We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it unto you: come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.—Numbers 10:29.

What a gracious invitation and promise of Moses to his kinsman! A genuine Gospel call, though made long before the time of Christ! It met with the same refusal which the message often encounters today. Then it was reiterated with fresh and strong inducement. "If thou wilt go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do to us, the same will we do unto thee." Let us make this message our message and consider:

1. Our destination. "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, 'I will give it you.'" Not a word is said about the locality, the scenery or the occupation of this place. It is a most singular style of description to put upon the Gospel guideboards—"a place of which the Lord said, I will give it you." But in the New Testament I find it characterized in precisely the same language. For Jesus says: "I go to prepare a place for you." That is all.

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Yet how much is involved in these descriptions: “I will
give it you.” “I go to prepare a place for you.” A gift is supposed to benefit the giver. When Caesar bestowed a very sumptuous present upon one of his subordinates, the recipient said, “Sir, I am unworthy of such a gift.” And Caesar replied: “It is not the question what you are worthy to receive, but what it is worthy of me to give.” Be sure the Lord will give His people something worthy of Himself: a real, tangible, recognizable place, not some attenuated heaven where shadowy forms flit to and fro in a shadowy land, a dream-realm of ghosts, whose inhabitants know each other only by a kind of glorified telepathy. “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,” says the scripture. He is what He was on earth, a man with face and hands and eyes and feet; only glorified with ineffable brightness. This being so, our habitation must correspond. I believe that heaven is a real, defined place, not an infinite everywhere, a real locality with conditions and surroundings adapted to a body transformed and glorified.

Observe, therefore, some of the descriptions which are given of it. “There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.” That is good news for you, if you are a hard-worked Christian who often gets so tired that you ache in every bone and muscle in the Lord’s service. But just put it down in your religious notebook that there remains no rest for those who never get tired, just as there is no “well-done” awaiting those who have never been employed in well-doing. “I go to prepare a place for you.” But we must be prepared for that place which He has gone to prepare. And the best fitness you can acquire for that place is that you get so weary in patient life-long toil for your Master that when you get through it can truly be said of you, “He rests from his labors.” You cannot rest from your labors unless you have labored. “His works do follow him.” Your works cannot follow you unless you have worked. This is my first description of “that place of which the Lord hath said, I will give it you.”

But it is also a place of deliverance. “Let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you.” Mark the connection of thought. He did not say “This is the best world that was ever made: things are growing better and better; there is ten times more happiness than sorrow on the earth. Only live in the sunny side of the house, and keep your window curtains lifted, and you will be all right.” No such optimistic vaporing as this. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” “Let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you” in another world. The scripture says that Christ came “to deliver us from the present evil world.” Sin, sorrow, disappointment, and death are real facts, so real that it took the tremendous anguish of the cross to overcome them. And our Lord came into this world and put Himself beneath these things, in order that He might lead us out of them. Hence the significant words: “I go to prepare,” and from henceforth we are to look along the upward track of light which He left behind Him, awaiting His summons to come after Him saying triumphantly: “For our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.” Our hope and succor are not in assimilating ourselves to present conditions or in transforming those conditions, but in following the Lord in the upward path of glory. St. Cuthbert was once driven upon the coast of Fife by a terrific snow-storm, and to his disheartened comrades he said: “The storm bars our way over the sea; the snow has closed our path upon the land but the way to Heaven lies open.” Heroic and most scriptural utterance! Since our Lord ascended into Paradise He has “opened the king-
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dom of heaven to all believers." And He has never allowed the way thither to become blocked and never will. Therefore note the concluding words of the promise: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself." No soul is left alone to climb the scala sancta of heaven, the holy ladder on which the angels ascend and descend. Our forerunner Jesus has passed within the veil and He will come forth again and fetch us thither with Him, that where He is we may be also.

The chief glory of Paradise is that we shall see Him, and all blessing and glory in their relation to Him. "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off," or, as the words stand correctly translated in the margin of my Bible, "the land of far distances." I do not know that heaven is far off; but I do know that from it I can see afar off. And this to me is a most significant thought concerning it. The happiest and most exalted moments I ever know in this life are those when I stand on some high look-out of my New Hampshire home, and gaze off upon the blue hills in the distance, and see those hills rising, range upon range, as though they were the very portals of Beulah-land. There is something indescribable in these mountain-top experiences, and they never fail to lift me out of myself and bring me nearer to God.

"I shall see the King in his beauty and the land of far distances." Yes, all the pathway of my life, now stretching away behind me, each dangerous turn in the road—and how I was mercifully protected in passing it; each fortunate juncture and how I was brought to it; the whole landscape of my history from the cradle to the crown, now lying like a panorama at my feet. My earthly life is at present like a dissected map. I can see the parts lying connected here and there; but in glory I shall see it put together, part fitting into part, and all making up one wondrous whole. I shall see how it all stands related to my glorified Lord, into whose face I am gazing. I shall see the King in His beauty, and all standing in blessed relationship to Him, He, the author and finisher of my faith; He the architect and builder of my life; He, the origin and end of all my ways, though I knew it not. What reason will there be for praise when I stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, in company with those who have been redeemed from among men: For, in the glorified Christ, all contradictions shall vanish, all mysteries be explained, all things be seen to have worked together for good to them that loved God, and were the "called, according to his purpose." Therefore, I consider it to be the greatest promise of the future: "They shall see his face." For when we see Him we shall see all in Him and Him in all.

2. Our traveling companions. "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." It is the instinct of true piety to seek companionship in the heavenly journey. If one is perfectly contented to go to heaven alone, it is the best evidence that he is not going there at all. "See that man," said Dr. Guthrie, alluding sarcastically to a selfish Christian, "his religion is just the size of his coffin, exactly large enough for himself, and no larger." If there is one thing which you ought to be zealously eager for, it is that your Christianity should be like a carriage, in which there is always room for more, and from which you are always reaching out to urge others to come in with you. It is the peculiarity of the church to be ever inviting. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come" is the description which our Lord gives of it. I would that we might all so imbibe and master this characteristic that, whether at home or abroad, this
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word "come" should be always on our lips. The love of Christ and the love of man conspire at this point. If you love Christ, how can you but long to give Him those whom He has purchased at the price of His bleeding toil on Calvary? If you love your fellow men, how can you but long to bring them to Christ? Let me press the question upon you. Do you feel this longing? Do you have it concerning the heathens? Do you have it concerning your neighbors? Do you have it concerning your own family? You remember that touching conversation between Judah and his brother Joseph in Egypt. When it was proposed to leave Benjamin as a hostage, Judah broke out, pathetically, "How shall I go up to my father and the lad be not with me?" Have you set your face heavenward, and have you a confident title to a mansion in glory? But, my brother, the only valid assurance that you shall have a home with Christ hereafter is that you have the heart of Christ now. He, our Divine Lord, knew that in a little while He would return to His Father, whence He came; but little place did this anticipation have in His thoughts compared with His solicitude to bring others thither with Him! His heart was occupied in seeking and saving that which was lost; He yearned for the cross, because by that cross He could bring many souls into glory. His question was not how can I get back to the glories of heaven, but "How can I bring the lost, ruined and suffering children of men into that glory?" All the sorrow of Gethsemane and all the agony of Calvary were an answer to this question. This, my brother, is the plainest token of Christ-likeness, not merely that you are ready to lose all to win heaven for yourself, but to lose all to bring others to heaven.

But now observe: If you are to succeed in bringing souls to heaven with you, it must be distinctly seen that you are journeying that way yourself. A Christian cannot look in one direction and live in another without utterly neutralizing his influence. Your profession and your conduct must both point the same way if you expect men to go that way. For the invitation is not only "come," but "come with us." Suppose you were to go to the Boston depot tomorrow morning and buy a ticket for Portland, and go to a train headed for Portland, and get into a car marked for Portland and take your seat. I come along and you see me and raise the car window and call out to me, saying, "Come, go with me to New York." I would be likely to reply, "Why, my friend, don't you see that you are not going to New York yourself and how can you invite me with you?" You smile at the absurdity of the suggestion. But it is the literal translation of a constant fact. There are professed Christians all about us whom God has commissioned to cry, "Come." But they are not going themselves and therefore they get no one to follow them. They have become earth-minded and hence they can do nothing to make their hearers heavenly-minded. O God save me from this paradox of apostasy, trying to beckon men to heaven while I am beckoning them toward earth by my love of self, or love of evil, or love of money. And there are Christians all about us who are exhorting men to repentance, who have practically repented of their own repentance and gone back upon it. They have their baggage all marked and checked for a worldly station, which station is named "wealth," or "ease," or "good society," or "high position," and then they say to the unconverted: "Come with us and we will do you good." And men will not come with them, because they are just discerning enough to see that they are on the same line as themselves. You remember how in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, when Christian and Hopeful told Athe-
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ist that they were “going to Mount Zion,” Atheist “fell into very great laughter.” Nor are we told why. Perhaps because he saw that they had bought their tickets for the Slough of Despond instead of Mount Zion and was chuckling to think of their discomfort when they should reach their destination. Ah! my hearers, whither are you going? This is the question, and not what are you saying and professing. Are you sure that your destination is heaven? Like pilgrims of old going up to Jerusalem, are you singing your song of degrees, saying, “We go from strength to strength till every one of us appeareth in Zion before God”? Is your path “the path of the just that shineth more and more unto the perfect day”? If so, you may invite others to go along, too.

3. Our inducements. “And we will do you good.”

This is the Christian’s business. And if he is to succeed he must be always at it. The world’s maxim is, “Get all you can”; Christ’s rule is, “Give all you can.” The world says, “Gain all the good in your power”; Christ says, “Do all the good in your power.” So in that grand summing up of the Epistle to the Hebrews it is written, “But to do good and communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” “Sacrifices!” “I thought sacrifices had been abolished,” you say. Not abolished, but transformed; made memorial instead of expiatory. We say Christ died that we might not die. More truly should we state the case were we to declare that He died that we might die, He died for sin that we might die to sin; He bore the cross for us that we might bear the cross with Him and for our fellow men. His crucifixion has ceased indeed, since “by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified”; but only that we might prolong it among lost and sinning men forever. You will tell me that I make the