

sanctity of human life and the guilt of shedding man's blood, the law before us was enacted. Mahomet endeavored to accomplish the same end by permitting a money compensation, but the Bible plan refuses to set a price upon that which is priceless.

LESSON PLAN. I. Provided in Mercy. vs. 1-3. II. Governed by Justice. vs. 4-6. III. Accessible to All. vs. 7-9.

I. PROVIDED IN MERCY. 1. The Lord also spake—As soon as the allotment of the land was completed, Joshua was instructed to carry out the provisions already laid down (Num. 35: 9-34) for the protection of those who accidentally committed homicide.

2. Appoint out for you—R. V. "Assign you." The three on the east of Jordan had been already designated during the lifetime of Moses (Deut. 4: 41-43). The cities of refuge (R. V.)—These were not specially sacred places, but inhabited towns governed, like others, by their elders. By the hand of Moses—By the agency of Moses (Num. 35: 6, 13-34; Deut. 19: 3-9). There were three on each side of Jordan. They were also Levitical cities (Num. 35: 6). "By this arrangement the manslayer, who specially needed the mercy of God to protect, console, instruct or humble him, was placed in the most favorable circumstances for his spiritual welfare." (Douglas).

3. Unawares and unwittingly—Only he who slew another unintentionally could be admitted. The wilful murderer was to be torn even from the altar (Ex. 21: 14; Num. 35: 31, 32; 1 Kings 2: 28-34; 2 Kings 11: 15). "In this respect there was an essential distinction between the asylum of the Israelites and those of the Greeks and Romans, and even of the middle ages, where criminals of every kind found protection." (Keil).

II. GOVERNED BY JUSTICE. 4. He that doth flee—Roads were made and kept in order (Deut. 19: 3), every obstacle had to be removed. Jewish writers say that no water-course on them was left unbridged, and at every cross road guide posts were set up with the word "Refuge" on them, so that the fugitive might make no mistake and lose no time. Shall stand at the entering of the gate—This does not mean that he shall stand outside the gate. "The gate of the city" means the public place of judgment, where the magistrates held court (Ruth 4: 1, 2; 2 Sam. 15: 2). Declare his cause—Give his version of the occurrence which led to his claiming an asylum there. Take him into the city—Receive him into its protection and give him the right of asylum meantime, if his story seemed true, until a formal trial could be held (verse 6).

5. They shall not deliver the slayer up—He was safe until he had been proved guilty of murder. He was delivered into the custody of the elders of his own village to stand his trial.

6. Until he stand before the congregation—(Num. 35: 24, 25) The elders of his own city would put him on trial. If he were then proved guilty of "malice aforethought" he would be delivered up to the avenger, but if innocent he would be returned to the city of

refuge. Until the death of the High Priest

"We have in this arrangement a manifestation of the perfect rigor of the divine justice in the most beautiful concord with compassionate mercy. By the destruction of life, even when not wilful, human blood had been shed, and that required expiation. This expiation did not consist in the death of the sinner, for he had not sinned with purpose; he had therefore to flee to the city of refuge, not merely into exile, although it was certainly a punishment to be obliged to absent himself from house and home, and be severed from his family, but also under the protection of the mercy of God, which had opened in the cities of refuge a place of escape from the human ardor of the avenger of blood, where he might remain concealed, until his sin had been expiated by the death of the High Priest." (Keil). Why was the death of the high priest fixed as the limit of the homicide's restraint? (1) It was symbolical of the death of Christ, and prefigured the deliverance from sin's penalty through the atonement (Keil). But the high priest died the common death of all men, he came "under the curse" for his own sin and in virtue of his connection with a fallen race. In this last act he could not be, in any view, a type of Christ. (2) He represents the whole people of Israel in their religious aspect. "As the most honored and beloved man in all Israel, his death plunges the whole community into such distress that private sorrow is lost in the general affliction" (Baehr). (3) It was merely a merciful limit assigned to his confinement, and contingent upon this condition in order that it might not be left at the discretion of man. It was God who set him free. The avenger could not complain at his release, nor the man himself at the length of his exile from home. The whole affair was in God's hands. The refugee was required, however, to remain strictly within the city. If found by the avenger outside of the limit of 500 yards from its walls he might be slain at any time.

7. Appointed—lit. "sanctified" or consecrated. They were set apart for a sacred purpose. "They were intended to preserve the people and the land of Jehovah free from blood-guiltiness; and stood there as memorials of the love of Jehovah to his chosen people." (Ranke). Kedesh—In the tribe of Naphtali (ch. 21: 32) north of lake Merom. Galilee—The word means "the circle." Originally a circle of twenty towns in Naphtali (1 Kings 9: 11) within whose borders many heathen continued to reside and hence called "Galilee of the gentiles" (Isa. 9: 1). Shechem—The old home of Jacob.

8. These three had already been set apart by Moses (Deut. 4: 41-43). Bezer—opposite Jericho. Ramoth—In the centre, on the