

can see so perfectly the deepest and all but hopeless disease which lies at the patient's heart.

Verse 31. Therefore. Because he would bring these to the same position as the believers of verse 30. **Had believed him.** The Authorized Version misses the whole point here. These men were still Jews, and all they had done was to accept the truth of his words in the foregoing discourse. There was none of that surrender which "believing on him" implies. **If ye.** The pronoun is emphatic. With all that inveterate prejudice, even they could arrive at true discipleship if they would abide in that life-giving atmosphere, his teaching and his truth. Note that he makes no endeavor to conciliate their prejudice. The Servant of Jehovah is gentle, but uncompromising: "truthfully sets he forth law" (Isa. 42. 9). These imperfect believers could only be saved by renouncing their pride and becoming learners. But the gentle breath which was needed to fan into a flame the fading wick proves too strong for it.

32. Know. Literally, "come to know," a continuous process, never complete, for truth is vast as eternity. **Free.** So the Jewish saying. "Thou wilt find no freeman but him who is occupied in learning of the law," and the Stoic maxim, "The wise man alone is free." What the bondage is which they so indignantly repudiate our Lord explains later.

33. The proud boast (comp. Matt. 3. 9) marks their sense of an inherent incongruity between the ideas of bondage and of descent from Abraham. Egypt, Babylon, Syria, Rome had all enslaved them, but they refused to own it as any thing but a passing accident. God's people as such were free. **Thou.** Emphatic; "great though thou art, is thy word superior to the universal consciousness of the nation?"

34. Committeth. Not as an act, but as a life, when evil is chosen as the end of action. **Bond-servant.** Comp. Rom. 6. 17 and 20. Essentially the same thought lay in the name of Jesus (Matt. 1. 21).

35. Comp. Gal. 4. 22, *sq.* The allegory contained in the history of Ishmael and Isaac evidently underlies this passage. As Ishmael was cast out of the house of Abraham, so must the Jews be cast out of God's "house" (comp. chap. 14. 2; Heb. 3. 6), as no true sons of God, but slaves by birth. **The Son.** As such. The next verse shows that only One can claim this name as his right.

36. Make you free. By communicating his Sonship. They will be delivered from slavery, not to become mere freedmen with no right to "abide ever" in the Father's house. It will be freedom indeed when the slave becomes a son!

37. Remembering that this is a condensed re-

port of the dialogue, we can explain the assertion of this verse as prepared for by language not recorded. The indignant repudiation in verse 33 betrays the spirit which identified these Jews "who had believed him" with the body from which they only momentarily parted. **Yet.** Thereby showing that they were not true children of Abraham; they needed therefore to be made "free," and to that freedom Jesus once more invites them. **Free course.** They "believed him," so the "word" was admitted to their mind. But it could not penetrate further, and, therefore, as they would not "abide in" it, it could not abide in them.

38. The Father: do ye also therefore the things which ye heard from the Father. This marginal reading is to be preferred because (1) the time has not yet come for solemnly ejecting these not wholly hostile Jews from the family of God; (2) the phrase "the Father" is recurrent in this passage, and has no pronouns to give it a different meaning here; (3) the distinction between the Son, who sees, and the sons, who hear, becomes full of force when the same Being is described in both clauses. The words thus are a tender appeal to them to take even now the course which will make them free indeed. His Sonship means a perfect doing of the Father's will (chap. 5. 19); theirs may be won by "doing" similarly that will, which is here (chap. 6. 29) to "believe in him whom he sent."

39. The little rift within the dark cloud is swiftly closing up. Full of their aristocratic pride, they will not let themselves think of a higher parentage than an earthly one, and so do not care to understand the Lord's words. **If ye are.** So read. **Do the works.** The reading of the margin is the best, but it should be taken imperatively. Jesus bade them just now do the work of God; he now takes hold of their own words and bids them "do the works of Abraham," for in this case the result will be the same.

40. A man. The title is used here alone by the Lord in speaking of himself to bring out the human sympathy with which he tried to draw them. He contrasts their conduct with that of him who so greatly honored God's messengers and so readily obeyed God's command.

41. The sad, stern word is spoken, yet how gently! They are no kin of Abraham; their acts are necessarily due to a spiritual heredity. Let them ponder whence that stock of evil springs and recoil in horror ere it is too late. **We.** Emphatic; "we are not like the Samaritans, offspring of a nation wedded to many gods." This prepares for the taunt of verse 48, which arose from the events of chap. 4.

42. Came forth. The origin. **Am come.** The arrival. **From God.** Literally, "out of