

immigated by the hope of deliverance in time, but which, while the believer is in the exercise of a weak and acquiescent spirit, trusts in the Lord and lays himself upon his God, can never extinguish the spiritual glory, kindled, and enshrined in his consecrated breast. Be it then deeply and indelibly impressed upon our minds, as a most salutary and important truth, that if we are destitute of the tranquil, and holy comfort of the Spirit's interior testimony, the cause is wholly in ourselves. It is not God that withdraws from us; but we that withdraw from God. God does not, purely to display his sovereignty, hide from us the light of his countenance, but we by our unfaithfulness to Him, intercept the heavenly effulgence. Let us yield ourselves unto him to be governed by his word, and led by his Spirit; then shall our path be as "the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—Prov. 4, 18.

## MISCELLANY.

## OBSERVATIONS ON PRIMEVAL LIGHT.

The apparent contradiction in the Mosaic account of the Creation, which occasions the question of "Omega," in your second number, has been considered by Commentators in a variety of ways; and has given birth to numerous theories, some extremely fanciful, and not a few perfectly absurd. Some persons have supposed, that the incipient primeval Light was elemental fire; others, that it was a lucid cloud, like that which directed the children of Israel; and some have asserted it to be an infant sun, not yet grown to maturity! Without attempting to reconcile or refute these contradictory opinions, I shall merely state what I consider the most rational and the most satisfactory view of this interesting subject.

The first step in the formation of the earth, and the commencement of the six days' creation, was the production of Light. The command of the Almighty was issued in that concise and energetic sentence, which has retained its sublimity in almost every translation of the sacred volume; and to which an eminent Heathen author (Longinus de Sublimitate) pays the tribute of admiration,—“Let there be light, and there was light.”

It appears to me extremely probable, that this Light was an emanation from the same Sun which now enlightens the world; and which, though it did not appear in its full glory, yet produced sufficient Light to render the surface of the terraqueous globe visible. The objection to this theory, which arises from the 14th and 16th verses, is, in my opinion, of no weight whatever; although “the greater” and “the lesser light,” and “the stars,” are then first mentioned, it was not necessary to suppose, that they were then first created. The text does not say so; and there are strong reasons for believing to the contrary. Origen says, that “no man of a sound mind can imagine, that there was an evening and a morning, during the three first days, without a Sun;” and St. Basil ascribes the darkness that covered the earth, before the appearance of light, to the interposition of an obscure body between it and the heavens. To make, is often synonymous with, to appoint to a certain use. The Sun and the Planets might have existed, and most probably they did exist, before this period, although it was not till the fourth day of the Creation that the veil which obscured them was withdrawn, and the constellated canopy of heaven appeared, for the first time, in full unclouded splendour.

Allowing this hypothesis to be correct, the whole Hebrew Cosmogony appears clear and consistent. If this primeval Light emanated from the Sun, it could not, even imperfectly, illuminate more than one half of the world at one time; and, while that half was illuminated, the other must remain in darkness: and by this we may properly understand, “separating the light from the darkness;” namely by the ideal boundary of the horizon. But, in order to convey alternate light and darkness to every part of the globe, it was either necessary that the Sun should gradually revolve round the Earth, or the Earth turn gradually round its supposed axis towards the Sun; and this latter notion we now know to be the fact. Light and darkness being thus separated by the horizon, they would follow one another without interruption, and produce, successively, the

vicissitudes of “day” and “night;” two other terms for “light” and “darkness;” and the former being justly considered as the principal and most valuable portion of time, an entire revolution of light and darkness was denominated “one day;” the “evening” being the term of “light,” and the “morning” the term of “darkness.”—Imperial Magazine.

## FALSE REASONING DETECTED.

It is remarkable, that the effrontery of Deistical writers is not more glaring than their defective reasoning; but since they profess to support their own theory by reason, and attack every other with the same weapon, it appears surprising that they have not learned to use it with more dexterity. A tractate of Diderot's fell into my hands the other day, published by Carlile, London, 1819, entitled, “Thoughts on Religion,” which abounds with examples of this kind, many of which are profane, and others blasphemous. I have selected a specimen of the profane, and beg leave to present it to your readers, with its refutation.

“If reason be a gift of heaven, and we can say as much of faith, heaven has certainly made us two presents, not only incompatible, but in direct contradiction to each other. In order to solve the difficulty, we are compelled to say, either that faith is a chimera, or that reason is useless.”—Diderot, p. 4.

The sophistry of this passage appears obvious, by the author's being compelled to offer a solution in the choice of two absurdities. Thus, if reason and faith be gifts of heaven, one must be a chimera, or the other useless, because it is assumed that they are incompatible. The postulate must therefore be absurd in argument: let us see if it be not so in fact. Reason is a faculty of the mind; but faith is an act of the mind. There is, therefore, this distinction: the faculty is power; but the act is the result of power. Now, the faculty, which is power, is the gift of God; and the grace of faith also is the gift of God, that is, the power to believe: but the act is a man's own, resulting from the power which God gives. Inasmuch, then, as reason is a faculty of the mind, and faith is an act of the mind, they cannot be incompatible; for the mind cannot act independently of its faculties; and because what is contrary to reason a man cannot believe, no act of faith incompatible with reason can ever take place. Wherefore, to say, “that reason and faith are not only incompatible, but in direct contradiction to each other,” is absurd, both in argument and fact.

I am aware, it might be objected, notwithstanding, that we read of persons under delusion that believe a lie, which might seem to contradict my argument; but these either cannot reason, or they reason falsely. In the first instance, reason and faith are not put in opposition; and in the last, we find no contradiction, for their reason and faith are alike delusive. The conclusion is inevitable.—Imperial Magazine.

There is much good sense in a remark recently made by the Rev. Jabez Bunting, President of the Methodist Conference in Great Britain. It being proposed to raise a small additional sum for the Wesleyan Missionary Society,—“No,” said Mr. B. “I do not think it would be possible for you to raise £1,000 or £2,000; but talk of £5,000 or £10,000, and, I think, you will raise it. Lord Bacon somewhere observes, that heroic desires contribute greatly to health. If a man would succeed let him aim at great things, and, by the blessing of God, he will accomplish great things.”

TEMPERANCE AND PROSPERITY.—A distinguished merchant of Boston recently informed Mr. Cleaveland, of Salem, that a principal trader in a town in New-Hampshire, who had regularly bought all his goods of him, and had been obliged always to obtain them on long credit, remarked, this spring, when he came to purchase his usual supply of goods, “I shall ask you, sir, to credit me for only one-half of what I buy, and that half, for only six months—and the next time, I shall pay you for all my goods, in ready cash. O!” said his delighted trader, “we are all becoming thrifty, prosperous men, at —, we are growing rich. We expend less than one-eighteenth as much for ardent spirits as we did, two years ago. And the consequence is, our farms and

fences and buildings are all rapidly improving, and we shall soon be a wealthy town, a peaceful, a happy town.”

N. B. The town referred to, expended a few years since, for ardent spirits, annually, *Nine Thousand Dollars*; more than \$8,600 of which is now saved. When to this we add the superior health, vigour and prudence of temperate men, it is not surprising that the people are growing rich and prosperous. There is no village in the land where the people would not grow rich if they would totally abstain from the use of ardent spirits.

## INQUIRY MEETINGS IN ENGLAND.

In the London Evangelical Magazine for June, we find an interesting article from the pen of the Rev. Mr. James, “on the necessity and importance of ministers establishing and supporting inquiry meetings for the instruction of those who have been recently brought under religious concern.” After alluding to the important benefits derived from such meetings in the revivals on this side of the Atlantic, and showing from the very nature of the case, how admirably calculated they are to promote the object for which they are instituted, Mr. J. gives the following account of an experiment which he has himself lately made of their efficacy.

About three months since, after a sermon of more than ordinary solemnity, and which seemed to produce considerable impression, I stopped the congregation, as soon as the benediction had been pronounced, and gave a notice to the following effect;—“If any of you now present should be impressed by the subject which you have just heard, or should have been by any previous means brought under concern about your soul's salvation, and should wish to make known your feelings to me, I invite you to meet me in the vestry on Tuesday evening next, when I intend to set up a meeting for the private instruction, encouragement, and help of all such as are beginning to be anxious about their everlasting welfare. If you have not courage to come to a meeting of this kind, and to open your mind before others, call upon me at my house, where, however I may be employed, I will most joyfully welcome any one, at any time, who comes to me with that question, ‘Sir, what must I do to be saved?’” On the appointed evening, I found four and twenty persons, all of whom, with the exception of six, were utter strangers to me, though constant attendants upon my ministry; and all of whom I found to be in various stages of religious inquiry. Some few others, and one of them a professional gentleman of great respectability, called at my house. The evening at the vestry was spent in short conversations with each individual, which were intended to elicit, as far as decorum would allow, their general history and present state of mind. It was a season not to be forgotten. Two or three were laboring under the deepest and most poignant sense of sins and almost cried aloud; others had dim and vague perceptions of sin, and the need of something more than they felt, either in the way of conviction or of peace; others were halting between two opinions. The meetings have been regularly kept up, and the public notice of them frequently repeated, either during sermon or after it. Now cases occur almost every evening on which we assemble. About fifty persons have by this time conversed with me on the state of their souls, and desired to be instructed in the way of salvation. Of these, twenty-one are to be admitted into the fellowship of the church next Lord's day, and eight more to be proposed for fellowship at the next church meeting. Some few have declined attending, and have escaped my notice. It has been a most interesting and affecting scene, to see one member and another of my church bring to the meeting a person, and introduce them to me, with this remark, “Here, sir, is another inquirer after salvation.” In one instance, I found that an inquirer had brought, after her first visit, two others of whom she knew nothing but by that deep and tearful attention, which she saw them paying to the word, and from whose countenances, as from a mirror, she saw reflected the state of her own anxious mind.

My object in giving publicity to this detail is, to endeavor to impress by brethren in the ministry with the immense importance of inquiry meetings, and of isolating their hearers, and taking each by himself, especially those who are beginning to be anxious, as an object of special attention.