

scribed "Refuge"; and that the roads themselves, leading to those cities were kept in good repair. So, from every portion of our life, and life's experiences, there is a road leading direct to Christ, and salvation, and safety. And the Holy Spirit, in His outward dealings (which we call "Providence"), as well as by His inward monitions, is ever pointing us to the Saviour.

It was a man's needs, and not his virtues, which became his passport to safety and refuge. When the elders examined the man, before they "took him unto them," it was not to find out how good he was, but to know if he was in danger. So the poor sinner who comes to Jesus, comes on the simple ground of his own need (exposed as he is to pursuing wrath), and of the Refuge provided for such as he.

And there he was free to remain till the death of the High Priest that should be in those days. Now, this provision, like the prophecy that Christ should "make His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death," had no particular reference to the safety found in the Refuge; but only in its spiritual suggestions. Christ might have had His grave with the righteous, or among the poor, and our Redemption been wrought out none the less: but it strengthened, and still strengthens, His people's faith, that the small circumstances of His death, as well as the great facts, were all foreknown and foretold. And the Lord might have provided a refuge for seven years—till heat had cooled down, and a blood-compensation to the family of the slain man had been arranged—and then let the slayer return; but we should have lost the best lesson of the whole, for the man-slayer, like the escaped sinner, was safe *as long as his High Priest lived!* No autumn tempest nor decay can ever strike *this* unwithering leaf! "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!" O glorious Refuge! O unfailing Rest!

And the man was not taken into idleness in the City of Refuge; any more than the saved sinner is to sit down and do nothing, because he is saved. The suburbs and fields of the cities of the Levites were all measured a thousand cubits outward from the walls each way; and the refugee would be expected to work, even as others in the city. It seems to me if I had been there, I would have

begged the privilege of working—not far from the walls—as far away as possible from the little dried-up brook, or ridge, or row of landmark-stones, that made the limit of the city and the outer verge of safety; and to be on the other side from the long-visible point where the enemy was persistently watching, hoping for an opportunity of reaching me. But how foolish and how wicked it would be for a man to try how near the limit he could come, without losing the protection of the City of Refuge! And even, perhaps, to make feints of stepping over the border! So, it is not right for the Child of God ever to be asking, "How near can I live as the world lives, without losing grace? Is there any sin in a quiet, social dance? In tobacco? In a single glass?" It is coming too near the border! It is tempting the enemy! It is wrong!

And it might often happen, that a man had a choice of cities. Shechem might be as near as Kedesh, or he might know the road better. So, instead of fleeing to Kedesh ("Holiness"), which he might fear he never could attain, he might fly to Shechem ("Shoulder"), and lay his burden—too heavy for him to bear any longer—upon the Great Sin-Bearer, Jesus: or the sweet fellowship for which our soul has yearned, may impel us to Hebron—which is "Fellowship"—where God took Abraham for a friend; and takes His children on the same terms! Or, on the high table-land of the east, he may "go up to Ramoth-Gilead," ("exalted"), and live in the very atmosphere of Heaven! Many Christians do live in Ramoth! Its air is sweet and pleasant, and the prospect is extensive—on peculiar favoured days reaching even to the Gates of the Golden City, otherwise, and to others, unseen! Or, with the one feeling of need, and the one desire to be *safe*, he may follow the North Star till he reaches Golan ("Stronghold"). "O to be safe! To know that Jesus loves me!" this is his whole cry. Or, flat upon the plain, conspicuous because nothing else is conspicuous, stands Bezer ("Joy"); and the sinner flies there, and finds God is the God of the plain, as well as the God of the mountains; and rejoices in a salvation that was so easy of access, that when he could neither climb the mountains nor ford the rivers, God led him over an easy path to Bezer!

For three months in the year, when "Jordan overfloweth all his banks, all the time of