, and acted graciously, and will give reason to know that if His way be objected to, the objection must come from a tainted moral spring in the heart of the accuser himself, as He does there. Very comforting, darling, this hint from the parable is. And though the soul may not need it, through simplicity and faith of its exercises, yet it is well to have the thoughts strengthened by such a witness.

Give my love in the Lord to your dear mother, and tell her I desire grace to feel for her in this last bereavement. My love also to dear Dr. T. . . We are not welcoming the thought of dear Mrs. W. . . .'s removal from us. Her activity among us has been valuable to the poor, and her spirit, in the liberty and light of it, a comfort and encouragement to the saints.

I am sending this through dear Mrs. B. . . . . She is diffident, and would not at once let another know her foibles, but I have been witness to some precious exercises of her soul — and in a cold and formal day, beloved sister, like the present, that is sweet to one.

The Lord bless you, sustain, and lead you daily! And believe me in the dear love of Jesus,

Ever yours,

J. G. B.

ELECTION.

There is much strength and blessing to the soul from the doctrine of election, but perhaps not that character of blessing which is commonly understood to flow from it. For it is commonly resorted to by a saint when he trespasses. But that is not, I believe, the use which the Holy Ghost makes of it for our souls in Scripture.

If the saint sin, he has an Advocate. The blood and intercession of Christ is for the need of his soul then: if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive. It is not, therefore, the remembrance of the doctrine of election, but it is confession — the remembrance of Jesus in heaven, which meets the need of the conscience.

The truth of the divine foreknowledge of us, of God's having elected us personally and predestinated us to most blessed destinies, is rather for the saint *as he walks in uninterrupted grace before God*. It is for the *joy of his heart* rather than for the *peace of his conscience*. It is for the putting of very boastful and triumphant language into his soul, by teaching him what anxious and everlasting interest God has had in all that concerns him. For it tells us (to speak after the manner of men) that we were the subject of the divine counsels — when God was *all alone* - before the foundation of the world; before the activities, so to speak, of creation began, we were before His thoughts. And this is the witness of our deep interests in Him. It is always so. It is always the mark of special favour, if we do but occupy the thoughts of another in solitude, or when the heart is fully at ease or at liberty to take up its own objects.

And in that place of favour with God does the doctrine of election and predestination put us. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and were then predestinated to the adoption of children by Him, simply according to His own good pleasure, or to His purpose taken in Himself, or hid in God from the beginning. (Eph. 1.) We are the called according to His purpose, or as the fruit of His foreknowledge and predestinated purposes. (Rom. 8.) His grace was given us in Christ before the world began, though it is only now made manifest. (2 Tim. 1.) He promised us eternal life before the world began, but did not till due time manifest that word of promise to ourselves. (Titus 1.) As the Lamb slain for us foreordained before the foundation of the world, though not manifested till these last times. (1 Peter 1.) And in all these ways, we ourselves, and our glorious and happy destinies, have been the subject of the counsels of God when He was, to speak after such a manner, in the simple solitude of His own mind and affections, that we might have joy in knowing how near our interests have been brought to Him, and from what deep sources our blessings have gushed forth.

We have some expressions of this order of things in Scripture.

When the Lord smelled the savour of Noah's sacrifice, He said in His heart that He would not again curse the ground. But that was just His own purpose and grace. It was then the secret of His own bosom. In due time, however, He made His purpose and grace known to Noah, and then Noah took the blessing in a way of peculiar sweetness, for he took it as coming forth from the deep, well-advised, and thoroughly-approved counsels and affections of the heart of the Lord Himself. (Gen. 8, 9)

So afterwards in Jacob and the sons of Joseph. He adopted them ere He saw them. He gave them the place of the firstborn in the family while as yet he had not looked on them, for his eyes were dim for age. All the desire of his heart had been toward them while they were personally unmanifested. And thus, when the blessing does come, it comes with all its value. The warmth of Jacob's heart and tongue came with it. It is sealed and doubly sealed ere Ephraim and Manasseh enjoy it, so that they may know that their adoption had been the delightful theme of the father's counsel and promise, the subject of his

thoughts and affections ere it is manifested to them.

Thus surely does the doctrine of election set the saint down in rich and happy pastures. The sinner need not think of it. It is not for him. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is at his door, as it were, telling of redemption.

One strikingly says,

"His purpose and his course he takes,

Treads all my reasonings down,

Commands my thoughts forth from their depths

And hides me in his own."

LETTER 26.

May 6, 1847.

MY BELOVED SISTER,

The Lord be with you and refresh your spirit. And it is simply resting on the sure and everlasting foundation of faith, which the hand of your covenant God has laid for you, by which this refreshment will come. It is not an effort of the soul after the joys of the Holy Ghost, or spiritual exercise of heart, but it is the precious repose of faith, and the bright prospects of hope which grow up therefrom, that will be our refreshment, beloved.

There is, in some deep and happy sense, more communion with those who have departed than with those who still cluster around us. I remember a dear sister saying this to me some years since, and I have often thought of her words. She spake in reference to a dear son who had then lately departed in the Lord. But it is so. We think of them only in their beauties in Christ Jesus. Our thought of them is not hindered, but there in spirit we see them, having first trusted in Christ, waiting with their beloved Saviour, for the consummation of His joy and their joy.

I thank you for your last few acceptable lines. I did not expect them from yourself, but I knew that my dear sister Ellen would let us hear of you.

The Lord bless you. The Lord comfort, in the calmness of a believing heart, your dear mother. My christian love to her and all around you. Accept my dear Mary's love. The good hand of the Lord still keeps, and our Johnny's arm, we think, is better.

Ever, beloved sister, yours affectionately,

J. G. B.

I do value the thoughts I enclose. They are by another; but this simple believing, setting of Christ above all, even above the exercises of the soul in the Holy Ghost, I do delight in. We are always, as was said, higher in our *standing* than in our *experience. Faith alone* does God, and His love, and His doings, justice.

I count on hearing again from some one. Do you know dear Gambold's hymn? "No more with trembling heart I try" Yes, indeed, whether we wake or sleep, we shall be together with Him.

LETTER 27.

1, Waterloo Road, Dublin,

March 29, 1848.

MY MUCH LOVED SISTER,

I was glad to see again your little pencil scribble. I will not now write much to you, but invite you to meditate with me on Job, as we have often and happily together meditated on other portions of God's sweet and perfect word. And Oh! the Lord forbid that there should ever be any distance between us, in these days of sad, sad estrangement, when it is as easy and as pleasant, as it sometimes appears to me, to make a brother an offender for a word, as in better days it was easy and pleasant to wish one another goodwill in the name of the Lord. Ah! it is sad. Love to dear Mrs. W . . . . . Tell her that her brethren here remember her, and that in mercy we are kept together in godly peace and unity. But we fear the importation of another mind from across the water, for the distance is short, and the poor nature is the same.

Remember us to your dear sister, and me to my dear brother Dr. T . . . . also to dear Miss W . . . . The Lord guide dear Mrs. W . . . for she puts her trust in Him. Ever, my loved sister, in much affection,

J. G. B.

(We have left Herbert Place.) Let me know that you have received this.

LETTER 28.

2, Sion Place, Bathwick Hill, Bath, Jan. 8, 1848.

MY BELOVED SISTER,

It has long been a pleasure to me to see your dear little pencil notes, and I welcomed the sight of another of them a day or two since; but I did not calculate on hearing of your renewed sorrow. It has left you, beloved, indeed more lonely in the great scene than once was counted upon — dear sister some few years since, and now dear mother removed. But, I need not add, what consolation in the thought that the blessed repairer of all breaches, the repairer of the mighty breach between God and sinners, had endeared Himself to them, and in that way made separation from you, presence with Himself, and in season He will repair the present breach between you and them.

May His comforts be much with you, my dear sister. My brotherly love to your dear physician and others around you. We are still watching our dear child. The remaining arm having become in a measure diseased, he is in a very helpless state. But this last week he is again better, and we have hope that he may recover a little more of his strength and use of it. But the result of his illness we cannot but apprehend, not doubting that the hand of the Lord in mercy has been ordering his history, very specially, for the last twelve months, and His *Spirit* working in company with His *hand* for the last five. We are likely to remain here for a while longer, and indeed until a change be recommended for him. Accept my Mary's love with mine, and remember us to your dear sister. Is dear Mrs. W . . . . near you still? If so, my love to her also. This time last year we were travelling the road together on Irish ground, and still are in mercy along Emanuel's land — may I say in spirit?

The Lord be with you, my dear, dear sister. How easy do I find it to wish you well with all my heart, and to greet you deeply in the bond of Christ Jesus. We expect dear Mrs. M . . . . here, and did look for Mr. K . . . .; but that is now given up.

Ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

REDEMPTION.

Leviticus 25.

Redemption is God's principle. Leviticus 25 (which is the great scripture on the subject of redemption) shows us that, because on the sale of either the person or the lands of an Israelite, if he had no kinsman to redeem him or his estate, God would redeem both every fiftieth year, and every man then should return to his family and to his possession. So that redemption was God's principle. And also, because it was so, neither the land nor the people were to be sold for ever, but to be sold *subject to redemption* — as we say in our laws, sold by way of mortgage, not sold for ever, or out and out, but sold by way of mortgage, or subject to redemption. The same chapter shows us that. Thus it is clearly apparent that redemption is God's principle. But what does it imply? *The paying of a price, a full price, for the thing or person sold.* The purchaser of an Israelite or of his possession was to have the full money weighed out to him, ere he could be required to restore the man or his land to his kinsman. The Scripture shows, in like manner, that our glorious kinsman (the God of heaven and earth manifest in flesh) has, by Himself, paid the full price of our redemption, paid the debt that lay upon us and our inheritance. In the balances of the throne of God (where righteousness was seated) the price was paid and weighed with the nicest hand, that no wrong might be done to any one through man having sold himself and all that he had by his sin. And thus Scripture calls Jesus a redeemer, in the sense of this glorious chapter on redemption. He visited and redeemed His people, and the price that He paid was His blood, or Himself — "he gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time," "by his blood having obtained eternal redemption for us" — "the redemption of the purchased possession," and "thou hast redeemed us to God," and many such passages.

And the scales of the throne of God tested the weight of this price before it was paid. They had before tried the weight of the blood of bulls and goats, but they found all such blood to be light and insufficient; but when the blood of God's own Lamb — God's divine Son — was put into that balance, which was thus held by the hand of Him that sat on the throne — that judges right — the balance stood, the will of God, the great Creditor, was satisfied, and by the satisfying of that will we are sanctified (Heb. 10); by the payment of that price our person and lands are repurchased by our glorious Redeemer or kinsman.

I do confess, to touch this doctrine of repurchase, or redemption, appears to me to touch the dearest thought in the mind of God, for it is as Leviticus 25 blessedly shows us, as I have said, His own principle. And why is it so dear to Him? Because it glorifies His love, that is, Himself, above everything; because it shows such a way of self-sacrifice in God, that though this ransom, this price of redemption, demanded the Son from the bosom (the Isaac), yet the Isaac was delivered.

And what comfort to the conscience to know that the full price has been paid. What comfort to a poor redeemed Israelite it must have been to know that his creditor, to whom he had sold himself, had been paid the *uttermost farthing* of his demand by his generous kinsman! The *heart* gets comfort from knowing that God's *love* was gratifying itself in the work of our redemption, but the *conscience* gets ease from knowing that God's *righteousness* has been honoured and secured, that the demand of His throne has been fully answered. And I judge that the Scripture enables us to understand how the blood of Jesus is equal to accomplish this great end of paying the ransom or redemption money. For the original condition was this: *life* must go for sin; "in the day thou eatest thou shalt die." Adam ate, Jesus died or gave up life; and He had life to give up. No other victim on earth had life; for sin, the principle of death, was tainting everything. All other blood carried the savour of death in it, but the blood of

Jesus was the blood of a living one, and this was equal to meet the penalty of sin, and when given was the full price for the redemption of all who would trust it and plead it, for *life* had now gone for *sin.* Jesus was not debtor to sin or to death, for He was entitled to life, but yet for us he consented to "die unto sin" (Rom. 6), to own the claim of sin and death, and thus has He fully and meritoriously discharged it. The blood was the life and was reserved for God. It was a thing forfeited or given back to God, because of sin. But God laid it up (or, found it) in Jesus, and in Him gave it to sinners for atonement. (Lev. 16) In this way again we see the blood of Christ to be as heavy as all the penalty of sin. For death has been induced — life has gone for sin, and that was the original condition. And again, the Lord said, the soul that sins *shall be a curse.* But the same Lord says, the man that hangs on a tree *shall be a curse.* And thus, in another shape, we see the price equal to the debt in the very reckoning of Him who alone can take the account, that is, the Lord, or God Himself. (Deut. 27, 21; Gal. 3) And it is most comforting to see the unbending severity of righteousness in this matter. It will be satisfied. The patriarchal law (Gen. 9: 5), the national law of Israel (Exodus 21: 23), the law of shadows or ordinances (Num. 35; 33), all show this. The payment must be *equal* to the debt, the ransom to the penalty or forfeiture. Guiltless living or untainted blood in Adam was shed by sin; guiltless, ever-living, and untainted blood in Jesus has now been shed for sin. (Heb. 9: 14.) And our comfort as sinners comes from thus seeing that the nicest and fullest demands of the righteous One have been honoured, ere pardon and peace are preached to us, ere the boundless love of God would give itself to our hearts to rest, refresh, and gladden them for ever. And that blood which as the victim Jesus once shed for sin, (Heb. 9: 14), as the Mediator He pleads always for *transgressions.* (Heb. 9: 15.) For it is the redemption of the one as of the other — the price for full remission of daily defilement. And by that same blood, as the forerunner into heaven, the same Jesus now there is getting *all* ready for us. (Heb. 9: 23, 24.) The very presence-chamber and all the heavenly things in glories that are there, making them approachable to sinners. And after all this display of the blood in Hebrews 9 we see the act of the righteous hand of God, as it were, holding the balance, as I have said, while weighing it against sin in Hebrews 10, and then the balance gloriously stands, and sin is then righteously remitted. So that *in the blood* we enter the holiest with a perfect conscience no longer *in our sins* kept outside.

The blood, as thus the price of redemption, or the consideration on which God can be just and the justifier of the believer, is called "the blood of the covenant." (Heb. 13; see also Ex. 24; Zech. 9; Luke 22: 20; 1 Cor. 11: 25.) And in that character also it is seen on the mercy-seat, or the throne of God, being that which shows how that righteousness and peace can kiss each other. And as the price of redemption it was put on the lintels of the Israelites' houses, and from the beginning of the world to the death of Jesus used in atonement, used as that which alone could meet sin.

LETTER 29,

Bath, July 26,1848.

MY BELOVED SISTER,

Your little word waited for me here on my return from Dublin last Saturday. Our stay here is uncertain, as is also the direction in which we may move from it. But I cannot speak of being at Torquay, though you know, to sit occasionally at your side, and speak together of our blessed Lord and His truth, would be pleasant to me.

I have judged that sea air would be very desirable for our . . . ., and her dear mamma also has the little cup of tears, dear sister, still wrung out at times; but many things make these movings not so easy.

Is not the great move a little nearer than it was? Do not the present agitations tell of the winds *beginning* to strive upon the great sea? And if ever distant symptoms of such action be perceived, is

there not cause for afresh looking up in expectation of the meeting in the air?

I see dear L . . . . M . . . . now and again, and last evening we drank tea together at Miss B . . . .'s. My love to the little flock near you, beloved sister, and to your dear physician. Accept the same from us all unitedly, and to your dear sister.

The Lord be with your spirit with every desire towards you in the bowels of Christ Jesus.

Believe me, my dear sister,

J. G. B.

LETTER 30.

May 9, 1850.

MY VERY DEAR SISTER,

I had written to you and my dear brother, as I heard through your last of his sore bereavement.

Would that I had bowels that could feel for others, and give my honoured brother the comfort of deeper fellowship in his sorrow. Remember me in all love to him. Tell him I am knowing something of the dealing of the blessed, blessed God with my own soul just now, and in the midst of exercises can both trust Him and bless Him. He aims to take us out of an artificial into a real atmosphere, to speak immediately to us, to give tokens without and consolations within, while both things and people be against us, and our reins are chastening us.

As surely as it is written, "He that believeth shall be saved," and again, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven," so surely may our dear brother rejoice in the evidence his departed one has left behind her. How quick the passage is made from darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son! We take the two steps: we learn that we have destroyed ourselves, and then that in Christ is our help.

The Lord be with your spirit! Accept our united love and remember us to your dear sister. We are moving this day into Dublin, so that our address will be, 2, Upper Pembroke Street, Dublin.

Ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

LETTER 31.

March 1, 1851.

MY DEAR SISTER,

Your letter was a surprise and a joy to me. I had, I believe, concluded in my mind that we were at present very differently affected by this agitation among brethren, and that it was well understood by *our hearts* that the happier way was to be silent towards each other. But your letter has told me other things in which I rejoice. And indeed the more I give myself a thought upon it, I think I can the more say that I marvel at the lessons which this agitation is fitted to teach, as being still unlearnt by so many. But it shows that many a mind among us was very little removed from the ordinary dissenting ground. The great personal grace and devotedness of some was long an occasion of delay and hindrance with me, and some of the ways of those in the other scale, was another similar hindrance. I made such mistakes, and took the journey so lamely, that I have to be forbearing and humble; but I do indeed, again I say, wonder at the slowness of many hearts.

It has been a testing of the state of the spiritual senses among us. Had the Christ of God and the Church of God been more discerned in the exercise of the divine nature, I am *certain* the actings of Bethesda would have been promptly resented. The unclean letter of the ten, and the divisive or heretical actings in connection with that letter, ought to be *instinctively* detected, repudiated, and condemned.

It is not a question of personal devotedness with me. I know how such ones as dear . . . . stood in the midst of difficulties and oppositions for the Lord, while I was at ease and in leisure. But, I feel assured, the spiritual senses have been but poorly exercised in the peculiar calling of the Church of God, when such a letter as that can be gloried in, or its existence as the symbol, of any gathering in Christ be vindicated.

Oh how little, with all that we assumed, was the mind that was in the midst of brethren purified from the common leaven of the day! Would that many, my dear sister, would still the prejudices and the partialities of their hearts for and against individuals, and in the pure and heavenly light of the Church's calling, challenge the *sayings*, the *writings*, and the *doings of* Bethesda.

But with all this, many of us are deeply debtors to this agitation — debtors to the Lord through it. Indeed I am sure of that, and though I see myself in such changed circumstances here in Dublin, that I suppose *time* will never repair, or give me back what, in a certain way, I have lost in *brotherly enjoyment*, yet I would not surrender what I have learnt and experienced for a tenfold increase of even the past enjoyment.

Oh that dear . . . 's mind was *spiritually* guided in this, as I know his heart and services are with the Lord! There are some who surprise me, in the place they are taking, much more than others; and had I been asked, I should say, *he* was among them. I should have hoped he would have seen the direction in which the Spirit was — may I not say — so manifestly leading. He had not even the earlier habits of even an *Independent's* or *Quaker's* mind to withstand his progress. But we know not. Calculations have been all disappointed, and on either side the Lord has dealt in much of the sovereignty of His grace. In my own little connection with this agitation I have known Him again and again disappointing what I had reckoned on, and giving help even from what I had feared and suspected.

May He Himself be more personally with and before us! a *nearer* and *more real* object than ever!

Truth that gives *thoughts* is not fully the right thing; but truth that gives *Himself* - that is the thing.

Jesus once here — now in the heavens — again to be here and with us for ever — the *same* Jesus throughout — known for eternity as He was known in His track through the cities and villages of Israel — this is the mystery that gives us *Himself.* And it is the business of *faith* to reach *Himself.* The centurion pierced the cloud, the *thick* cloud, of His humiliation, and got at the *divine glories*, which lay the other side of it, or under it. The poor sinner of the city pierced the cloud, the *dark* cloud, of her own sin and misery, and got at the *divine love* that could heal it all. Faith may thus find various excellencies in Him, but it is *Himself* it reaches.

Faith sits and sings

"All human beauties, all divine,

In my beloved meet and shine."

Let not this evangelic age, dear sister, give you the *work* of Christ alone. It tends that way. Without His work, I know, all would be nothing. But let not doctrinal acquaintance with His work turn

you from personal acquaintance with Himself.

I write at once, on receiving yours, for it was indeed a surprise and a joy to me.

Our dear sisters are at Cheltenham, where Mrs. M . . . . is, in very bad health. My dear Mary is increasingly feeble in her limbs, but "her peace in Jesus," through His grace, perfect. Great comfort have we in our dear child at our side; deep, eternal joy in our dear child that is gone.

All will soon close in the brightness of vision.

The Lord bless you and be with your spirit. Ever, etc.,

J. G. B.

Accept my Mary's love. Let us hear again of you and all dear to you, for it is a long time since we did.

LETTER 32.

2, Upper Pembroke Street,

Dublin, May 4, 1852.

MY DEAR SISTER,

It is, indeed, some time since a little word passed between us. The good Lord knows that it comes not from change or lack of the old and wonted love between us, but it may be, like some dream, from the multitude of business, and much of that business far less attractive to the heart than communion over some of the precious truth of God, but perhaps as needed and not less profitable.

I want to prove, "when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" Beautiful sentence!

I heard of a good man who had been long under trial, people mistaking and reproaching him, saying to one who told me of it, "It has not given me five minutes' uneasiness for the whole seven months." What a living, happy experience of the reality of that short scripture. How much the soul covets the like, dear sister.

In our conduct and journey as saints, it is not enough, for the *full* repose of the heart, to have a good conscience. Without that, it is true, there could be no repose. But we need that light and grace and energy of the spiritual mind, that will keep us in the track of the mind of God, and in such activities as become the house and people of God, and our place in the midst of them. But, at the same time, I believe we can bring our lacking or our erring in these ways of the Spirit up to the throne of grace, in confession, with somewhat a less painful mourning heart than we should have to bring our blots of conscience.

I would that you could tell me better things of yourself, as to the body; but you scarcely expect much till all that be perfected in its "eternal house." I was lately reading a life of dear G. Whitfield. What a fervent spirit he carried with him, and what a love of souls filled his heart. I found it good and rebuking to be in company with him and with others who breathed the life of Christ in those days of dear Lady Huntingdon. Oh for more such fervency, loved sister, in my cold and narrow heart! He wept while he preached, like his Master; in his measure and way he seems to have given himself to the people, imparting his own soul to them, as the apostle speaks. The Lord spread among us more of this!

Give my love to dear Mrs. W . . . ., when you see her, and to your dear physician. I have heard of his brother in the north, but knew not of his loss. Blessed be God for the mercy 1 In the riches of grace He has given me, in recollections of mine, some of the dearest joys of my heart. The Lord be with your

spirit, and believe me,

Ever your affectionate

J. G. B.

My Mary desires her love, and remember me to your dear sister. I may find something on Matthew 13 among my MSS. and will send it, please God.

I was glad you told me of yourself, where and with whom you are now living. I visit two dear saints of God, laid up, like yourself, for years in pain of body. One of them a near connection of the dear man, Mr. Greene, who ministers to Matamoros. Trials, my sister, will re-appear as honours by and by, sufferings as crowns. (1 Peter 1: 7.) You may be full sure I should find my way to the Quarries, were I at Exeter. My own sister from Tiverton we hope to see here in the course of the summer; but for six years I have not paid her a visit. A visit from dear M . . . would be very pleasant to you, I am sure. The recollections of him are very grateful to me, as of dear Mr. and Mrs. W . . . . and theirs. But all is imperfection, till the presence of Christ in glory teaches it by and by. May we have a heart for His appearing, without the check of present lust and vanity!

I have not heard of dear L . . . . M . . . . for a long while. Your dear doctor at Torquay cannot visit you now, as he was wont to do so lovingly.

"We talk of the land of the blest,

That country so bright and so fair;

And oft are its glories confest,

But what must it be to be there."

Oh! for deeper, richer, larger desires and sympathies for it and with it, my sister.

Ever your affectionate brother,

J. G. B.

LETTER 33.

May 29, 1863.

How naturally, yea, necessarily, my dear sister, the sight of a letter from you took me back many years in the recollections of my heart, and the interval surely was marked by its lights and shadows. How consistently, as one company, brethren were walking together, when first you and I knew each other, and now how broken! And yet I believe we can say, we would not exchange our present experience with what it was in apparently brighter and calmer days. The harvest that is reddening for the sickle is not as lovely to the eye as it was in its early freshness of green spring-time. And it is well, my dear sister, to be thinking of the day of ingathering. With me, at my age of sixty-six, it can be but comparatively a little while; but to faith, it is always a little while, and the less the better — save as service and the will of the Master would have it otherwise.

There is nothing like resting in His love. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." There is no one moral thought so full of power, I believe, as that which the apostle utters, "the Son of God *who has loved me."* The soul looking upward, as in communion not with God in judgment but in grace, apprehending not an exactor but a Saviour. You speak of my visiting Exeter, my dear sister. But I have no such prospect. My dear Mary is dependent on me every day, the frame increasingly feeble, and the mind bemoaning much failing; but the simplicity of her faith holds on, and no cloud rests on her well-

known title to the love of God her Father. Our dear . . . . is a great comfort to us, and in more health of body, I think, than some years since. You know, perhaps, that we have lost all our dear sisters. The three died within two years of each other, at Cheltenham, where . . . ., ..., and . . . . still live, and live as walking with the Lord, and serving Him in their way and measure.

For more than four years I have not been absent from Dublin for a week, and though I know it is profiting to visit brethren in other places at times, and see how they do, and take their pledge, and learn where they have been seated at divine lessons which have escaped the notice of one's own soul, yet if His strong hand fix your habitation, that becomes your profitable as well as your right place.

We are kept here, thank the Lord, in much peace, and the revival times which were blessedly seen in our city and neighbourhood some three years ago, have led to the enlarging of our company, and to the manifestation of much grace and godliness in many young persons. . . But in the state of *churches*, dear sister, we have great reason "to rejoice with trembling." Mischief breaks out suddenly at times, and in quarters which had not awakened one's apprehensions.

GENESIS 1 - 47

"In the beginning God created the *heaven* and the *earth*." The scene of the divine hand in all was, thus, twofold, and accordingly, in "the dispensation of the fulness of times," He will display Himself, in the new creation in Christ Jesus, both in *heaven* and *earth.*

I believe that the chapters in the Book of Genesis which we have mentioned above give us a view of the Lord acting with respect to each of these, as it were, *by turns*, till in the end, we see them presented together in a way typical of what their connection and yet distinction will be in the coming dispensation of the fulness of times. It was of the *earth* that Adam was made the lord under the Lord God. He had no place in heaven at all. The garden was his residence, and he was to subdue and replenish the earth. But this, excellent as it was, was the limit of His inheritance and enjoyments. All that He knew of in heaven was the Lord God the Creator who was above him. He had no thoughts that linked him personally with it at all. But when he transgressed, he lost the earth. He became a slave and a drudge in it to get bare existence out of it, and then had to lay himself down upon it and die. Such was his changed condition in the earth, grace the while providing remedy for him as a sinner, and pointing his hopes to a better inheritance and richer enjoyments in *heaven.*

This is much to be observed, and this is the voice of Genesis 5. There Adam, Seth, and the whole line of godly patriarchs, have in the earth only a burying-place, no memorial, no inheritance there, but, as represented in Enoch, destined of the Lord God to be translated to a higher portion in *the heavens* with the Lord Himself. This was faith and godliness now. That people who would cling to the earth must do so in the spirit of Cain or the Infidel, desiring to find their memorial and their delights in a place expressly under the curse, seating themselves down with satisfaction and at ease, when God had said; in righteous judgment, they were to expect only a hard and sorrowful livelihood. (Gen. 4)

But *the earth* was not given up. It is, we know, destined to rejoice in the liberty of the glory by and by, when the promised "dispensation of the fulness of times comes." And, accordingly, this purpose the Lord will rehearse and illustrate, as He now, in due season, does in the history of Noah. (Gen. 6 - 9) For here, after passing through the judgment of water, *the earth* appears again in the scene of the divine delight. God has his representative prophet, priest, and king in it, and makes His covenant with it, undertaking to preserve it, and providing for its righteous, godly government. Cattle and fowl, and creeping thing of every sort are preserved with it; and the earth and its whole system, with man at

the head of it, as God's image, is the scene of divine care and delight again. Noah's possession of the earth was quite unlike either that of Cain's or of Seth's family. He did not, like the former, enjoy it and fill it in defiance or in spite of God; nor did he, like the latter, take only a burying place in it. But he enjoyed it under God. The Lord sanctioned his inheritance of it, his dominion over it, and his delight in it, in some sense, like Adam at the beginning, though, of course, it was now in an injured condition.

All this is very significant. In Noah *the earth* reappears as the scene of divine care and husbandry, after it had for a season been given over, and the elect had been, in their hopes and calling, removed to heaven, as we saw in chapter 5. The heavenly family there had died to the earth. They could speak of its coming judgment and restoration. Enoch foretold of its judgment (Jude), and Lamech of its restoration and blessing, though it was then under the displeasure of the Lord. (Gen. 5: 29.) But they neither of them lived for the scenes they thus spoke about. They carried the mind of God in them, and could speak or prophesy of these things, but they had gone from the scene before they happened. So *heavenly* were they, having the intelligence, that true stranger-character, and the inheritance of the Church. But Noah, who comes after them, is found to be an *earthly* man. He returns to it, after the judgment, to find in it the sphere of covenanted blessing and honour.

Again, however, we know *the earth* soon corrupted its way before the Lord. As in Adam, this corruption began in Noah himself, and was perfected in the builders of Babel, who, like another family of Cain, desired to fill the earth with themselves and their works, independently of God. They were mighty hunters before the Lord — they scoured the face of the earth in the full infidel spirit, asking, as it were, "Where is the God of judgment?" But, as we also know, this was not allowed. Another judgment came upon the people, and they are scattered and confounded, and made strange the one to the other. The whole human social order is awfully broken up, and Abram is called out to find his fellowship with the blessed God Himself apart from all that which had now thus corrupted its way before Him.

And thus it is that the Lord still continues to unfold and tell out His purposes. He does not put the earth into Abraham's hand, as He had done into Adam's and Noah's, but He promises him a future inheritance in it, and in that hope and under that promise Abraham becomes a stranger in the world. *He walks as a heavenly man* therefore, like Seth, or Enoch, or the others of Genesis 5, with *the prospect of the earth* and his seed being linked together by and by. Such appears to be the nature of things as exhibited in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and thus in their persons were heavenly, but their distant hopes, at least the hopes of their seed, pointed to the earth. They did not enjoy it themselves, but it was inheritance in the earth that was covenanted to them and their seed.

Having thus become the objects and holders of these covenants and promises, in process of time, their children, too much in the spirit of Cain, hate and persecute their righteous brother. And this has the operation of separating that brother from them. Joseph is estranged from the scene of the promised and covenanted inheritance and is a pilgrim and a sufferer among a distant people, till he there becomes great and honourable, the second man in the kingdom, on whom by the strong hand of the Lord the whole earth, and his brothers who once hated him and cast him out, became dependent.

I judge that nothing can be more exactly and wonderfully expressive than all this. It is a striking exhibition of the great result — for now we see not the heavens merely or the earth merely, each in its season broken up and made the scene of the divine counsels, or of the hopes and inheritance of the elect, but we see the heavens and the earth together in one great system though in different departments, gathered under one head, a fair and beautiful type of those days of refreshing and

restitution, when there shall be, according to this pattern, gathered together in one, all things in Christ, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven.

Joseph is, at first, cast, by the wickedness of them who were the children of the covenants and of the promises, among the Gentiles, among strangers, and then after his sorrows he becomes exalted, and the head and father of a family which yields him such joy that his heart can well afford to forget his kindred in the flesh. He is raised also to be the great depositary and dispenser of those resources on which the whole earth is soon made to depend. This, surely, is Christ in heaven now. This, surely, is the Church taken from among the Gentiles, "the fulness of the Gentiles," made the companion, the family, and the joy, of Jesus during the season of his estrangement from Israel. But the world is brought to look to this exalted one, and his brethren who hated him to bow to him and seek his favour. And surely this is Christ on the earth by and by. And this is Israel brought to repentance, and seated in favour and in the richest portion of the land which their exalted brother can bestow on them. And this is the whole world in the days of the kingdom, when the true Joseph will order and settle them according to His perfect wisdom and pleasure, feed them out of His stores, and receive from them, as Joseph did from the Egyptians, a willing and unmurmuring obedience — when the whole world will say, as the believer, the child of wisdom now learns to say, "Our Jesus hath done all things well." And all this will be to the honour of Him who holds the supreme place, as Joseph did all this for Pharaoh's praise, and as every tongue by and by is to confess Jesus Lord, but to the glory of God the Father.

But in the midst of all this earthly honour of Joseph, Asenath and the children are not seen. No lot of ground is appointed for this family of Joseph. Jacob may get Goshen, the fairest and fattest of the land, but Asenath, apparently, gets nothing. Is it that the wife and children were loved less than the father and the brethren? Nay, that must not be, that could not be, in such an one as Joseph. But it is because Asenath and the children are heavenly, and cannot mingle with the interests and arrangements of the earth. Even Goshen would be unworthy of them. They are the family of the Lord of all this scene. They share the house and the constant presence and the closest endearments of him who presides over all this.

Is not this, all things heavenly and earthly gathered into one? Is not this the Church with Jesus, and the nations and Israel at their head with Jesus in their several spheres in the days of the kingdom? Here, surely, the heavens and the earth are heard and seen together, and yet distinctly here.

LETTER 34.

2, Upper Pembroke Street,

Feb. 19, 1864.

I thank you, my dear, long-known sister, for your word of living sympathy. I have had a sore bereavement, thirty-nine years of sweet and pleasant and edifying communion may well give me to know that. And though, in all feebleness of mind and body, it was my joy to look at her, and see and hear the expressions of her simple and ever-unclouded faith. May the Lord give me to find more in Himself, I am sure I ask Him, than ever I have done. For the most that way has hitherto been small surely.

My dear . . . . from the neighbourhood of T . . . . happened to be with us on a visit, the first time we had seen her for twelve years, just at the time when we were visited by this sore and painful loss; and it was a gracious arrangement for us under the hand of God. And how glad I should be, were I again in Devonshire, again to see you. My recollections of you, at Exeter are still fresher with me than those at Torquay, but if the good Lord have kept us with Himself, He has kept us with each other. My

love to dear Mr. and Mrs. W . . . . Truly can I add, renewed communion with them would also be very grateful to me. Mrs . . . . is the only one from those parts I have seen of late, but her visits have been very pleasant to us.

I never hear of L . . . . M . . . . I was invited to the Torquay meeting, but I felt unequal to it at the time. My dear . . . . is in better health than she was some years ago, I am thankful to say; but our tabernacle has been emptied of its choicest Israelite. May it be a moving wilderness one, I pray, till Canaan be reached. The tents must have gathered soil and fractures, as they passed from the Red Sea to the Jordan, but they were better in their relations on the banks of the Jordan, though worse in their conditions, than they had been on the banks of the Egyptian sea. Though torn and dirtied, they were nearer to being struck for the last time.

My child has just come in, and desires me to give her love. Our aged Aunt who lives with us — ninety-four — is still wonderful in mind and body.

The Lord be with your spirit, my dear sisters.

Ever yours affectionately in Him,

J. G. B.

I would have heard better of your health than your letter allows me to do. But there is One who sees the end from the beginning.