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Poetry.

The following lines, by Miss M. E. R., a graduate of the Hudson Female Academy, were read at the Sixth Anniversary of that Institution:

To the North Star.

Far brighter orbs shine in the distant heavens,
Far brighter, through the solemn night they blaze,
Cheering the earth and skies and ocean dark
With all the varied splendor of their rays.

But they are changing like the winged winds,
Nor stay they in their mystic dances bright,
Gliding, e'er gliding, as in reverent awe
Around thy throne, thou Monarch of the night!

Thou only, eye of God, remain'st unchanged,
Holding creation by thy gaze in awe,
Keeping thy watch, as ever thou hast kept,
And still wilt keep it on for evermore.

Watching, where wandering on his ocean way,
The weary sailor, on the billow tossed,
Looks up to thee, as his last, only guide,
Without whose aid and succor he were lost.

Watching the sleep God gives to his beloved,
With eye that cannot slumber, cannot sleep,
Marking the tears of those who at this hour,
O'er pain, or sorrow, or oppression, weep.

Thou seest the infant in his smiling dreams,
Thou seest the dead lie wrapt in snowy shroud;
All things are open to thy piercing gaze,
Even the bosom of the mortal proud.

And, as the stars, in Joseph's youthful dream,
Bowed as in humble reverence unto one,
So do they now, as 'neath thine awful beam,
Through all their courses they still journey on.

There bends Orion, with his golden sword
Upheld in triumph by his powerful arm;
There bow the Pleiads, with their voices seven,
Raising to thee, their sweet mysterious psalm.

When heaven's dread phantoms, with their misty
hair,
Rush by thee, wild and frantic through the sky,
Thou, ever changeless, still dost on them fling
The calm and silent radiance of thine eye.

And where a galaxy of shining forms
Weave round thy lofty seat an airy dance,
Thou watchest all their motions from afar,
Bending upon them thine unwavering glance.

Dian and Venus, bearing light to all,
First in the eye, and last in brightening day;
Saturn magnificent, with girdle bright,
Followed by spirits seven upon his way;

Uranus dim, and Neptune distant far,
Beckoning to Hermes, through the mighty space,
Proud Jupiter, the lordliest of them all,
Passing by glorious, with majestic grace;

Even haughty Mars lowers his plumed crest,
And bendeth low, and with an humble knee;
While all the stars from heaven's remotest verge,
Come trooping, proud thy worshippers to be.

Once only, since creation's holy dawn,
Thine ancient empire insecure did rest,
When came from out the opening gate of heaven,
An orb of beauty far above the rest.

Fain would the stars have followed in its train,
As, like a crown, it over Bethlehem hung;
But peaceful went, as peacefully it came,
And vanished soon heaven's shining hosts among.

Hail to thee, in thy silent changeless rest,
Star of the Pole, and Monarch of the sky!
Guard still creation, with thy sleepless gaze,
Till hoary Nature's self at last shall die.

—N. Y. Examiner.

Select Sermon.

The City of Refuge.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares."—NUMBERS xxxv. 11.

I wish to use this custom of the Jews as a metaphor and type, to set forth the salvation of men through Jesus Christ our Lord. I shall give you first an explanation, and then an exhortation.

I. WE SHALL ATTEMPT AN EXPLANATION OF THIS TYPE.

1. Note, *The person for whom the city of refuge was provided.* It was not provided for the wilful murderer; if he fled there, he must be dragged out of it, and

given up to the avenger after a fair trial, and the avenger of death was to kill him, and so have blood for blood, and life for life. But, in case of accident, when one man had slain another, without malice or forethought, and had only committed homicide, then the man fleeing there was perfectly safe. Here, however, the type of Christ was not in keeping; Christ is not a city of refuge provided for men that are innocent, but a city provided for men that are guilty—not for men who have accidentally transgressed, but for men who have willfully gone astray. Our Saviour has come into the world to save not those who have by mistake and error committed sin, but those who have fearfully transgressed against his known commandments, and have gone astray of their own free-will, their own perversity leading them to rebel against God.

2. *The avenger of blood.* It was allowed by the Jewish law, that those who were of the kith and kin of the man killed, should be the avengers of his blood. We find the type of this, then, for the sinner, in the law of God. Sinner, the law of God is the blood avenger against you; you have willfully transgressed, you have killed God's commandments, you have trampled them under foot; the law is the avenger of blood, that, is after you, and it will have you; though it reach you not in this life, yet, in the world to come, the avenger of blood, the Moses, the law shall have its vengeance upon you, and you shall be utterly destroyed.

3. But there was a city of refuge provided under the law; and let me tell you a few things concerning this city. You will remember there were six cities of refuge, in order that one of them might be at a convenient distance from any part of the country. Now, there are not six Christs; there is but one; but then there is a Christ everywhere. "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; and if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart, thou shalt be saved." The city of refuge was a priestly city—a city of Levites, and it afforded protection to the man-slayer for life. He might never go out of it, till the death of the then reigning high priest; after which he might go free, without being touched by the avenger of blood at all. But during the time of his sojourn there, he was housed and fed gratuitously; everything was provided for him, and he was kept entirely safe. And I would have you mark that he was safe in this city, not because of the bolts or bars of the city, but simply because it was of divine appointment. Do you see the man running from the avenger? The avenger is after him, fast and furious; the man has just reached the borders of the city; in a moment the avenger halts; he knows it is of no use going any farther after him, not because the city walls are strong, nor because the gates are barred, nor because an army standeth without to resist, but because God hath said the man shall be safe as soon as he has crossed the border, and has come into the suburbs of the city. Divine appointment was the only thing which made the city of refuge secure. Now, beloved, Jesus Christ is the divinely appointed way of salvation; whosoever amongst us shall make haste from our sins, and fly to Christ, being convinced of our guilt, and helped by God's Spirit to pursue the road, we shall, without doubt, find security; the curse of the law shall not touch us, Satan shall not harm us, vengeance shall not reach us, for the divine appointment, stronger than gates of iron or brass, shieldeth every one of us who have "fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel."

This city of refuge, I must have you note, too, had around it suburbs of a very great extent. Two thousand cubits were allowed for grazing land for the cattle of the priests, and a thousand cubits within these for fields and vineyards. Now, no sooner did the man reach the outside of the city, the suburbs, than he was safe; it was not necessary for him to get within the walls, but the suburbs themselves were sufficient protection. Learn, hence, that

if ye do but touch the hem of Christ's garment, ye shall be made whole; if ye do but lay hold of him with "faith as a grain of mustard seed," with faith which is scarcely a believing, but is truly a believing, you are safe.

"A little genuine grace ensures
The death of all our sins."

Get within the borders; lay hold of the hem of Christ's garment, and thou art secure.

We have some interesting particulars, also, with regard to the distance of those cities from the habitations of men in Judea. It is said, that wherever a homicide might occur, any man might get to a city of refuge within half a day. And, verily beloved, it is no great distance to the breast of Christ; it is but a simple renunciation of our own powers, and a laying hold of Christ, to be our all in all, that is required, in order to our being found in the city of refuge. And with regard to the roads to the city, we are told that they were strictly preserved. Every river was bridged; as far as possible, the road was made level, and every obstruction removed, so that the man who fled might find an easy passage to the city. Once a year the elders of the city went along the roads to keep them in order, so that nothing might occur, through the breaking down of bridges, or the stopping up of the highway, to impede the flight of any one, and cause him to be overtaken and killed. And wherever there were bye-roads and turnings, there were fixed up hand-posts, with this word upon them, "Mechlek"—"refuge"—pointing out the way in which the man should fly, if he wished to reach the city. And there were two people always kept on the road; so that in case the avenger of blood should overtake a man, they might come in the way and entreat the avenger to stay his hand, until the man had reached the city, lest haply innocent blood should be shed, without a fair trial, and so the avenger should be proved guilty of murder; for the risk, of course, was upon the head of the avenger, if he put one to death that did not deserve to die. Now, beloved, I think this is a picture of the road to Christ Jesus. It is no round-about 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 his way to heaven. And lest they should be mistaken, God has set 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 thou therein and be thou saved.

I think I have thus given the explanation. Christ is the city of refuge, who preserves all those that flee to him for mercy; he does that because he is the divinely appointed Saviour, able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him.

II. WE HAVE AN EXHORTATION TO GIVE.

You must allow me to picture a scene. You see that man in the field. He has been at work; he has taken an ox-goad in his hand, to use it in some part of his husbandry. Unfortunately, instead of doing what he desires to do, he strikes a companion of his to the heart, and he falls down dead! You see the poor man with horror in his face; he is a guiltless man; but, oh! what misery he feels when he sees the corpse lying at his feet! A pang shoots through his heart, such as you and I have never felt—horror, dread, desolation! Yes, some of us have felt something akin to it; we will not allude to the when and the wherefore; but who can describe the horror of a man at seeing his companion fall at his feet? Words are incapable of expressing the anguish of his spirit; he looks upon him, he takes him up—he ascertains that he is really dead. What next! Do you not see him? In a moment he flies out of the field where he was at labour, and runs along the road with all his might; he has many miles before him, six long

hours of hard running, and just as he passes the gate, he turns his head, and there is the man's brother! He has just come into the field, and has seen his brother lying dead. Oh! can you conceive how the man's heart palpitates with fear? He has a little start upon the road. He just sees the other, with red face, hot and fiery, rushing out of the field, with the oxgoad in his hand, and running after him, the way lies through the village where the man's father lives; how he rushes through the streets! He does not even stop to bid good bye to his wife, nor kiss his children! But on, on he flies for his very life. The relative calls his father, and his other friends, and they all rush after him. Now, there is a troupe on the road; the man is still flying ahead, no rest for him. Though one of his pursuers rest, the others still track him. There is a horse in the village; they take it, and pursue him. If they can find any animal that can assist their swiftness, they will take it. Can you not conceive him crying, "Oh, that I had wings that I might fly!" See how he spurns the earth beneath his feet! What to him the green fields on either hand; what the brooks; he stops not even so much as to wet his mouth. The sun is scorching him; but it is still on, on, on! He casts aside one garment after another; still he rushes on, and the pursuers are behind him. He feels like the poor stag pursued by the hounds; he knows they are eager for his blood, and that if they do but once overtake him it will be a word, a blow—dead! See how he speeds his way! Now, do you see him? A city is rising into sight; he can see the towers of the city of refuge: his weary feet almost refuse to carry him further; the veins are standing out on his brow, like whipcords; the blood spurts from his nostrils; he is straining to the utmost, as he rushes on, and faster he would go if he were the master of more strength. The pursuers are after him—they have almost reached him; but see, and rejoice! He has just got to the outskirts of the city; there is the line of demarcation; he leaps it, and falls senseless to the ground; and there is joy in his heart. The pursuers come and look at him; but they dare not slay him. The knife is in their hand, and the stones too, to stone him or draw his blood; but they dare not touch him. He is safe, he is secure; his running has been just fast enough; he has just managed to leap into the kingdom of life, and avoid death.

Sinner, that picture I have given thee is a picture of thyself, in all but the man's guiltlessness, for thou art a guilty man. Oh! if thou didst but know that the avenger of blood is after thee! Oh! that God would give thee grace that thou couldst have a sense of thy danger to-night! thou wouldst not then stop a solitary instant without flying to Christ. Thou wouldst say, even while sitting in thy pew, "Let me away, away, awry, where mercy is to be found," and thou wouldst give neither sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids, till thou hadst in Christ found a refuge for thy spirit. I am come, then, to exhort thee to-night. Let me pick out one of you, to be a case for all the rest; there is a young man here who is guilty; the proofs of his guilt lie at his feet to-night. He knows himself to be a great transgressor; he has foully offended against God's law. Young man, young man, certainly, as you are guilty, the avenger of blood is after you! Oh! he is a horrid thing, that avenger—God's fiery law; did you ever see it? It speaketh words of flame; it hath eyes like lamps of fire. If you could once see the law of God, and mark the dread keenness of its horrible sword, you might, as you sat in your pew, quiver to death itself in horror at your doom. Sinner, bethink thee, if this avenger get hold of thee, it will not be temporal death merely; it will be death eternally. Sinner, remember, if the law doth get its hand on thee, thou art damned; and dost thou know what damnation means? Say, canst thou tell what are the billows of eternal wrath, and what the worm that never dies; what the lake of fire, what the pit that is