

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

The sudden appearance of Jesus at the feast of tabernacles, his mighty utterances in the temple, and the report of his wonderful works led many to a belief that this man from Nazareth was the Messiah of Israel. The rulers, however, not only stood aloof from the current, but set themselves against it. They sent a detachment of the temple police to arrest Jesus while he was teaching. But the officers listened to his words, and could not lay hands upon one who spoke like a prophet and a prince. Thus arose a division not only among the people, but, as a result, among their rulers; for even in the Sanhedrin was found a small company of men who were almost ready to accept Jesus as the Christ. It needed only an impulse to bring over the entire body of the nation, and to make Jesus in fact, as he was by right, the King of the Jews. But that impulse was steadily resisted by the crafty priests who were at the head of the nation, the vindictive Annas and the cold-hearted, worldly-minded Caiaphas. They employed all their power, and their prestige as well, to override the minority in the council, which embraced Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; good men, but lacking in the courage of their convictions. And thus at the feast of tabernacles an opportunity was lost, and the nation, through its leaders, rejected its heaven-sent King.

**Verse 12. Then.** On one of the evenings of the feast of tabernacles the golden lamps in the courts of the temple were lighted, and, as if in response, all the streets and housetops in the city were illuminated by the rejoicing people. Perhaps on the day following, while this blaze of light was still in the minds of the people, Jesus spoke the words of this verse. He was ever quick to see the correspondence between things seen and unseen, and to show "spiritual law in the natural world." (1) *Let our eyes be open to see divine analogies to earthly events. Again.* Calling attention to the discussions of the previous chapter. The incident of the woman taken in adultery is passed over as an interruption. **The light of the world.** He had already said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14); and that is true. But disciples are only torch bearers, and they obtain their light from him who is its source and life. Other lights may burn dim, or go out in darkness; that is the True Light which never fails. How much of this world's light in nineteen centuries past has come from Jesus! The world's light of civilization, of learning, of character, of philanthropic interest in humanity, has all been lighted at his fire. Contrast the Christian world with the Mohammedan or the pagan, and see how much earth owes to Jesus Christ. (2) *Let us receive light from him, and then impart that light to others who need it. Followeth me.* All that Christ asks of men is to follow him; but that simple word means the absolute surrender of their will to him. (3) *We cannot follow Jesus and have our own way unless his way is our way too. Not walk in darkness.* This is a dark world to one who walks alone in it. We are like wanderers on the prairie in a blizzard; like sailors in a storm without a pilot; like strangers in the mazes of a city. We need a guide, and in Christ we have one. (4) *Happy*

*is he who can hold on to Christ's hand in this world.*

**The light of life.** Not merely a light which he holds, but one which is in him, so that he himself becomes luminous, and gives light to others. (5) *There is an inner light to every disciple.*

Verses 13 to 30 are not given as a part of the lesson, but should be read carefully both by the teacher and the student. They give the outline of a discussion between Jesus and the unfriendly Pharisees; a discussion which resulted in many of the common people, and perhaps some of the rulers, accepting Jesus in a general way as an inspired teacher.

**31. Jews which believed on him.** Note the Revised Version, "had believed him," not "believed on him." There is a vast difference between believing Christ, accepting his words as true, and believing on him, resting their faith upon him as a personal Saviour. Many to-day stand where these Jews stood, believing in the truth of Jesus's words, but by no means taking him to their hearts by faith. Yet the believing Jesus is an important step toward the believing on him. (6) *Teacher, urge your scholar not only to take the first step of belief, but also the second step of faith. If ye continue in my word.* Revised Version, "abide in my word." They supposed that to recognize Jesus formally as their national Messiah was sufficient. Jesus reminds them that they are to dwell in his word as we live in the air which we breathe, and as that air lives in us and inspires us. **My disciples indeed.** The very word "disciple" means a learner. These Jews who accepted Christ are now to become students in his school, to receive his instructions, to walk in fellowship with him, and to model their lives after his. They were, in a sense, "disciples in word" by accepting Christ; they become "disciples indeed" in following Christ. (7) *Happy is he who is a disciple indeed!*