

V. 42.—Another party thinking that He had been born in Galilee, gave this as a proof that He could not be the Messiah, inasmuch as Bethlehem was the predicted birth place.

V. 44.—Christ's hour was not yet come, and therefore he was not apprehended.

Vs. 45, 46.—From V. 32 we find that the Pharisees and the chief priests had sent officers to take Him. But these officers could not fulfil their mission. His teaching completely disarmed them. There was in it something so authoritative, solemn, impressive and affectionate, that they were compelled to give this high testimony, Never man spake like this man.

#### LESSONS.

1. How eminent our Lord must have been as a public teacher of religion.

2. The evidence that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah cannot be gainsaid.

3. From Vs. 41 and 42 learn (1) That sometimes men either in ignorance or prejudice put scripture and facts in antagonism; and (2) That sometimes those who seem very zealous for the Scripture use it against Christ.

#### FIFTH SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*Freedom by the Truth*, John 8: 28-36.

The place and time are the same as those of last lesson. The persons specially addressed are the Scribes and Pharisees—those who were opposed to Christ and who sought His death. See Vs. 13, 19, 40.

V. 28.—The Jews would not listen to Christ's claims that He had been sent by God. He tells them here that when He was crucified they would see that He was the Messiah. The wonderful events connected with His death, resurrection, and ascension, and with the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost would prove the truth of His claims. When Christ speaks of doing nothing of Himself, as here and in ch. 5: 19 and 30, He does not mean that He is not co-equal with the Father, but that He can do nothing of His own independent authority. He refers to the perfect union between Himself and the Father. See v. 16.

V. 30.—*These words*—probably the whole preceding discourse.

V. 31—Only by abiding in Christ would they evidence the reality of their religion. Perhaps their faith was only that of the head—a speculative not a saving faith.

V. 32.—They would by honestly following Christ not only understand the truth of the gospel, but feel its power in their hearts. It would give them true freedom,—freedom not only from the heavy yoke of Phariseism, but from the bondage of sin.

V. 33.—Here comes out their Jewish pride. Compare Matt. 3: 19. They understood "bondage" in its literal sense. And yet their claim was not well founded, for at the time they spoke they were under Roman dominion.

V. 34.—See Rom. 6: 16-20; 2 Pet. 2: 19.

Vs. 35, 36.—"They had spoken of themselves as the seed of Abraham. The Lord

shows them that there may be, of that seed, two kinds; the son properly so called, and the slave. The latter does not abide in the house for ever; it is not his right nor his position—'Cast out the bondwoman and her son,' [i. e., Hagar and Ishmael] 'But the son [i. e., Isaac] abideth ever.' Ye then being in sin, are carnal; the sons of the bondwoman, and therefore need liberation. This liberation can only take place by means of Him of whom Isaac was the type—the Seed according to promise; those only who of His Spirit are born again, and after His image, are truly sons of God."—*Alford*. See Gal. 4: 19 to the end.

#### LESSONS.

1. A state of sin is a state of bondage—the very worst kind of bondage.

2. Many who are under the bondage of sin know it not. So far from that they kiss the chains that bind them.

3. The cordial reception of Christ, in other words the belief of the truth of the gospel, is that which alone can break these chains and introduce into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

The Sustentation Fund still does its work. The Committee's Report was given in by the new convener, Dr. Wilson, who made an excellent speech on the progress and state of the great financial support of the Church. He began by paying an admirable tribute to the transcendent services of Dr. Buchanan, who for twenty-eight years had been convener of the Sustentation Committee, and in that capacity had conducted the fund through many perils and difficulties to its present triumphant position. The form and memory of the lamented father seemed present to all the members of the house as Dr. Wilson spoke; and true sorrow for the departed swelled every heart.

The fund this year has reached the unprecedented figure of £164,330. After all requisite deductions, this allows £157 as a dividend to each minister, and a surplus of £36 to each minister whose congregation contributes at the rate of 10s. or more per member, with a surplus of £18 to each minister whose congregation contributes at the rate of 7s. 6d. per member, and below 10s. It appears that fully 500 ministers are entitled to the larger surplus. In their case the dividend is £193, only £7 below the full dividend contemplated by the Church.

The question of Church Establishment came up and was discussed for one whole day. Sir Henry Moncrieff's motion for disestablishment was carried by a vote of 397 to 84—over Dr. Begg's compromising resolution.