

The Quiet Hour.

Cities of Refuge.

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GOLDEN TEXT—Ps. 46 : 1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

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The Lord . . . spake Joshua, saying, v. 1. Man, left to himself, would wander further and further from God. He can never become the author of his own salvation, but of his own destruction. God, before the foundation of the world, planned our salvation and, in the fulness of time, spoke unto our "Joshua," saying, "I appoint Thee as the city of refuge, to which every sinner may flee and be safe."

Apportion out for you cities of refuge, v. 2. The nature and situation of these cities of refuge is suggestive. As to their nature they were all Levite cities; so, although the manslayer could not go out and up to the ark at Shiloh to worship, yet the Levites could teach him the knowledge of God, comfort and encourage him and bid him welcome. May we not see in this the truth that ministers of the gospel should bid poor sinners welcome, and comfort and encourage him and bid him welcome. May we not see in this the truth that ministers of the gospel should bid poor sinners welcome, and comfort and encourage those who are already Christians. Then, as to the situation of these six cities, they were on hills and so distributed that the manslayer could in one half day reach one. So, Christ is our refuge, and wherever we are, He is a refuge at hand—a very present help in trouble.

That the slayer . . . may flee thither, v. 3. The roads to these cities were prepared, obstacles removed, finger posts at the cross-roads to indicate the proper road to take. We who believe in Jesus Christ are commissioned to point others to Him, to urge them to flee from the wrath to come and lay hold for refuge on the hope set before them (Heb. 6 : 18), as Bunyan's pilgrim fled from the City of Destruction to attain the Celestial City.

Your refuge from the avenger of blood, v. 3. The man who believes in Jesus Christ and has fled to Him for refuge shall be saved. He is saved, and he shall be saved, for he is kept by the power of God and under the shadow of the Almighty. No avenger of blood dares cross that threshold. But simply to contemplate Christ's salvation and call Christ a Saviour or the Saviour, will never give security and peace. He must be able to say my Saviour, my refuge, my fortress, and my deliverer.

And when he that doth flee . . . shall stand . . . declare his cause . . . take him into . . . and give him a place . . . among them, v. 4. How beautifully this verse describes the reception by Christ of the returning sinner. We have it paralleled in the father's reception of the returning son (Luke, ch. 15) "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." Then the father ran, and fell upon his neck and kissed him, and said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him . . . he was lost and is found." What a confession! What a re-

ception! "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," John 6 : 37.

And they appointed Kedesh . . . and Shechem . . . Hebron and Bezer . . . and Ramoth in Gilead, vs. 7, 8. Each city in its name is a type of the character of Christ.

(1) Kedesh—Holiness, Sanctuary: Christ our sanctuary, our holy of holies. He is made unto us sanctification, I Cor. 1 : 30. (2) Shechem—Shoulder: Christ the burden bearer. He is our sin-bearer (1 Pet. 2 : 24), the sorrow-bearer, Isa. 53 : 4. Then let us roll our burden and ourselves too on the Lord (Ps. 37 : 5). (3) Hebron—Fellowship: Christ our friend, who died to unite us to God. (4) Bezer—Stronghold: Christ our fortress, Ps. 18 : 2. (Ramoth—Gilead—Heights, Exaltation: Jesus the glorified, Gone to heaven that he might send the Comforter to earth. He has ascended into heaven . . . now to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9 : 24. He is highly exalted and given a name that is above every name, Phil. 2 : 9. Through him we are the sons of God, 1 John 4 : 17. (6) Golan—Joy, Exultation: Christ our exceeding joy, Ps. 43 : 4. He is the good tidings of great joy which the angels brought, Luke 2 : 10. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice," is his message to us, Phil. 4 : 4.

And for the stranger that sojourneth among them, v. 9. Even for the strangers and sojourners there was refuge. In Jesus Christ there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, makes no difference, "for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," Rom. 10, 13, 14. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. 22 : 17. The hand of the Crucified has opened the door of mercy.

Not Destruction But Fulfillment.

"I am come not to destroy but to fulfil," says Christ, and not destruction but fulfilment is the method by which his kingdom is to be realized in the world. There is a lesson in this for two classes of people. There is first that class who think that their fathers knew nothing as it should be known, that the fathers' wisdom and achievements are of no value to us to-day, that this is the great age of enlightenment and the dawn of the great era of progress. On the other hand, there is that other class, generally composed of older people, who think that the only good times were the good old times and that to-day everything is going wrong and the world is growing worse. Let me say that both of these classes are wrong in their opinions. All things are being fulfilled in Christ's kingdom with the progress of the ages. More and more of the good that goes to constitute his kingdom is being realized. Every age is a stage in the progress of the world. Each generation builds upon the foundation the previous one has left. And we cannot be without the knowledge and achievements of our fathers. Their work was necessary and our achievements to-day are but the outcome and fulfilment of their labors and purposes and the achievements of the next generation will be but the outcome and fulfilment of our aims and

efforts. And the blessing, the greatness, the glory of this generation will depend upon the faith of its men in great causes and the energy and enthusiasm with which they throw themselves into the great work of God; for every work which in any way helps mankind is a work of God. Moreover the questions which are causing us trouble to-day, the problems we are called upon to solve are the questions and problems which naturally come to us at the stage of the world's history which we have now reached, the outcome and fulfilment in our day of the work of the past ages. What they all need for their solution is the enlightened application of Christian principles. But that society should ever cease to be agitated by great questions would be a sure sign that the world had ceased to make progress.

I have heard it said that the great strikes of the present day are an indication that the world is growing worse, because they did not have such things in former times. On the contrary, does it not show the progress of the world that such things are possible? It is less than a hundred years ago since a number of men were thrown into prison for six months, I think, for merely asking an increase of wages. We are too prone to forget the great struggles which tried men in the past, the blood and treasure which men of other days spent in solving their problems and winning for us the blessings which we now enjoy. Go back to reformation times and begin to reckon up the cost of winning over intellectual and religious freedom. How many generations gave of their best before this was obtained? Then think of the life and energy given to win man's physical freedom. Think of the long fight culminating in the successful efforts of Clarkson and Wilberforce and others in Britain, and in the results of the greatest war of modern times in United States, in establishing the principle that no man shall have power to assert ownership over the person of another. We have our political freedom in the British Empire, but it takes a great amount of history reading to ascertain how long was the struggle and how great the cost in obtaining it. And the struggle between capital and labor to-day is an indication that the enjoyment of these other blessings has made enlightened labor to gradually become conscious of her rights and her powers, and she is now exerting her might to win, and endeavoring to show herself worthy of, what men are pleased to call industrial freedom. Or if you do not like that term, the effort is now to secure that each person shall have a fair share of the product of the industry of all. It is becoming impossible that one woman should with vulgar ostentation spend five thousand dollars on a wedding dress while in the same city another should be starving to death in a garret, or twenty cents a day obtained from making shirts. Labor of course will go to extremes and do unworthy things and capital is not likely to let go her privileges without a hard fight. The contest is thus likely to be long and vigorous. One thing, however, gives us hope and that is the wise moderation of later labor leaders. But there can be no permanent peace until justice has been secured for all.—Y.

To the Christian thought of Personality, that is, individuality creating itself through covenant with God, there is no Fate, save luck of time; and the belief is immortality, the historical corollary of the belief in Personality, makes time no bar.—H. S. Nash.