

Vol 15312 (873)
 about of place
 p. 191 and promise

OUR DESTINATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

"We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, 'I will give it you.'" (Num. 10: 29). 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 guide-boards—"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.

And 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 Cæsar bestowed a very sumptuous present upon one of his subordinates, the recipient said, "Sire, I am unworthy of such a gift." And Cæsar replied, "It is not the question what you are worthy to receive, but what the Emperor is worthy to give." And 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 mind-reading. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see him as he is," says the Scripture. And he is what he was on earth, a man with a real face and hands and eyes and feet; only glorified with ineffable brightness; one who can still say, "Handle me and see that it is I; a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." This being so, our habitation must correspond. I believe that heaven is a real defined place, not an infinite everywhere, a real locality with material conditions and surroundings adapted to a material body only 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 note-book 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." And you cannot rest from your labors unless you have labored; "and his works do follow him," and 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 vapping 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

ter 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. Guthbert 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 kingdom 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.

And 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 out-look 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 now like a dissected map. I can see the parts lying disconnected 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 now 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.

GIVING AND GOING.

PURSE and person usually go together. If we can get one to give himself he will generally give his money; and if we can get one to give his money he will sooner or later give himself. The venerable missionary, Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, so long associated with the work in Turkey, thus gives the story of his boyhood's giving. Who knows how fast the boy's consecration may have determined the self-consecration of the man. The story was