

Not our Virtues, But our Needs.



HE six cities of refuge were for the Israelite and the stranger alike. They were for every man who needed them. But not every man was expected and invited to dwell in them. We could imagine a Jew coming to one of them, and stating his case to the elders at the gate: "I am an Israelite, of a godly and reputable family. I have constantly hept all the feasts and fasts of my nation. I have never lifted my hand against my neighbour, nor wronged him of his goods. The elder of my city can testify to my good character; and I pray you let me dwell here!"

They would ask him, "But have you slain any one!"

"No, I thank God my hands have never been stained with blood!"

"Is there any avenger of blood pursuing you? Are you in danger!"

"No; I am at peace with all men; and all men at peace with me."

"Then," they would say, "this city is not for you. It is not your *virtues* that are to commend you to our protection, but your *needs*. If you are not in danger, you do not need a *refuge*!"

... so with the sinner. Instead of telling Christ his virtues, let him tell Christ his needs. It was the man who knew his danger who fled to the city of refuge: and it is the *sinner* who needs to fly to Christ! Till the high priest died the man in the city was safe. While our High Priest lives, we need not despair; and *He* lives for ever!

THE visible church is one whose members let their light shine. The invisible church is one whose members have let their lamps go out. The church can never light the world, except by keeping up a Christianity visible and recognizable in the world's darkness. If a Christian's lamp is not bright enough to light others heavenward, it will fail to light the Christian himself in that direction. If the example does not shine, the life itself is lacking in light. Badly lighted churches are not always those where the gas is dim, but often they are those where the members fail to be apparent.—S. S. Times.

IF we know anything of our Divine Master, can we doubt that He has left us ample time to do all he wishes us to do? But we have not five minutes to spare!

The Lost Day.



HAT day is lost, in which I have not learned something from the Word of God! Every day I should open the sacred volume, and every time I open it I should seek to discover some treasure of knowledge which I never possessed before.

That day is lost in which I have not done some *act of benevolence*! Where this can be done as a part of my regular calling, I ought to thank God for an employment which offers such occasions of serving God. I cannot live aright without continually looking forward to that solemn award, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. Doing good to the soul is better than doing good to the body; but both may be attempted every day. "Pure religion," or pure religious service, as the word there means, consists largely in visiting "the fatherless and widows in their affliction."—(James i. 27.)

That day is lost, in which I have not gained some *victory over sin*! Our indwelling corruption is to be put to death by repeated strokes. The conquest of one habit marks any day with colours of joy. The sensible lessening of any evil temper, or the denying of any evil propensity, is better than all the gains of business. Every sin that is mortified is so much weight thrown off in the race.

That day is lost, in which I have not enjoyed some *communion with God*! This is the very life of the soul. He is not living aright, who does not seek this heavenly intercourse day by day.

That day is lost, in which I have not sought in prayer some spiritual blessing for myself or others! Such prayers ought to be earnest and importunate, and we ought to remember them, and look for gracious answers.

That day is lost, in which I have allowed myself to remain *unreconciled* to a brother! The sun should not go down upon our wrath.

That day is lost, in which I have not made some *advance* on my way to heaven! The traveller justly regards it a day lost when he lies by, and does not go forward in his journey.

Alas, how many lost days are marked in the calendar of our past life! The time is short—death approaches. Shall I not begin this day to do some of the neglected work for which I was sent into the world?

FLY in your troubles to Jesus Christ. The experience of upward of thirty years enables me to say, "No man ever had so kind a friend as He, or so good a master. View Him, not at a distance, but as a prop, a stay and a comforter ever at hand, and he will requite your confidence by blessings illimitable."—Sir Henry Havelock.