

breathing music and peace and prophecy of success as we go? Let us make up our minds to this, as the New Year approaches, that we will never set out at all unless we can take the blessing of Jesus with us.

Sometimes a ship starts out from port with sealed orders. The captain does not know to what destination he is sailing till he is already on the way. It is often done in time of war. Some cruiser has been fretting at the dock, with every soul aboard her anxious to meet and fight the enemy, when the captain orders that the hawsers be cast off and the engines started. Everybody wonders what it means, but the captain cannot tell. He shows an envelope which he is not to open till they are three days out. Three days come and go, and the envelope is opened. Then the ship is filled with cheering for the sealed orders are a command to join the fighting fleet at last. It was like that with the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Must these men and women not have wondered during the forty days what that promise meant? And then came Pentecost. The divine promises are always better in fulfilment than we expect them to be. No human being can possibly imagine anything so good as God gives.

Then He was taken up. It was better so. The Spirit means the presence of Jesus every-

where, whereas His bodily existence on earth would have confined Him to one locality. The Wright brothers, once they had learned to fly, began to manufacture flying machines so that anybody could fly that wanted to. Signor Marconi did not set himself to travel about the world with his wireless apparatus. That would have meant little benefit to the world. He set companies to work manufacturing it so that every ship might have it on board, and every soul upon every sea have its protection. Wherever you are, Christ is. Whatever you are trying to do for Him, He is helping. You are never alone, or unaided, so long as you are His friend.

The followers of Jesus are to act, not gaze. His last command sent the disciples to the ends of the earth. There is a temptation to be guarded against, in gazing up into heaven. We may doubt our religion if it is all comfort. True religion means labor and conflict. It is said that a man once came to Mahomet and said, "O prophet, my mother is dead. What trophy shall I give for her memory?" The prophet replied, "Water. Dig a well for her, and give water to the thirsty." The man did so, saying, "This well is for my mother." That is the spirit in which our Lord wishes to be remembered. It is thus that we prove ourselves His true followers.

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

This is the Christmas Lesson and falls into two distinct parts. Take up:

1. *The King Heralded*, Isa. 11:1-10. This is one of the most glorious pictures of the Messiah's kingdom found in Old Testament literature. It is the kingdom declared by John the Baptist to be at hand. Bring out the main thoughts which centre in the king: (a) the king's ancestry (v. 1; compare Matt. 1:1); (b) the source of the king's power, the sevenfold spirit (v. 2; compare Rev. 1:4); (c) the character of the king's reign, vs. 3-5. Each of these points finds abundant illustration in the teaching of Jesus; (d) the quality of the kingdom (vs. 6-8), setting forth the manifest blessings upon

all creation as well as upon humanity; (e) the extent of the kingdom (v. 9); (f) the method of its establishment, v. 10.

For the meaning of all this, take George Adam Smith's comment, "The 'zeal of the Lord' kindling the dark thoughts of the prophet as he broods over his people's need of salvation, suddenly makes a Saviour visible, visible just as He is needed there and then. Isaiah hears Him hailed by titles that satisfy the particular wants of the age, and express men's thoughts as far up the idea of salvation and majesty as they of that age can rise. But the prophet has also perceived that sin and disaster will so accumulate before the Messiah comes, that though innocent, He shall have to bear tribulation and pass to His prime through suffering." Prediction and fulfilment meet in Him.

2. *The King Enthroned*, Luke 24:50-53;