



THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

FOR FORTY DAYS of the Great Fast we journeyed with Christ along the solemn road that led up the mount of Golgotha to the Cross. There we experienced the agony of the Lord's suffering and death, followed soon by the ecstasy of His glorious resurrection. Then came forty days of exultation as we rejoiced in the victory of Christ over mankind's great enemies - Sin and Death.

Now has come the time of the Lord's triumphant return to the Father, His solemn Ascension. His work on earth was done, so He prepared to go to His eternal home.

Have you ever bid goodbye to a loved one? You accompany him to the place of departure, the airport or train station; you listen to his final words, and then you gaze as the vehicle bearing the loved one disappears in the distance.

It was like that when Jesus bid farewell to His beloved friends. How graphically the Gospel depicts His leaving: Christ led the Apostles to a mount towards Bethany; this was as far as they could go. The Lord spoke to them for the last time -- "*... wait here in the city until you are clothed with power from on high ... You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses ... to the end of the earth ... Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*"

Then, as Christ blessed them, He was parted from the group, a cloud enveloped Him as He rose, and Angels came to minister to the Apostles. They, in turn, returned to Jerusalem "with great joy," remembering the Lord's promise to abide with them and to send the Holy Spirit upon them.