

heaven! *There is excess of light.* How feeble and how faint are the rays of the sun compared therewith! There it cheers every soul and clothes every object with glory and with beauty. It sparkles in the diadem of Jesus; it composes alike his sceptre, his robe, his throne; and all in that world of love, is brightness ineffable and eternal.

But we live upon earth, and have therefore darkness as well as light; natural darkness. Not that there is any substantial darkness in our world: darkness with us, we apprehend, is a mere negation—the mere absence of light. Like light it has its degrees; there are dark days; there is the common darkness of night; and there is the black gloom of an exceeding dark night. But in hell, there is, we apprehend, material darkness, horrible and utter—darkness that may be felt. In this world there is perhaps, no place or time so utterly dark as not to have some small degree of light mixed with it, but there, is the blackness of darkness, for ever. These, light and darkness, were mingled with the chaos of materials which God spake into existence when “the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light; and God divided the light from the darkness.” It was his work to banish the one, and to shed abroad and display the other.

Thus far in reference to *natural* light in darkness. There are also mental and moral light (in the understanding and in the conscience). Wisdom and knowledge are light, and the absence of these (folly and ignorance) is darkness. “If the light that is in thee be darkness,” said Jesus to the Pharisees, “how great is that darkness.” *i. e.*, “If your very understanding is perverted by the influence of sin, how great must be the darkness that reigns within you, and hinders your reception of the truth.” Mental and moral darkness are the sad consequences of the fall; so that in a state of fallen nature the very light within us is darkness. It is wilful ignorance in the understanding—it is error in judgment—it is perverseness in the will—it is corruption in the heart—it is pollution and death in the soul. What

shall we say of errors in the judgment?—Are we entirely blameless in judging wrong concerning things of the utmost importance, in putting a wrong construction upon the divine commands, or in forming a wrong estimate of the relative value of the things of time and eternity, or in judging wrongly concerning the way of salvation by Christ Jesus? Are we blameless in judging wrongly about these things when our Heavenly Father, in compassion to human ignorance, is holding out to us the torch of truth, the light of his divine word? If we would form a correct estimate of any object in common life we bring it to the light, that we may examine it on every side: do so by all your pursuits, my friends; do so by your opinions, your motives, your hopes and fears, your souls and your circumstances, your plans and habits; all you have, all you are—bring all to the light,—the light of Scripture.—The individual whose judgment of things is erroneous cannot be innocent; his is guilty error, unless he has brought every thing to the light of divine truth, and has besought that light of heaven may shine into his soul. “Thy word is truth,” said the psalmist, “the entrance of thy word giveth light,” said he. Gospel light and truth then are one.

“When once it enters to the mind,
It sheds such light abroad;
The meanest souls instruction find
And raise their thoughts to God.”

The children of spiritual Israel still dwell in Goshen; light is in their dwellings and among them. Yes, there is a mental and a spiritual Goshen in which God causes his people for the most part to dwell. It still stands on record, “All thy children shall be taught of God.” “I am the light of the world,” saith Jesus, “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

There is also divine providence both in its bright and gloomy dispensations. If it is true (as it certainly is) that Jehovah fixes the bounds of his people's habitations—that the very hairs of their heads are numbered—that he has them under his special care and protection; it is equally true that their path through life is a chequered scene: it is not all light; not all enjoyments, and peace, and purity, and love with them in this world; but on the