

Expository Tracts, No. 104.

THE TRUE LIGHT:
ITS RECEPTION & REJECTION.

BEING
THOUGHTS ON JOHN I. 6-13.

BY THE LATE
BISHOP J. C. RYLE, D.D.

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JOHN I. 6–13.

- 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.
8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.
9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
10 He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.
11 He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.
12 But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:
13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We see in these verses *one principal position which our Lord Jesus occupies towards mankind*. We have it in the words, “He was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

Christ is to the souls of men what the sun is to the world. He is the centre and source of all spiritual light, warmth, life, health, growth, beauty, and fertility. Like the sun, He shines for the common benefit of all mankind,—for high and for low, for rich and for poor, for Jew and for Greek. Like the sun, He is free to all. All may look at Him, and drink health out of His light. If millions of mankind were mad enough to dwell in caves underground, or to bandage their eyes, their darkness would be their own fault, and not the fault of the sun. So, likewise, if millions of men and women love spiritual “darkness rather than light,” the blame must be laid on their blind hearts, and not on Christ. Their foolish hearts are darkened (John iii. 19; Rom. i. 21). But whether men will see or not, Christ is the true sun, and the light of the world. There is no light for sinners except in the Lord Jesus.

We see, also, in these verses, *the desperate wickedness of man’s natural heart*. We have it in the words, Christ “was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.”

Christ was in the world invisibly, long before He was born of the Virgin Mary. He was there from the very beginning, ruling, ordering, and governing the whole creation. By Him all things consisted (Coloss. i. 17). He gave to all life and breath, rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons. By Him kings reigned, and nations were increased or diminished. Yet men knew Him not, and honoured Him not. They “worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Romans i. 25). Well may the natural heart be called “wicked!”

But Christ came visibly into the world when He was born at Bethlehem, and fared no better. He came to the very people whom He had brought out from Egypt, and purchased for His own. He came to the Jews, whom He had separated from other nations, and to whom He had revealed Himself by the prophets. He came to those very Jews who had read of Him in the Old Testament Scriptures, seen Him under types and figures in their temple services, and professed to be waiting for His coming. And yet, when He came, those very Jews received Him not. They even rejected Him, despised Him, and slew Him. Well may the natural heart be called “desperately wicked!”

We see, lastly, in these verses, *the vast privileges of all who receive Christ, and believe on Him*. We are told that “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

Christ will never be without some servants. If the vast majority of the Jews did not receive Him as the Messiah, there were, at any rate, a few who did. To them He gave the privilege of being God’s children. He adopted them as members of His Father’s family. He reckoned them His own brethren and sisters, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. He conferred on them a dignity which was ample recompense for the cross which they had to carry for His sake. He made them sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

Privileges like these, be it remembered, are the possession of all, in every age, who receive Christ by faith, and follow Him as their Saviour. They are “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 26). They are born again by a new and heavenly birth, and adopted into the family of the King of kings. Few in number, and despised by the world as they are, they are cared for with infinite love by a Father in heaven, who, for His Son’s sake, is well pleased with them. In time He provides them with everything that is for their good. In eternity He will give them a crown of glory that fadeth not away. These are great things! But faith in Christ gives men an ample title to them. Good masters care for their servants, and Christ cares for His.

Are we ourselves sons of God? Have we been born again? Have we the marks which always accompany the new birth,—sense of sin, faith in Jesus, love of others, righteous living, separation from the world? Let us never be content till we give a satisfactory answer to these questions.

Do we desire to be sons of God? Then let us “receive Christ” as our Saviour, and believe on Him with the heart. To every one that so receives Him, He will give the privilege of becoming a son of God.