



Concerning the Light

Isaac Penington 1616-1679, English Quaker Apologist

“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.” JOHN 1: 4-5

WHAT IS THE DARKNESS which comprehends not the light? Is it not man in the unregenerate state? "You were darkness," said the apostle, speaking concerning them as they had been in that state.

In what ways do people walk in darkness today?

Now it pleased the Lord, that in this darkness his pure light should shine, to gather man out of the darkness. For unless light should shine on man in his dark state, he could never be gathered out of it; but he that is turned to the light, and follows it, can no longer abide in the darkness; but comes into that which gathers and preserves the mind out of it. (*“...How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”* Matthew 23:37b)

In what ways have you been gathered into Christ?

But of what nature is this light, which shineth in man in his dark state? It is of a living nature; it is light which flows from life; it is light which has life in it; it is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Word eternal, which is the light of humanity. And those who come to the true understanding may thereby distinguish it from all other lights whatsoever.

(*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.”* Proverbs 3:5). There is a vast difference between it, and the reason and understanding of a man or woman; for the natural man or woman, with their understanding, is dead; but this is living light, and powerfully operating in people, as it finds entrance, and as their minds are joined to it. He that is dead, indeed, knows it not; but he that is alive unto God, feels the virtue of it. This light is above all gathered knowledge, and above all descriptions whatsoever, for it is of the nature of Him from whom it flows.

How can we put faith in something that is beyond our knowledge?

A person may get a notion from this into his mind, which he may retain the knowledge of; but his knowledge will quickly die. But he that dwells in the light ... dwells in that which never dies.

What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

“If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind...” James 1:5-6