

Christ's words. It is not unlikely, however, that they were spoken to the very men who "believed on Him," for their belief was still infantile; they were but babes, with little light and little steadiness. Such pride of blood as theirs was not subdued in a moment. "*Never in bondage to any man.*" "They had Abraham's blood in their veins, but not his faith in their hearts." It was a mere political fiction that they had never been in bondage. Conquered and made captive over and over again, they declared that they had never submitted. It was not in the Jew to submit. But how sadly blind they were to the true meaning of Christ's words as to freedom. He now proceeds to enlighten them.

V. 34. "*The bond-servant of sin.*" (Rev. Ver.) The hideous truth is here exposed that they, as unregenerate, were bond slaves of sin, absolutely in the possession and power of evil, and the principle is clearly set forth that every man who commits sin is thereby a bond-servant of sin. See Rom. 6: 16; 1 John 3: 4-8.

V. 35. "*The servant abideth not in the house forever.*" The distinction is here drawn between the bond-servant who was a creature of the will

and pleasure of his master, and, according to the common practice, a mere chattel who could be sold or turned adrift at any time, and the son, who had a perpetual birthright to all the benefits and privileges of the family. Jesus is pressing home upon his hearers one of the consequences of their bondage to sin. They prided themselves upon being Abraham's children and therefore of the household of God. Jesus says, "As still in sin, ye are not sons but slaves; ye have lost your place in the household of Abraham, the father of the faithful." "*The Son abideth forever.*" This saying may be taken as a general principle, though its highest and unique application is found in Jesus Christ. (Heb. 3: 5, 6.)

V. 36. "*If the Son therefore shall make you free*"; i. e., if through the acceptance of Him as the Revealer of the truth, and Himself the truth of God, ye have been set free from the bondage of sin and, like Him, are become true sons of God, "*Ye shall be free indeed.*" "He only is a free-man whom the truth makes free and all are slaves besides." (How we become sons of God is fully discussed in Gal. 4: 1-7).

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

"*I am the Light of the world,*" v. 12, is an oft-recurring statement in John's Gospel. Jesus is verily the only true source of light for this dark, sinful world. As the sun is the source of natural light, whether in the strength of noon-day, or in the paler reflection of the moon, or in the fuel that blazes on the hearth, so Christ is the source of all the light that can lead men out of the darkness of sin into fellowship with truth and God. It is when we follow Christ that all questions that vex and trouble the soul find their true solution, and that our feet are firm and sure in righteous ways. "Like the basket of fire hung from a pole at the tent of the chief, the pillar of fire marked the camping-ground and every movement of the host of Israel. And those who believe in Christ have not only a chart or a guide in which they can pick out their own road, but a Light going on before which they must implicitly follow, and, following, walk in the true way of life." (Dods.)

"*If ye continue in my word,*" v. 31. There is a note of warning here. Jesus spoke these

words "to those Jews which believed on Him." He recognizes the possibility of a faith that forgets and a purpose of service that wavers. There are testing times in the experience of every child of God. The fire of first love is apt to cool. He finds the pathway of obedience more rugged than he had looked for. His feet waver. Instead of continuing in Christ's words, he is tempted to follow his own way. His doing fails to keep pace with his saying. It is a perilous position. No form of evil aroused the meek and lowly Jesus to a fiercer passion than hypocrisy. It is only by the steadfast doing of Christ's will that profession of his name is justified. "According to Xenophon, the ancient Persian monarchs selected as teachers for their princes the four best men in the kingdom, the wisest man, the most just man, the most temperate, self-controlled man and the bravest man, that the princes under these might be best fitted to be kings and rulers." All these the disciples of Christ find united in their one Master. He is the wisest, most just, most temperate and most brave Being