



LESSON,—SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1907.

**The Cities of Refuge.**

Joshua xx., 1-9. Memory verses, 2, 3. Read Num. xxxv., 6-34.

**Golden Text.**

My refuge is in God. Psalm lxxii., 7.

**Home Readings.**

- Monday, Oct. 28.—Josh. xx., 1-9.
- Tuesday, Oct. 29.—Num. xxxv., 9-34.
- Wednesday, Oct. 30.—Deut. iv., 32-40.
- Thursday, Oct. 31.—Deut. xix., 1-21.
- Friday, Nov. 1.—II. Sam. xxii., 1-20.
- Saturday, Nov. 2.—Ps. xlvii.
- Sunday, Nov. 3.—Ps. xci.

**FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.**

Did you ever do anything wrong when you really did not mean to? Perhaps you broke a valuable vase through no fault at all of your own. Do you remember how hurt you felt when people blamed you and called you naughty when you knew that you really had not done anything wrong? I am afraid we can all remember such accidents because people so often misunderstand us, but we may be sure that God does not, because he can see our hearts. After the Israelites were settled in Canaan, God reminded Joshua that there was something he had not done yet. Many years ago God had thought about this plan, and told Moses to tell the Israelites about it, and now the time had come to have it settled. You remember that God had commanded his people not to kill each other, and said that if they did kill, then they would have to be killed themselves. But God knew that sometimes a man might kill another by accident, and then it would not be right that he should be punished with death.

Draw a picture of the city with its gates standing open and the tired man running along the road with two of the Levites running beside to help him until at last he reaches the city and is safe from his pursuer. Be sure to make them understand that it was the sin in the heart that needed punishment in God's eyes, the ugly hate, not the accidental blow. Try to bring home to them Christ's point of view in Matt. v., 21, 22. Of course the central thought of the lesson is the refuge we may find in God from all evil.

**FOR THE SENIORS.**

Reading up the earlier references to this will show how much a part of the new law this idea had always been. The commandment given to Moses was now to be carried out by Joshua. The cities of refuge were to be easily accessible to all the inhabitants and everything was to be done to secure the rule of Justice. It was necessary in those unsettled times of formation that murder should receive a summary punishment, but thoughtless revenge must be discouraged. It was not the idea, as in similar heathen customs, that all comers should receive sanctuary, for the real murderer was to be handed over impartially to the hands of justice. There is much of symbolism in the plan that is readily recognizable.

**SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.'**

Places of refuge where, under the cover of religion, the guilty and the unfortunate might find shelter and protection were not unknown among the ancient heathen. The jus asyli, or right of shelter and impunity was enjoyed by certain places reputed sacred, such as groves,

temples, and alters. This protective power commonly spread itself over a considerable district round the holy spot, and was watched over and preserved by severe penalties. Among the Greeks and Romans the number of these places of asylum became very great, and led, by abuse, to a fresh increase of criminals. Tiberius, in consequence, caused a solemn inquiry into their effects to be made which resulted in a diminution of their number, and a limitation of their privileges.

This pagan custom passed into Christian custom. As early as Constantine the Great, Christian churches were asylums for the unfortunate persons whom an outraged law or powerful enemies pursued. Theodosius extended this privilege to the houses, gardens, and other places which were under the jurisdiction of the churches. This privilege prevailed in the whole of Catholic Christendom, and was preserved undiminished, at least in Italy, so long as the papal independence remained.—Biblical Encyclopaedia.

Wickedness and injustice lie in the intentions.—Aristotle.

A wise man forgets old grudges.—Chinese Proverb.

There is no method of obtaining God's protection but by adherence to His laws.—William E. Channing.

**(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')**

It requires only to look at the map to see how wisely these spots were marked out, so as to make a city of refuge easy of access from all parts of the land. They were chosen, it will be observed, out of the priestly and Levitical cities, as likely to be inhabited by the most intelligent part of the community.—'Cambridge Bible.'

Note. Not only was the situation of these cities such as to present the easiest access from all parts of the country, but roads were to be built to them (Deut. xix., 3). 'According to the Rabbins, in order to give the fugitive all possible advantage in his flight, it was the business of the Sanhedrim to make the roads that led to the cities of refuge convenient, by enlarging them and removing every obstruction that might hurt his foot or hinder his speed. No hillock was left, no river was allowed over which there was not a bridge. At every turning there were to be posts erected bearing the words, Refuge, Refuge, to guide the unhappy man in his flight, and two students in the law were appointed to accompany him, that, if the avenger should overtake him before he reached the city, they might attempt to pacify him till the legal investigation could take place.'—F. R. Beard.

Christ is the City of Refuge. It is not the church, it is not the altar; it is Christ himself who is the one and only sacrifice for sin, and therefore the one and only hiding-place to which the sinner can repair. But there such a refuge is provided as will meet the case of sinners of every class, not excepting the wilful murderer himself, if he repents, and that refuge is the everlasting love of God revealed in Jesus Christ, crucified for our sins, and raised from the dead for our redemption.

'God has done all he can to aid and draw men to Jesus. Now, beloved, I think this is a picture of the road to Christ Jesus. It is no roundabout road of the law; it is no obeying this, that, and the other; it is a straight road; "Believe and live." It is a road so hard that no self-righteous man can ever tread it; but it is a road so easy that every sinner who knows himself to be a sinner might by it find his way to Christ and heaven. And lest they should be mistaken, God has sent me and my brethren in the ministry to be like hand posts in the way, to point poor sinners to Jesus; and we desire ever to have on our lips the cry: "Refuge, refuge, refuge." Sinner, that is the way; walk therein, and be thou saved.'—Spurgeon.

**BIBLE REFERENCES.**

Ex. xxi., 13, 14; Deut. xix., 1-13; Psa. xviii.,

10; xxxii., 1; xvii., 2, 3; xvic., 1; Matt. xi., 28-30; Rom. viii., 1; Matt. v., 38, 39; I. John iii., 15.

**Junior C. E. Topic.**

Sunday, November 3.—Topic—'Acquainted with God.' Job. xxii., 21, 22. (Consecration meeting.)

**C. E. Topic.**

**TRYING AGAIN.**

Monday, Oct. 28.—Peter's denial. Matt. xxvi., 69-74.

Tuesday, Oct. 29.—Peter trying again. Acts iv., 1-13.

Wednesday, Oct. 30.—David trying again. Ps. li., 10-15.

Thursday, Oct. 31.—Israelites trying again. II. Chron. xiv., 1-7.

Friday, Nov. 1.—Jonah's second chance. Jonah iii., 1, 2.

Saturday, Nov. 2.—The Ninevites trying again. Jonah iii., 5-10.

Sunday, Nov. 3.—Topic—A fresh beginning. Jonah iii., 1-4. (Consecration meeting.)

**Growing.**

I was staying in one of the best Christian homes at Elsternwick, in Australia. A young lady said one day, 'Dear brother, I do not see my plant growing. I water it; I try my best with it, but I don't see that it grows.'

I said, 'What is the matter with it?'

'I don't know; I put water on it and manure it. I have done all that I could, but I do not see any growth. There are a few leaves on the top, but no growth.'

I said to her, 'Perhaps there is something at the bottom, did you ever think so?' Oh, she said, 'I never thought of that.'

She took a knife and dug to the bottom of the plant to see if there was anything there. She found a big maggot just at the root and took it out.

She said to me, 'What a big maggot I found at its root!'

I said, 'That was the hindrance of your plant's growth. You put manure and water on it, but you didn't find out what was hindering its growth.'

When I went to Ceylon, she wrote me a letter, in which she said: 'My plant is growing now. I have learned two lessons from it. First I found out the reason why my plant was not growing, because there was a maggot just at its root; second, that told me exactly the state of my soul.'

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