

pelled, not voluntary, or where it is lowly only because the capacity for higher service is lacking. It is the spirit with which it is done which gives it grace and dignity. But this is only a limitation of comparison. That is the noblest spirit of service which from the highest place stoops to do that which is menial, only from the desire to help. It is not even conscious of the stooping but only of the lifting.

There can be no stronger, clearer closing words to the consideration of this Scripture than its own: "A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." May we all be able to claim this last beatitude!—*Rev. George M. Boynton, D.D.*



LESSON 4.—APRIL 23, 1899.

Jesus, the Way and the Truth and the Life.

(Lesson Text: John 14: 1-14. Commit to Memory Verses 2-6.)
(Study also Acts 4: 8-12.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life."—*John 14: 6.*

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: John 14: 1-14. Tuesday: John 17: 1-10. Wednesday: John 17: 11-19. Thursday: John 17: 20-26. Friday: Eph. 2: 13-22. Saturday: Acts 4: 1-12. Sunday: Heb. 10: 11-22.

The gospel is concentrated in this sentence. It is a text for a volume, not a sermon. What not to think and say is our problem. Hence the impression of the saying is as eloquent as its meaning. A phrase of Jesus opens vistas always into the infinite. Like this never man spake. It is the accent of the divine. It was at that answer, not at the offered nail-prints, that Thomas should have cried "My Lord and my God." For Jesus the transition from the visible to the invisible was at hand, and His wonted reticence about the heavenly seems about to be broken. In His speech there is a gleam of the splendor and amplitude of the Father's house. But ere many sentences the perspective contracts to the supreme center of interest, the Father Himself. All the terms of the text must be explained with this person, not the place, in view. They are successively ascending, or ever more penetrating and inclusive expressions of the same truth. Through Christ we come to God: He is the way; through Christ we know God: He is the truth; through Christ we share the life of God: He is the life. He is for us at once example, insight, and energy in attaining the destiny and the consummation of our being. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." I am the Way, for I am the Truth and the Life.

Truth that is also the life becomes the way, because of its calm certainty. One of the wisest of our religious teachers has called his book of studies into divine things "Guesses at Truth," a not too modest title for all human thinkers. We have our views, we cherish our opinions, we balance arguments and measure probabilities. Jesus alone does nothing of the kind. We never hear Him talk of His views or opinions. It is not His way to set forth evidence pro and con, and sum up the case with a strong appeal for what He sets forth as His candid judgment. If there were discovered anywhere a new saying of Jesus, expressed in that manner, we should need no textual critic to pass on its genuineness. We should each know that it was a forgery. Even when dealing with the profound mysteries of existence the style of Jesus is "Verily, verily, I say unto you."

But it is not enough to be positive. It is in virtue of what He is that Jesus dares to speak. "I am . . . the Truth, and the Life." And that is what men felt when they heard Him. Startled by the question of Jesus, before he had time to reason out an answer, the intuitive impression of Peter was struck out of him. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Have you ever in a mountain climb found yourself on some strange and dangerous steep, suddenly enveloped in cloud, all trace of direction lost, a yawning gulf, maybe, at your feet? But you are not lost. Your guide, or your expert companion is well on in advance of the party. He has passed the cloud and reached the ridge, and He calls back, "It is all clear here; I can see the way right to the summit; follow me and you will be safe." His position of advance gives him authority to speak. Astray in the mazes of our own wrong-doing, or bewildered in mists of doubt that blot out the landscape for us and chill our hearts, we hear the confident tones of One who is indeed to us "A voice from the heights." It is the voice of Jesus calling "Follow me," "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." He, too, is on the mountain above us—how far exalted, perhaps we cannot all of us yet see; but at all events well in advance, yes, well in advance of all the world's great thinkers and teachers of religion. Is it nothing that from that high ground He speaks to us with the voice of sure knowledge and decisive utterance? But the figure fails, for it is not only by His voice and words that He guides. His person, His life, His character are luminous and illuminating, shining before us like a clear light in the mists of earth to cheer and guide us above all clouds into the perfect light of truth.—*Rev. Charles L. Voyes.*



LESSON 5.—APRIL 30, 1899.

The Comforter Promised.

(Lesson Text: John 14: 15-27. Commit to Memory Verses 25-26.)

(Study also John 16: 1-15.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter."—*John 14: 16.*

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: John 14: 15-27. Tuesday: John 15: 17-27. Wednesday: John 16: 1-15. Thursday: 1 Cor. 2: 9-16. Friday: Rom. 8: 12-17 and 26-28. Saturday: Joel 2: 23-32. Sunday: Acts 2: 1-13.

In our lesson to-day Jesus says "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." What does this mean but that, having been carried along a certain distance in our Christian experiences, we shall not then halt and waver and perhaps turn back. To us as to the disciples it is expedient that Christ should go away—not that we should ever forget Him whose "blessed feet were nailed for our advantage on the bitter cross," or that life upon which rested constantly the beauty of holiness, but that we should enter more deeply into a relation with the spiritual and present Christ; should avail ourselves of the force which He is yearning to bestow upon us now and here. It is this kind of a relation to Christ which is testified to by the Christian experience of eighteen centuries and which is the source of any disciple's deepest peace and greatest power.

The promise suits itself particularly to our times. This age is better acquainted with the historic Jesus than any since the apostolic. But can we be satisfied with riveting all our attention upon the Man who lived and died? What we most need is a