as faith wrought by hearing is  
higher than that by miracles; but still  
wanted confirming.

**31.] continue in  
my word** means to “*abide in Me*,” ch. xv.  
7, though that perhaps is spoken of a  
deeper entrance into the state of union  
with Christ. *Remaining in His word* is  
not merely *obeying His teaching*, but is the  
inner conviction of the truth of that revelation of Himself, which is *his word*.  
**ye are**, for probably they had given some  
outward token of believing on Him, e. g.  
that of ranging themselves among His disciples.

**32.]** In opposition to the  
mere *holding* of the truth. The *knowing*of the truth answers to the *feeding* on  
Christ ;—is the inner realization of it in  
the man. And in the continuing increase  
of this comes true freedom from all fear  
and error and bondage.

**33.]** The  
answerers are *those that believed*, not some  
others among the hearers, as many Commentators have maintained ;—see, as a  
proof of this, ver. 36, addressed to these  
same persons. They had not yet become  
disciples indeed, were not yet distinct from  
the mass of the unbelieving; and therefore, in speaking to them, He ascribes to  
them the sins of their race, and addresses  
them as part of that race.

**We be  
Abraham’s seed**: see Matt. iii. 9. The  
assertion that they had **never been in bondage to any man** was so contrary to historical truth, that we must suppose some  
technical meaning to have been attached  
to the word *bondage*, in which it may have  
been correct. ‘The words cannot be meant.  
of *that generation only*, for the word **never**(**never yet at any time**, literally) connects  
with their assertion that they were Abraham’s seed, and generalizes it. As  
usual (see ch. iii, 4; iv. 11; vi. 52), they  
take the words of our Lord in their outward literal sense. Perhaps this was not  
always an *unintentional* misunderstanding.

**34.] doeth sin**, not merely “*sinneth*,” for that all do; but in the same  
sense as “*work iniquity*” is said, Matt. vii.  
23. It implies **living in the practice of sin,  
doing sin**, as a habit: see reff. ‘he mere  
moral sentiment, of which this is the spiritual expression, was common among the  
Greek and Roman philosophers.

**35.]**  
I believe, with Stier and Bengel, the reference to be to Hagar and Ishmael, and Isaac:  
the *bond* and the *free*. They had spoken  
of themselves as the *seed of Abraham*. The  
Lord shews 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.’ ‘But the *son* abideth  
ever. For the application, see on following verses.

**36.]** Ye then, being in  
sin, are carnal: the sons of the bondwoman, and therefore need liberation.  
Now comes in the spiritual reality, into  
which the discourse passes from the figure.  
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 **free indeed**—truly  
sons of God, aud no longer children of the  
bondwoman, but of the free. See by all  
means Gal. iv. 19 (where the subject really  
begins, not at ver. 21) to end, which is the  
best commentary on this verse. There  
neither is, nor can be here, any allusion