

lessness. Let us inquire where we can best serve God, best rescue the perishing, best seek and save the lost, and, going in the strength of the Lord God, let us carry His Gospel to every creature.—*The Christian*.

### THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

KEDESH: JESUS OUR SANCTUARY.

BY THE REV. RURAL DEAN ARMITAGE, ST. CATHARINES.

The first in order of the Cities of Refuge appointed by God was Kedesh, in Galilee, in Mount Naphtali. It was beautifully situated on a lofty ridge about twenty miles from Tyre. It was surrounded by a well-watered plain, which had been highly cultivated and sustained a large population. The city itself was well fortified against attack. It was the birthplace and residence of Barak, and it was there that he and Deborah assembled the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali when they "jeopardied their lives unto the death" in the great battle against Sisera, the captain of the hosts of Canaan. It was afterwards known as Cades, and is now called Kedes.

The name Kedesh means a sanctuary, a holy place. The first thought connected with sanctuary is that it is a sacred or consecrated place. A temple implies a sanctuary, and the word as used in the Old Testament is well defined in Exodus, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." But the word sanctuary has a wider meaning. It is a sacred asylum or refuge, a place of protection. It is also used in the sense of rights of sanctuary, of the privileges attached to certain places in virtue of which accused persons obtained protection for a longer or shorter period.

The sanctuary, to the saints of old, meant any place in which God deigned to dwell or to manifest Himself. Thus Jacob, when he awoke from the dream, in which God visited him with such manifest lessons of His loving care, said, "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So William Cowper, the Christian poet, could write,

"Where'er they seek Thee Thou art found,  
And every place is hallowed ground."

But God also met His people in a special manner in His house. "Ye shall reverence my sanctuary." The tabernacle was His sanctuary, as was also the temple, afterwards, and the synagogues also, as places set apart for prayer and study of the Word. The holy of holies was also designated the sanctuary. The altar furnished rights of asylum in Israel. At the corners of the altar were four horn-shaped projections, to which the victims were tied in sacrifice, and which were smeared with blood in the sin offering. The symbolical meaning of the horns was might, and they were object lessons of the mighty salvation and the perfect security which God offered the believing soul in approaching Him, and of the mercy which He offers to the sons of men. Here was the inviolable sanctuary, grasping which the refugee, if free from criminal intent, was safe from the strongest, for his appeal was not only to the mercy of man, but also to the protection of the Almighty. It was this sanctuary which Adonijah sought when he "feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar" (I. Kings 1: 50). So Joab, for the same cause, "fled into the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar."

As a general rule all heathen temples and altars afforded the privileges of sanctuary protected by the rule that it was a sacrilegious act to attempt to remove by force, or to offer bodily harm to any person who had sought the protection of a deity. The provision made in the Jewish economy by which a refugee was kept free of all expense for food, did not obtain amongst the heathen, and he was only allowed to remain while his means lasted. The celebrated temple of Diana at Ephesus acquired rights of protection, even beyond its own boundary walls, and made a part of the city proper a sanctuary. We read in the Book of Judges that the house of the God Berith in Shechem contained an asylum, or place of refuge in a "hold," which probably means vault, for one thousand men.

In early days the right to take refuge in a Christian Church was recognized both by Church and State. The first Christian emperors granted this privilege with the clear understanding that it was not to be used to frustrate the ends of justice by sheltering hardened offenders and systematic criminals, but to afford a refuge to the innocent, the weak, and the misunderstood. Abuses soon sprang up, however, when the worst criminals received protection, and the right of sanctuary was abolished, except in a few Churches. The idea gained a strong hold upon the popular mind, which is illustrated from more standpoints than one by the case of Guntram, king of the Franks, in 561, who thought when he entered the Church at Arles that he required no guard of soldiers. Yet when he was attacked by an assassin, it was thought to be sacrilege to put to death even the man who attempted the murder, because he had been dragged from the Church. The privilege belonged to many Churches in England, notably Westminster Abbey and Beverley Minster. Tradition says that Sebert, the first Christian king of Essex (A.D. 604), conferred the privilege of sanctuary upon the Church at Westminster. Dean Stanley shows that the privilege was much abused, and says that "the precincts of the Abbey were a vast cave of Adullam for all the distressed and discontented in the metropolis who desired, according to the phrase of the time, to take Westminster."

Jesus Christ is the true *Sanctuary*. He fulfils all that the city of refuge suggested. He is our Kedesh, our place of refuge, our sanctuary, our sacred place. His name is Saviour, and He is mighty to save. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Prov. xviii. 10).

The altar was the meeting place between God and the sinner, where the innocent victim was offered in the place of the guilty sinner. So Christ is the true altar, the meeting place between God and man, the one and only priest, the one and only sacrificed, the one and only atonement for sin.