

forget the work of His own hands, not even the least thing or the least person.

"God who made the earth,  
The air, the sky, the sea,  
Who gave the light its birth,  
Careth for me."

—Hymn 509, Book of Praise.

"*In him was life*," v. 4. The Christian religion opens up the source of life. It is no mere philosophy speculating as to the why and wherefore of things. Nor is it a set of rules alone for holy living. It is infinitely more. It is the revelation of life, and of how men, dead in sin, may be made alive through God. None other than this Son of God has ever dared to say, "I am the Life of the World," and no other Gospel is like His; "He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11: 25, 26.)

"*The life was the light of men*," v. 4. Such it was in the bliss of Paradise. Their Creator's life fresh imbreathed into them, our first parents dwelt in the light. Because the life of God was in them they knew and loved and followed the good and the true, and walking in the light their happiness was complete. They rejoiced in all the good things which God had made. The light was shining; the world was full of light and joy.

In another sense also Christ's life was "the light of men." While on earth, wherever He went, He shed about Him the radiance of perfect candor, of sweet reasonableness, of tender compassion, of patience. His light shone in the darkness. He expects the same of those who profess His name. — "I am the light of the world"; "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." (Matt. 5: 14, 16.)

"*For a witness*," v. 7. A most honorable service. A service passed over to His disciples, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1: 8). It falls to us also to so confess Him before men. It is thus men are to be most certainly won to the Saviour.

"*That all men through him might believe*," v. 7.

"God loved the world of sinners lost  
And ruined by the fall;  
Salvation full, at highest cost,  
He offers free to all."

—Hymn 129, Book of Praise.

It is a delightful exercise in arithmetic to count the "whosoever's" of the Bible.

"*He was not that light*," v. 8. It requires grace to take a second place. John the Baptist, as we shall read a little farther on (v. 15, 20-27), possessed that grace, and thereby stands as an example. There can be but few leaders. How ludicrous to envy them, or to refuse to serve except in the place of honor. Such a thing should not once be named among Christ's followers, for any position in His service is an honor, and those who possess only the talent for an interior place do better work there than as leaders.

"*Which lighteth every man*," v. 9. A text which has bred much controversy. It is called the "Quaker's text," because on it "the Quakers found their doctrine that every man has a day of visitation, and that to every man God gives sufficient grace." (Expositor's Greek Text.) All will, however, agree that, whilst the world is dark, it is not all dark. The Eternal Light is still shining with subdued but steady radiance. It may be discerned by those who have eyes to see, in the goodness of God, in the rain from heaven, in the fruitful seasons which fill men's hearts with food and gladness. In conscience, too, not utterly silenced, it makes its existence known.

"*His own received him not*," v. 11. Think out the perils of proximity and familiarity and privilege.

"*Full of grace and truth*," v. 14. After such fashion, says John, did the Word "dwell among us." Picture the apostle in his old age looking back on those three years of precious intimacy, now so long past. He recalls every lineament of the features of the Man of Nazareth; listens again to his accents of love; trembles, as that voice becomes stern in the denunciation of wrongdoers; wonders afresh at the miracles of mercy; tarrys once more in the upper room and in the Garden and on Golgotha. "*Full of grace and truth*," He was indeed. All who have known and loved the Saviour of men give like testimony. None have ever been disappointed in Him.