

THE CEASELESS ACT OF THE ALMIGHTY.

BY REV. WILLIAM BURGESS, L. C. P.. EDGEWORTH, C.W.

And God divided the light from the darkness."—Gen. i., 4.

"The works of the Lord are great; sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." And those works are not merely creative, but restorative,—works of salvation and of regeneration: great in their design—great in their accomplishment—great in their results. Such were his works of creation, as set forth in the chapter containing our text,—the visible heavens—the earth—the waters under the earth—the light—the darkness; these display his wisdom, power, and goodness. It is of a very small but distinct portion of his doings in the stupendous work of creation that we purpose to speak; not, properly speaking, a creative act, but an arrangement of that which had already been created. "God divided the light from the darkness." What Jehovah then did, in the exercise of his wisdom and power, he still performs throughout all his vast arrangements. "I form the light, and I create darkness; I the Lord do all these things." It is his *ceaseless act* to divide the light from the darkness.

Let us consider,—

1. The things spoken of in the text; and,—

2. What is affirmed concerning them.

1.—The things spoken of in the text, light and darkness. To each of these terms there are different significations.—There is what we term natural light; there are also mental and moral light (the illumination of the understanding and of the heart); there are also providential, spiritual, and eternal light: each of these has its opposite state of darkness. It is true that our text speaks only of light natural; yet, as the works of God in nature are often typical of his works of grace, we may follow the example of Scripture, and in tracing out the truths it teaches, may endeavour to prove, that in the whole economy of nature, providence, and grace, it is the practice and prerogative of God to divide the light from the darkness.

Light is a creature of God, without

which we could not well exist; yet, perhaps, we have never been sufficiently sensible of its value; perhaps we have not received it, walked in it, enjoyed it, and rejoiced in it as the gift of HIM who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Like all the gifts of our Heavenly Father, it is beautiful, and that beyond description. It cheers the heart of the prisoner when it shines through the grating of his solitary cell. It glitters in the frozen skies of Lapland, and sheds its golden lustre on the inhabitants of the torrid zone. It makes manifest, "for whatever doth make manifest is light." It enables us to avoid dangers and obstacles, and to travel safely in the most intricate paths. It frustrates the designs of wickedness: without it no profitable or useful occupations could be pursued; all would be confusion and danger; creation would be one viewless, cheerless, colourless, unvarying blank, and our lives would terminate in despair; for no ground could be cultivated—no harvest reaped—no commerce carried on—no word of God perused,—no knowledge of God conveyed to heathen lands. But Jehovah said, "Let light be, and there was light." The lovely transparent fluid sprang from nothing, into existence—glittered amidst the darkness—shone in the firmament—was treasured up in the sun, and for thousands of years has flowed thence as waters from a fountain, unceasing in its emanations, free to all and without diminishing in quantity or lustre. It is true the revolution of our earth around the sun and on her own axis gives us various gradations of light—the twilight, the morning, and the meridian day; but the sun is ever the same, like that Saviour whom he feebly shadows forth,—always glorious—always a blessing to mankind. "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun." But light is also pure; though it dwell in the most polluted places and shine on the filthiest dunghills it contracts no pollution.—it cannot be defiled. Such is light upon earth; what must it be in