

as not really belonging to the Gospel, although touching and beautiful). He continues His discourse. He speaks in the face of a storm of opposition, which increased constantly in violence, and reached its climax when "they took up stones to stone Him" (v. 59). We are to think of Jesus as standing in the Court of the Women "over against the Treasury" (v. 20) as He uttered these solemn and profound sayings.

### EXPOSITION

#### I. The Light-Giver, 12.

V. 12. "*Then spake Jesus again.*" Continuing the discourse interrupted by the coming of the officers of the Chief Priests and Pharisees to arrest Him (7 : 45). "*I am the light of the world.*" "The Feast of Tabernacles" recalls the life in the wilderness, with its two marks of God's special grace, the rock that gave water, the pillar of cloud and fire that gave guidance." (Reith.) Jesus had already declared Himself to be the only source of satisfaction for human thirst. He now identifies Himself with the guiding light: "Close beside Him were two gigantic candelabra, 50 cubits (75 feet) high and sumptuously gilded, on the summit of which nightly during the Feast of Tabernacles lamps were lighted, which shed their soft light over all the city. Around the lamps, the people in their joyous enthusiasm and even the stateliest priests and Pharisees joined in the festival dances." (Fairfax.) These magnificent temple lamps would give emphasis to the strange declaration that Jesus now makes,—"I am the light of the world." The Jews associated the coming of the Messiah with light. The aged Simeon, when he received the Child Jesus in the temple, spoke of Him as "A light to lighten the Gentiles." The Pharisees, therefore, could not fail to understand that in thus speaking of Himself He was claiming Messiahship. (See Isa. 42 : 6 ; Mal. 4 : 2.) "*Followeth Me.*" Israel followed the pillar of fire in the desert night. Here is One who can guide them out of the dark desert of sin into the blessedness of eternal light and life. "*The light of life.*" This form of expression is analogous to "The bread of life," the bread which sustains life, and to "the water of life," the water which, by quenching thirst, vivifies. It means the light which is needful to maintain spiritual life. Those who follow Jesus have not only the light shining through His perfect life for their guidance, but have the inward illumination of His indwelling Spirit as well.

#### II. The Deliverer, 31, 32.

V. 31. "*To those Jews which believed on Him.*" Notwithstanding the fiery opposition of the Pharisees, many believed on Jesus as they heard Him speak. (V. 30; compare 7:40.) No human terror can prevent the heart and conscience of men from answering to the voice of God. "If ye continue in My Word." Christ's response to the faith of these men was to test that faith in order that they might be led into a fuller and deeper faith (See 15:3-8). "*My disciples indeed.*" Jesus is never satisfied with surface work, and He here lays down the rule—a rule absolutely without exception—that continuance in His Word, that is, obedience and service, is the test of the reality of profession. As men do so are they.

V. 32. "*Ye shall know the truth.*" One can come really to know the will of God only in the measure in which he endeavors to do it. As our Lord Himself said in the earlier part of this same discourse, "If any man willeth to do His Will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God" (7:17). "*The truth shall make you free.*" We are in the region of deep things here and yet there are no hard words. The statement is profound but the language is of the utmost simplicity. The fact set forth is vital. No man with the spirit of a man is satisfied unless he is free. Christ here proclaims the true way to freedom; "The truth shall make you free." "The truth regarding the relation to Him and to God," says Dods in the Exp. Grk. Test., "would turn all service and all life into liberty. Freedom, a condition of absolute liberty from all outward constraint, is only attained when man attains fellowship with God (who is absolutely free) in the truth; when that prompts man to action which prompts God."

#### III. Free Indeed, 33-36.

V. 33. "*We be Abraham's seed.*" Some think that these words were spoken, not by the believing Jews, but by those as yet unconvinced