

**The Cities of
Refuge: or, The
Name of Jesus A
Sunday book for the
young**

Macduff, John R. (John Ross)

THE CITIES OF REFUGE.



The ManSlayer

THE CITIES OF REFUGE:

OR,

The Name of Jesus.

A SUNDAY BOOK FOR THE YOUNG.

BY
REV. JOHN R. MACDUFF, D.D.,

Author Of "Morning And Night Watches," "Memories of
Bethany," "Mind And Words Of Jesus," etc., etc.

"How sweet the NAME of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
and drives away his fear."

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My Dear Young Friends,

This little book contains, with a few additions, the substance of what was spoken one Sabbath to a number of hearers of your own age. It may serve to recall to those that listened to it, and to unfold to those who did not, some simple and well-known, but precious gospel truths.

May He whose NAME it is designed to exalt, bless you in reading it, and enable you from the heart to repeat as your own happy experience, the well-known verse of the beautiful hymn I have put on the title-page.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you.”—Num. xxxv. 9-11.

I.

When travelling lately through the Simplon—one of the great Alpine passes leading from Switzerland into Italy—observed, close by the roadside, at regular distances, a number of plain, square buildings. On these (sometimes over the doorway, sometimes on the side) were inscribed the words—“Refuge No. 1,” “Refuge No. 2,” “Refuge No. 3,” &c. I think there were twenty altogether. I was told, on inquiry, they were intended as shelters for any hapless travellers who might be overtaken by the sudden storms which so often sweep down from the snow-white mountains bounding the prospect. These “*Refuges*,” at the time I saw them, were empty, for it was in the beginning of summer, when everything, even in that elevated region, was looking bright and green. The Alpine rhododendron was flushing, with its pink blossom, the mountain sides; or growing up, along with the lovely blue gentian, close by stray patches of winter's snow which were still filling the ridges and hollows in the higher parts of the pass. Seldom at this season are travellers exposed to any peril from an Alpine storm. It is different, however, in winter or spring, when the avalanches come tumbling from the heights, or the snow is drifting in huge masses over that wonderful Road. Many shivering wayfarers have fled with thankful hearts into these shelters. Some have been carried thither, in a state of insensibility, by unknown benefactors, and on gradually awaking to consciousness, have blessed the kind hearts and hands which have saved them from certain death, and are now ministering to their necessities. By others, alas! they have been reached too late. Rescued from the snows of the mountain, they have been conveyed to them only to die.

As I passed those Alpine “Retreats,” I could not help being reminded of the wonderful *Cities of Refuge* which God graciously provided of old in Palestine for the unfortunate manslayer.

It sometimes happened, in the land of Canaan, as in our own country, that a Hebrew, without any evil purpose, would cause the death of a brother Hebrew. He did not intend to inflict any injury; it was the result only of unhappy accident. But, nevertheless, to show God's detestation of the shedding of blood, he was liable, by the Levitical law, to be killed by the Avenger, or “Goel,”—the person nearest related to the murdered man. If he wished to escape with his life, his only chance of safety was to flee to one of these Refuge-cities. It mattered not what his age, or name, or station in life was. He might be young or old, prince or noble, priest or prophet, he was exposed every moment to death, unless he availed himself of the offered shelter. There was no time for delay, he must betake himself to instant flight. To linger might be to perish.

Do you not think with pity of the unhappy fugitive, obliged thus suddenly to leave his home and all he most loved on earth? If at the time he caused the death, he was working in his vineyard, the pruning-hook must be left to rust on the branch. If he was ploughing with his yoke of oxen, they must be left lowing in the furrow. If he was busied in his harvest-field, the sheaves must be left unbound, and the reapers receive their wages from another's hands. If he was returning home fatigued at evening after the toils of the day, and longing for grateful repose, he dare give no “sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids.” His child may be lying pining in sickness at his cottage, but it may endanger him to return to

clasp that and his other little ones in his embrace, and bid them a fond farewell. He may have no time to alter his raiment or take even his scrip or pilgrim-staff. The Avenger of blood may be in the adjoining street, or in the dwelling hard by. Another hour may be fatal;—"Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life."^[1] Off he speeds in breathless haste—now along the level road—now up the steep ascent—with his breast heaving, and drops of perspiration standing on his brow. Friends may meet him, but with a wave of the hand, and shouting "Goel! Goel!" he rushes on with fleet footstep. Parched with thirst in the hot noonday, he turns a longing eye on the ripe grapes that are hanging in purple clusters on the wayside, or on the water trickling down the narrow ravine. But he dare not pause. Knowing full well that the Avenger is in close pursuit, he hurries on with unabated ardor. Happy sight, when he sees at last, on some mountain slope, the longed-for shelter! Happy, when, weary and footsore, covered with dust, the portals of the city close him in. A few moments before, had he been overtaken on the mountain-top by his pursuer, he might have been heard to cry out, in the bitterness of despair, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Now, safe within the secure shelter, he can rejoicingly exclaim, even with the Avenger standing close by, "O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end."^[2]

These *Cities of Refuge* form one of the Old Testament PICTURES of the sinner, and of the coming gospel salvation. This was the way God took to teach the Jewish people great gospel truths. Just as we know that youthful readers like a story-book all the better when it has got pictures in it; so God taught the early church, when it was in a state of "childhood," by means of similar *pictures* or *types*; and the present was one of them. It represented, and still represents, the sinner who has broken the Divine law as pursued by an avenger: Justice following with drawn sword, exclaiming, "*The soul that sinneth it must die.*"^[3] "*Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not escape unpunished.*"^[4]

This is a picture, too, which applies to every one without exception, rich and poor, parent and child, master and servant; "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."^[5] But a glorious CITY, "*salvation* its walls and bulwarks," opens its gates. The sinner is exhorted to "escape thither;" to "linger not in all the plain;" to "flee for his life, lest he be consumed."^[6] That city is *Jesus*, the sinner's Refuge and the sinner's Friend. Once within its walls, no enemy can touch him,—no sword can terrify him. He can triumphantly exclaim, "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?"^[7]

Dear young friends, it is because I know this City of Refuge is open for the youngest of *you*, that I now write these pages. I love to read about a group of little ones who, eighteen hundred years ago, were gathered round its gates, asking admission; and when others, with unkind words, were sending them away, He who held the gates in His hand, "*who openeth and no man shutteth,*"^[8] said, "*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*"^[9] It is because I believe and know that many as young as *you* have obeyed the Saviour's invitation, and have already entered this happy City, that I ask you to come and hear while I speak to you about it. I believe and know that many such have learned to feel that they are sinners, and that they need a Saviour. They have been taught by God's own Word and Spirit that they have broken His holy law, and have thereby exposed themselves to eternal death. But they are now safe within the Gospel Shelter. The "enemy" is "stilled." The "avenger" has sheathed his sword. I think I can hear their youthful voices, as they march through the streets of the City, singing, "*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest STILL the enemy and the AVENGER.*"^[10] "*Blessed be the Lord; for He hath showed me His marvellous kindness in A STRONG CITY.*"^[11]

II. THE SIX CITIES.

"And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. And on the other side Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the Tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities appointed for all the Children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever Killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the Avenger of Blood, until he stood before the Congregation."-Josh. xx. 7-9.

II.

It is of these *six cities* here mentioned, I am now going to speak. The name of each of the six has something significantly to tell about THE NAME OF JESUS. They are six pictures of the Saviour, hung up in the Old Testament picture-gallery. I am going to ask you to take a journey with me to these towns of old Palestine. Before we enter their gates, I should like again to repeat the verse of the precious hymn placed at the beginning of this book:—

"How sweet the NAME of *Jesus* sounds
In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.”



Kedesh

First City—Kedesh.

First City—Kedesh.

If you look far north in the map of Palestine above the lake of Merom, near the snowy peaks of mount Hermon and Lebanon, you will see where this Refuge-city lies. Recent travellers describe its ruins as still standing on a rocky ridge in the midst of green hills, surrounded with the remains of forts and castles built by the Crusaders in the middle ages. It was situated within the tribe of Naphtali, and must have been its great town at the time when the old warrior Barak, who was born within its walls, marched from its gates to meet Sisera in the plain below with his nine hundred chariots of iron.

What does its name tell of Christ?

The Hebrew word Kedesh signifies “*Holy*.” Jesus was “*The Holy One*.” Not one stain of sin polluted His holy human nature. Angels in heaven, as they cast their crowns at His feet, cry, “*Holy! holy! holy!*” [12] Devils on earth were compelled to exclaim, “*We know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.*” [13] Jewish priests, as they spake of Him of old by types, took “*a lamb without blemish.*” [14] Jewish prophets, as they spake of Him in their predictions, called Him “*The Righteous (or Holy) Branch.*” [15] Apostles, as they wrote about Him, said “*He was HOLY, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.*” [16] When He was Himself on earth, He could challenge His bitterest foes, “*Which of you convinceth me of sin?*” [17] And when He came down, soon after His ascension, from His throne in the skies, we find Him proclaiming as His name, “*He that is HOLY, He that is True!*” [18]

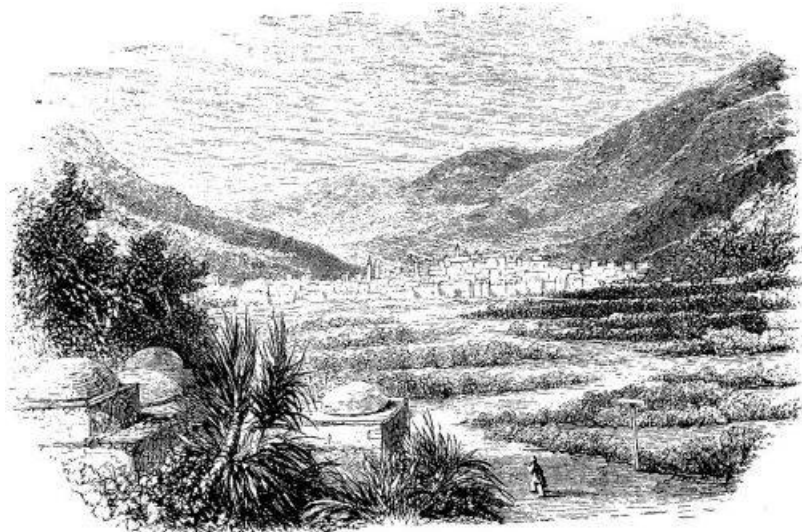
Reader, remember this. Jesus never could have saved you unless He had been “glorious in holiness.” If He had had one sin in Him, you and I must have been lost for ever. Just as one leak in Noah's ark of old would have sunk it, so one leak of sin in Jesus, the true Ark, would have plunged us all in the depths of eternal despair. Let us, then, love often to walk round the walls of Kedesh, and think of *our* “City of Refuge” as “*The Holy Child Jesus.*” [19]

And when you ponder *His* holiness, seek to be holy, as *He* was. How He hated sin! How He loved to do His heavenly Father's will! How gentle, and good, and kind He was to all! He never was angry, or passionate, or revengeful. When a youth, at His early home in Nazareth, “He increased in favour with God and man.” [20] Be *like* Jesus in His *holiness*! Let *KEDESH* be a word written on your young hearts! Whenever you are in trouble or difficulty, or temptation, always ask, “How would the Holy Jesus have acted here?” Turn the words of your well-known hymn into a prayer. While you say—

“I love the NAME of Jesus,
Immanuel, Christ the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breezes,
His *name* abroad is pour'd;” —

seek also to add—

“I long to be *like* Jesus,
Meek, lowly, loving, mild;
I long to be *like* Jesus,



Shechem

Second City—Shechem.

Second City—Shechem.

Shechem was situated at the extremity of a valley among the hills of Ephraim. The famous mountains of Ebal and Gerizim rose on either side, from the slopes of which the blessings and the curses of the law were proclaimed in the ears of assembled Israel. If Jerusalem was the greatest and the grandest of the cities of Palestine, Shechem was perhaps the most beautiful. It is still spoken of by travellers as one of the loveliest spots in the Holy Land, with its orchards of olive, fig, and pomegranate, and its flocks of singing-birds, which have made the inhabitants give to the graceful slope on which it looks down, the name of the "Musical Valley." I don't know if the streets in the olden time resembled what they are now. The following is the recent description of a traveller familiar with them:—"The streets are narrow and vaulted over, and in the winter time it is difficult to pass along many of them on account of brooks, which rush over the pavement with deafening roar.... It has mulberry, orange, pomegranate, and other trees mingled in with the houses, whose odoriferous flowers load the air with delicious perfume during the months of April and May."^[21] You do not require to be told that *Shechem* is a very ancient city, and that many interesting events in sacred story took place in connexion with it. The earliest mention made of it is when the patriarch Abraham slept under its oaks, (the Terebinths of Moreh,) when he came to Canaan from distant Chaldea, and erected his first altar under their shade;^[22] and one of the last Bible notices regarding it, is in connexion with the woman of Samaria, when Jesus sat with her at "the well of Sychar," and spoke to her of the better fountain, "springing up to everlasting life."^[23]

What does the name Shechem tell of Christ?

It is a word which means "SHOULDER."

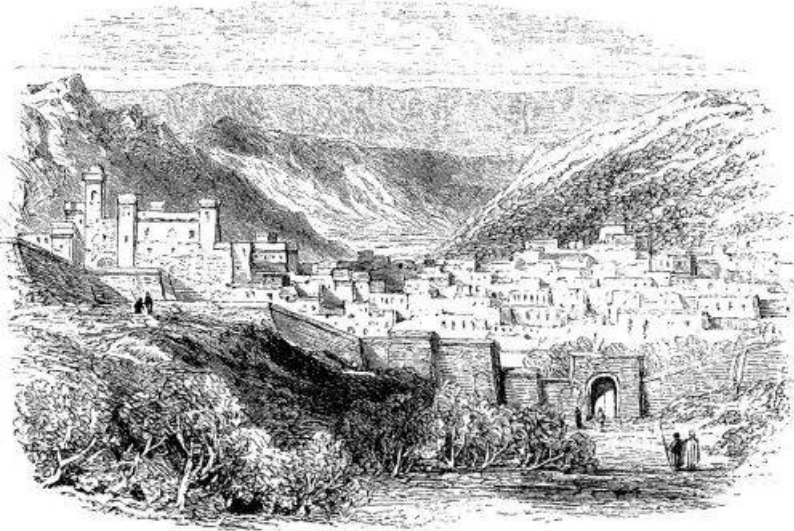
Jesus, our Refuge, bore a guilty world upon His shoulder. The ancients had a fabled Atlas, who was supposed to carry the earth on his shoulders. Jesus Christ is the true Atlas. "*Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows!*"^[24] All the sins of all His people Jesus bore for ever away. Think of that heavy load which bowed Him down to the ground in the garden of Gethsemane, and caused drops of blood to fall from His brow! No other one *but* Jesus could have carried such an awful load and burden as this. No angel or archangel could have done so. Jesus, being God, was alone "able to save unto the uttermost."^[25] He is the only "sure foundation" that could sustain all the building.^[26] With any other, it would have fallen into a mass of ruins.

But I love not only to visit the old city of *Shechem*, and to think of Jesus bearing the guilt of His people on His *shoulders*, but I like to think of Him as the true *Shechem* *now*. He is our *Shechem* at God's right hand. "The government is upon His SHOULDER."^[27] The Church and the world are upheld by Him. Believers—the poorest, the weakest, the humblest—are on the *shoulders* of Jesus. He is bearing the weight of them all; loving them all, attending to them all, interceding for them all. All that befalls me, Jesus orders. Food and raiment, health and strength, friends and home, are gifts from Him. Every tear I shed, He knows it, He appoints it. If he sends me sorrow and trial, I will go and enter the gates of this city *Shechem*, and remember, "*Jesus* (Jesus, who died for me) bears me on his *shoulder!*"

Moses speaks of God conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness of old as a kind father carries on his shoulder his weak and weary child. "*Thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son.*"^[28] And David says in an hour of trouble, "*I am poor and needy, yet the Lord (lit) carries me on his heart.*"^[29]

I like to look at that New Testament picture—Jesus, the good Shepherd, carrying a bleating sheep or lamb back on His shoulder to the fold. That poor wanderer had gone astray on the dark mountains; but the great and gracious Shepherd had gone after it “until He found it; and when He *had* found it, *He laid it on His SHOULDERS, rejoicing.*”[\[30\]](#)

Young reader, what *perfect* security and safety you have in Jesus, and in His Gospel City! Far, far more so than the manslayer had of old in his. I daresay, even although he was delivered from the Avenger, the Hebrew refugee could not help at times dreading lest the other might come upon him secretly. I daresay, at night, on his lonely couch, he would sometimes dream of the Goel stealing beside his pillow, and he would start from his unquiet sleep at the scaring vision. Not so in the case of those who have fled to the “Gospel Refuge.” They can say in sweet confidence, “I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; because thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety.”[\[31\]](#) He who is their “Keeper” says of them, “*They shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.*”[\[32\]](#)



Hebron

Third City—Hebron.

Third City—Hebron.

Hebron is the most ancient of all the cities of Canaan. It was as old, if not older, than Damascus, and was built seven years before Zoar in Egypt. After wandering about from place to place in the land of promise, pitching their tents and altars, it was here the patriarchs had, for the first time, a settled home. We need not wonder at their selection of the old Canaanite city, on the peaceful slope of the southern hills, nestling amid olive-groves and terebinths, and looking down on one of the most fertile valleys in Palestine, with its orchards and corn-fields. On its eastern height is the spot which gives it to this day perhaps its most sacred interest—the cave of Machpelah, where the dust of the patriarchs has reposed for four thousand years. It must have been outside its walls that the angels appeared to Abraham, when he was seated at his tent door. The adjoining height is pointed out as the place from which the patriarch saw the smoke of burning Sodom rising from its own deep valley. It was in Hebron David was anointed king over Israel. It was amid its vineyards and mountain-slopes that John the Baptist grew up as a little boy, before he appeared in the wilderness of Judea, to tell of One mightier than he, “whose shoe-latchet” he was “not worthy to unloose.”[\[33\]](#)

What does the name Hebron tell of Christ?

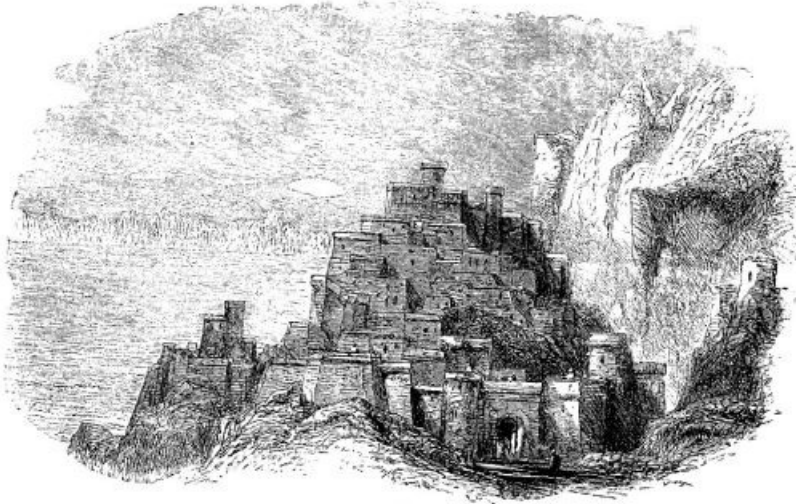
In Hebrew it means “*fellowship*,” “*society*,” “*friendship*.” Jesus has brought guilty man into fellowship with God. On account of sin we had forfeited this fellowship. We had made God not our friend, but our enemy. We were cut off from communion with all that is holy and happy. Angels, in their errands of mercy through the universe, passed by our world; they could hold no intercourse with those who had rebelled against their Creator. Can none bridge this wide gulf which separates between earth and heaven? Can no ladder be let down by which happy angels can descend once more on their visits of love, and fallen man once more be raised up to hold “fellowship” with God and holy creatures?

Jesus is the true Hebron—the true ladder of Jacob let down from heaven and reaching to earth. Jesus has “reconciled things on earth and things in heaven,”[\[34\]](#) He hath “raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places.”[\[35\]](#) We who were once “afar off” have been “brought nigh by the blood of Christ.”[\[36\]](#)

I trust many who read this will love often to visit in thought the old city of the patriarchs, and to dwell on its name and meaning, “*fellowship*.” Think of what *you* would have been without Jesus, your Hebron-City of Refuge,—a poor outcast in creation, an alien from all that is holy and happy. But by Jesus all is changed. God is your Father—Christ is your elder

Brother. In Him, God loves you,—angels visit you,—the Holy Spirit teaches you,—heaven,—is open for you. You are enrolled as a citizen of the great *Hebron* above—“the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Christ has made you to be members of the great heavenly family; so that the little child who loves Jesus, is brother or sister to the archangel before the throne! You may be deprived of human friendship and fellowship. The brother or sister, the father or mother, or friend you once dearly loved, may be laid in some earthly Machpelah—some silent grave. But rejoice! nothing can separate you from a better friend and more lasting fellowship. Though all earthly joys were to perish, you can always rush within the gates of that mighty Hebron of refuge, and say, “*Truly our 'FELLOWSHIP' is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*”

“Earthly friends may pain and grieve me,
One day kind, the next they leave me;
But this Friend can ne'er deceive me—
Oh, how He loves!”



Bezer

Fourth City—Bezer.

Fourth City—Bezer.

Bezer was situated beyond the Jordan, in the tribe of Reuben. Although its precise site has not been discovered, we may infer that it was perched on one of the many rocky heights among the mountains of *Abarim*,—perhaps a spur of the great mount Nebo, from whose summit Moses was permitted, before death, to get a view of the Land of Promise. The northern portion of the waters of the Dead Sea would be seen from it, and the pastoral mountains of Judah in the distance. From its name, as well as from its being a border town, and subject to attack from the warlike tribe of Moab, Bezer would probably be strongly fortified,—similar, perhaps, in this respect to the towns in the neighbourhood, with which the Israelites were so struck on their first approach to Canaan, with “their walls great and high, reaching to heaven.”

What does the name Bezer tell of Christ?

It literally means “*stronghold*,” or Rock. Jesus is the believer's Bezer. The sinner is in danger everywhere else, but in Jesus he is safe. He is invited to “turn to the STRONGHOLD” as a “prisoner of hope,” and once within its gates, “though an host encamp against him,” he need “fear no evil.”

What a mighty force *does* encamp against him! There is *God's Holy Law*, with all its terrible threatenings and curses. But sheltered in the true Bezer he can triumphantly say, “It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?” [\[37\]](#)

There is *Satan*, with his artful wiles and countless temptations. He was once a bright angel himself. He knows what holiness and happiness are. But being now a wicked spirit, he would make others as wicked and unhappy as himself. He is spoken of in the Bible as “a strong man armed.” [\[38\]](#) But Jesus is “stronger” than this strong man. If you have fled for refuge to this great gospel *Bezer*, seated within its secure bulwarks you can joyfully exclaim, “*I will say of the Lord, He is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whose I will put my trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*” [\[39\]](#)

There is your own *Wicked Heart*, with its sinful thoughts, and vain imaginations, and deep corruptions—for a man's worst foes are often those of his own household. One of these heart-foes will tempt you to tell a lie; another to swear; another to be dishonest; another to be selfish; another to be passionate; another to be unkind. But He that is *for* you, is greater than they that are *against* you. Safer than in any earthly castle, you can take up your warrior-song, “*The name of the*

Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." [40]

There are the *Trials and Sorrows and Distresses of this world*,—those things that cause sad hearts and tearful eyes. But that blessed Saviour—your Rock and Stronghold—"knows your sorrows," for He felt them. He marks your tears, for He shed the same himself. Fleeing to this true Bezer in the time of affliction, you can dry your tears and sing, "*God also will be a refuge for the distressed, a refuge in the time of trouble; and they that know thy name shall put their trust in thee.*" [41]

And there is *Death*, the last enemy of all. But even over this King of terrors and Terror of kings, you can shout in triumph from your Divine shelter, "*O death, where is thy sting?... Thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ.*" [42]

And Jesus is a Stronghold for *all*. I have already spoken of the little children of old rushing to its gates,—infants smiling fearless in the Saviour's arms. He combines the majesty of Deity with the tenderness of man. If He had been the great God alone, you might have been awed at the thought of going to Him. But what says the prophet Isaiah of this true Bezer?—"A MAN shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." [43] He Himself says in another scripture, "*I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.*" [44]

In one of the great strongholds that were besieged in our last Indian rebellion, the Christian mothers were wont to hush their infants asleep by singing, "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*" My young friends, "*as one whom his mother comforteth,*" so is God willing to "*comfort you;*" and here is His word of comfort: "*The Lord is good, a STRONGHOLD in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*" [45] In the old Cities of Refuge no weapons of any kind were allowed to be made. Those who possessed them had to surrender them. This is true in a nobler and better sense regarding the Gospel Stronghold. There can be no deadly weapons forged there. Their edge is blunted: "*There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*" [46] Satan's armoury has been plundered; the "*Stronger than he*" has "*taken from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divided the spoil.*" [47]

I have said that the word Bezer means "*Rock*" as well as "*stronghold.*" "*Trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength,*" or, (marginal reading,) "*the Rock of Ages.*" [48] May you not well say, with your eye on this glorious "*Refuge*"—

"Dear Name, the Rock on which I build,
My shield and *hiding-place*;
My never-failing treasury, fill'd
With boundless stores of grace!"
"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!"



Ramoth

Fifth City—Ramoth.

Fifth City—Ramoth.

Ramoth was situated in Gilead, within the tribe of Gad, and somewhere near the banks of the brook Jabbok, where, you know, Jacob wrestled in prayer with the angel. It must have occupied a commanding position among the beautifully-wooded glens of Gilead, and, like Bezer, been strongly fortified. We infer this latter from the many sieges it had undergone. Being not only, like the other, a border town of Palestine, but situated in the direct route taken by the

invading Syrian armies, it must have been constantly exposed to hostile attacks.

You can think of Ramoth, then, among the hills and slopes on the other side of the Jordan, with their forests of native oak, which the famous “*bulls of Bashan*” (herds of wild cattle) roamed at large; while more peaceful flocks browsed on the meadows which fringed the mountain-streams.

What does the name Ramoth tell us regarding Christ?

Ramoth literally means Exaltation. Jesus is the true *Ramoth*; He is “*exalted* to be a Prince and a Saviour!” He was once lowly, despised, rejected, crucified, slain. He compares Himself to a poor outcast and exile amid these forests of Gilead: “*Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*”^[49] But having been exalted on the cross as a *suffering* Saviour, He is now exalted on the throne as a *glorious* King. “*God hath highly EXALTED Him;*”^[50]—angels exalt Him—seraphs adore Him—saints praise Him—the Church on earth magnifies Him—the Church redeemed in heaven will magnify and exalt Him for ever and ever!

Young reader, delight often to walk around the walls of *Ramoth*, and think of Jesus “*exalted at God's right hand.*” He is there pleading your cause. Though exalted, He has not forgotten the lowliest or humblest of His people. He is the Greatest of all Beings, but He is the Kindest of all too. The first time after His exaltation when He came down to earth to speak to the aged apostle John, John wondered if the glories of heaven had altered His love and tenderness. He remembered how often before he used to lean on His bosom. When he looked, however, *now*, upon the glorious Being that stood before him in His lustrous garment, with “*His eyes like a flame of fire,*” “*he fell down at His feet like one dead.*” But the same gentle hand touched him, the same gentle voice he was wont to hear so often in past years, said to him, “*Fear not!*” How sweet for us to think that we have *exalted* on the highest throne of the universe an unchanged and unchanging Saviour, an ever-living, never-dying Friend.

“*Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye.*”

Jesus is exalted in heaven, and exalted by all the glorious family of heaven. But, alas! there is one place where He is often *not* exalted, but rather cast down, and that is the human heart. That heart has been too truly compared to the inn of Bethlehem, where there was room for every guest but the Lord of glory! Ye of tender years, whom Christ loved so much on earth—whom He fondled in His arms of mercy; see that it is not so with you. “*My son,*” He says, “*give me thine heart.*” See that He is enthroned there as Lord of all. Exalt Him in everything: in your thoughts, in your words, in your deeds. Welcome Him, as the children of the temple welcomed Him to Jerusalem of old. Take up their song, and sing, “*Hosannah to the Son of David! hosannah in the highest!*”

“*When, His salvation bringing,
To Zion Jesus came,
The children follow'd singing
Hosanna to His name.
Nor was the Lord offended
That children joined the throng;
But smiled that they attended,
And loved to hear their song.
“And since the Lord retaineth
His love for children still,
Though now as King He reigneth
On Zion's heavenly hill;
We'll humbly come before Him
To celebrate His praise,
And while His saints adore Him,
Our youthful voices raise.”*



Golan

Sixth City—Golan.

Sixth City—Golan.

Golan was situated in Bashan, in the tribe of Manasseh, among the pastoral hills north of the lake of Gennesaret. It formed the most northerly Refuge-Sanctuary on the east side of Jordan, as Kedesh did on the west; but there are no particular events connected with it in Bible story.

What does the name of this last City of Refuge tell us regarding *Jesus*?

Golan literally signifies *Joy*. Jesus is truly the *Golan* of His people; they may have many others, but He is their “chief joy!” Well may they call Him Golan; for not one joy could have ever visited them had it not been for *Him*. The world would have been to them, from first to last, a “valley of Baca,” (weeping,) had not Jesus died for their sins, and saved their souls. Well might the angel say, when he came to the plains of Bethlehem to announce the Saviour’s birth, “*Behold, I bring you good tidings of GREAT JOY!*”

There is not one step the Christian takes but Jesus is Golan to him—“joy.” He is straying, a lost sheep on the dark mountains, in search of peace: Jesus meets him, and says, “*Your sins are all forgiven you;*”—he is joyful at *that*. He is wandering a prodigal from his Father’s house: Jesus brings him to his lost home, and calls him His own child; and he is joyful at *that*. He has to travel a long and dreary journey ere he reaches his true home in heaven: Jesus gives him His arm to lean upon; and he “goes on his way *rejoicing*.” He has many fiery trials to try him: Jesus tells him not to think these “strange,” but rather to “*rejoice*,” inasmuch as He is “partaker with him in his sufferings.”^[51] He has, at last, to walk through the dark Valley: Jesus meets him there, and supports him there. He sees “the King in His beauty,” and the land that is yet “afar off;” and, believing, “*he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*”^[52] When Jesus beholds him from His throne in judgment, what are to be His blessed words of welcome? “*Enter ye into the JOY of your Lord.*”^[53] And when, as a ransomed one, he enters the streets of the New Jerusalem, at whose feet is it that he is to cast, through all eternity, his crown? “In thy presence,” O Saviour God, is “fullness of JOY!”

Young reader, love often to gaze on the walls of this City of Refuge. The sacred writer, in giving the list of these six cities, seems to have kept it to the last because it is a happy word, and speaks of the happy prospects of all those that love the Lord Jesus. Believe me, there is no true *joy* but in God. The joy of the wicked is like that of a noisy stream—noisy because it is shallow. The joy, on the other hand, which Jesus gives, is like a great river,—deep, calm, ever-flowing, overflowing;—not full in winter and dry in summer, but full, and clear, and refreshing all the year long. It may be always truly said of Jesus, the great Gospel Refuge, and of those who have fled to Him, what was said of old about Samaria, “There was great JOY in that CITY.”^[54] It was the object of all that Christ did and said on earth to give you this joy. “*These things have I spoken unto you,*” says He, “*that my JOY might remain in you, and that your JOY might be full.*”^[55] Love Him now, and serve Him now and follow Him now, that you may come at last to the true Golan, in His glorious presence above, and “REJOICE *evermore!*”

“Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.
“Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared,

Unworthy though I be,
For me a blood-bought, free reward,
A golden harp for me!
“Tis strung, and tuned, for endless years,
And form'd, by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other NAME but Thine!”

III.

THE GOSPEL REFUGE.

“We have a strong consolation who have fled for Refuge.”—Heb. vi. 18.

III.

And now, my young friends, we have finished the survey of our picture-gallery. We have wandered among these six cities in the old land of promise. I shall repeat their names once more, that you may remember them.

Kedesh,	Holiness.
Shechem,	Shoulder.
Hebron,	Fellowship.
Bezer,	Stronghold.
Ramoth,	Exaltation.
Golan,	Joy.

What a complete Saviour! In Him “all fullness dwells.” In the case of some of these Hebrew cities, “not one stone has been left upon another that has not been thrown down.” Owls are screaming amid their ruins, and jackals prowling for their prey. But not so with Him of whom they were types. *Jesus* ever lives! He never changes. Time and decay cannot crumble the walls of the Gospel Refuge. He is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” [\[56\]](#)

I want, in this last chapter, to say one or two additional things to you about the Cities of Refuge. Let me ask you to give me your earnest attention.

The *first* thing I wish you to remember is, *that all the preciousness of that NAME of Jesus, and all the security of the Gospel Refuge, is derived from the merits of His death for you upon the cross.*

This is the truth of all truths, and one, too, strikingly taught in these olden types. If you read the Bible account, you will find that the manslayer had his liberty restored to him *upon the death of the High Priest.* [\[57\]](#) When the tidings of the decease of this great Head of the Jewish nation reached these refuge towns, I daresay many of their citizens would be heard, with wailing cry, mourning the loss of God's faithful servant. But the intelligence was very different to the captive Hebrew. It brought him joyful news! For that event enabled him to go forth from his banishment, and to terminate years of painful separation from all he loved on earth. The avenger could no longer injure him. He could return, happy and secure, to the comforts of his long-lost home.

So, dear reader, it is the *death of your* great High Priest that has purchased your release from spiritual captivity. The law can no longer hold you. Justice can no longer threaten you. You can go forth with the glorious liberty of a child of God, saying, “*Who is he that condemneth?—It is Christ that died.*” [\[58\]](#)

You can picture to yourselves, on the death of the Jewish High Priest, the Hebrew captive going forth from the city, within whose gloomy walls he had long been enclosed. You can picture him, with merry heart, making the valleys through which he hurried to his native dwelling, echo with songs of joy! And shall not *you*, with happier heart and voice, sing this song as you journey on to your heavenly home, and see it gleaming in the distance, on the other side of Jordan—

“When from the dust of death I rise,
To take my mansion in the skies,

This all my hope—this all my plea,
That *Jesus lived and died for me!*"

The *second* thing I want to say to you is, that *God has made the gospel City of Refuge easy of access, and has filled it with rich provision.*

He made the way as plain as possible to the manslayer of old. The cities themselves were generally on a height, so as to be seen at a far distance. The roads leading to them were carefully kept. They were broader than others in Palestine, (sixteen yards wide.) The Jewish magistrates and judges went once every year to inspect them, and to order repairs. Where streams occurred, there were bridges thrown across. Where there were angles or by-roads, posts with "*Refuge*" on them were set up; and as there were no bridges across Jordan, three of the cities were placed, as I have already mentioned, on one side of the river, and three on the other; so that all might easily get at them, and none might have any excuse for not fleeing. The nearest city could always be reached by the manslayer in half a day. Moreover, we are informed there were ample stores of provisions laid up in them. They were supplied with wells of water, and Levites were placed in turn as porters or gatekeepers, to be ready to welcome every fugitive into these homes of safety.

So God has done everything for *you*, to make the Gospel Refuge accessible. Your parents and ministers—your Bibles and churches and good books—are all, just like these refuge signals, pointing away from the cross-roads and by-roads of human reason, and human error, and self-righteousness, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and saying, "Flee! flee! flee for refuge to lay *hold* on the hope set before you!" *Jesus*, too, the true Gospel Refuge, is full of rich provision. "Ye are complete in Him." He, as the true Joseph, gives forth out of the storehouses in His "treasure-cities," to all His needy people. What are some of these provisions? There is pardon — peace — justification — adoption — sanctification, — strength for the hour of weakness, — grace for the hour of temptation, — and the good hope of everlasting life for the hour of death. No wonder that he says to every poor sinner seeking admission within these gates, "*I am the bread of life: he that cometh unto me shall never hunger.*" [59]

As in the cities of Canaan, so in this glorious Gospel-City of which they were types, there is a Well of living water. What is this? It is the Holy Spirit. He is often in Scripture compared to water. "*If any man thirst,*" said Jesus, "*let him come unto me, and drink. This spake he of the Spirit.*" [60] This all-glorious well-spring, moreover, is not like those of the Palestine cities, which were sometimes dried up in seasons of drought, but "springing up unto everlasting life." Angels, too, are the porters,—the blessed warders that keep the gates of this Gospel-City. "*Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who are heirs of salvation?*" [61] They love to watch by these gates, and to welcome every wanderer. How gladly they give the word, "*Open ye the gates, that the righteous (those made righteous through the righteousness of Jesus) may enter in!*" [62]

It is delightful, moreover, to think, that just as the Jewish cities were easily got at from all parts of Palestine, so from all parts of the world, may people go to the Greater and more Glorious Gospel Refuge. Poor Pagan of the far East! cast away your idols; the gates of the Gospel-City stand ready to welcome *you*. Indian of the far West! cast aside your warrior spear and your offerings of blood, and flee to the portals of mercy and to the blood which cleanseth from all sin. Laplander of the far North, amid your polar snows! Negro of Africa, amid your burning sands! rush to the provided shelter. There is salvation there for *you*. "The same Lord is rich to ALL that call upon Him." Happy prospect!—the time will come when the whole world will be found singing together the same song and uttering the same prayer, "*Open unto us the gates of righteousness, that we may enter into them, and praise the Lord!*" [63]

Will none of my young friends rejoice if they are able, by aiding the cause of missions abroad, to help putting this "new song" into the lips of those who are still "wandering in the wilderness in a solitary way, and have NO CITY to dwell in?" [64]

The *third* thing I want to say to you is, that *no OTHER Refuge will do but Jesus.*

I would like you to take as your motto the simple and beautiful words which a Sabbath scholar, I knew well about, lately gone to glory, wrote to his minister. "I am sure I may be very thankful to God for His great mercy toward me.... *I must just keep in mind that there is one Refuge to flee to, and that is Jesus.*"

There are many other refuges people try to take shelter in. They think they will be as safe in them as in the ONE of God's providing; but these will never stand in that day which will try every refuge of what sort it is.

I have seen some making their *own goodness* their refuge-city. They imagined they were not so bad as others. They trusted in the falling Siloam-tower of their own righteousness!

I have seen some making *God's goodness* their refuge-city. They said to themselves, "God is kind. He surely will not deal hardly with sinners at last. Justice, the avenger, will not surely always pursue with her flaming sword. The love of

God will surely get the better of his justice.”

Don't let Satan deceive you. There are many of *his* refuges which *appear* to be safe enough, but on which God has written “*Refuges of lies.*”

There were many other towns in Canaan of old which *appeared* to be as good and as safe as those I have been speaking of. But no city could afford shelter to the manslayer, excepting one of the six God had specially appointed.

What would have happened if the fugitive of old, in fleeing from the avenger, had said to himself, “What is the use of my going so far away as to Hebron or Golan? I would rather flee to a nearer place. I will go to Jericho, the old city of palm-trees; or to Bethlehem, in the hills of Judah; or, better still, I will go to Jerusalem, the capital of the nation, where the temple of Zion is, and the palace of the King. Surely I shall be safer far within its lofty walls and bulwarks than in one of these little cities of the Levites. Is it not said that '*God is known in all her Palaces for a Refuge?*'”

If he had done so, he would undoubtedly have perished. Neither King nor Priest, nor Golden gate nor Beautiful gate, nor wall nor bulwark, could have saved him from the avenger's sword. The refuge-towns appointed in the olden time may have been “the least amid the cities of Judah.” But they were God's selection, God's ordering, and that was enough. In them, and in them only, was the manslayer safe from the avenger of blood.

And so it is with our Gospel Refuge. “*Neither is there salvation in any other.*” Rejecting Jesus, we are lost for ever. All other refuges, however good or great or strong they may *appear* to be, will prove only Babel-towers, that will fall on the poor builders, and crush them in their ruins.

When God told the children of Israel to sprinkle their lintels and door-posts with blood, they might have been foolish enough to say, “No; we shall do better. We shall not be content with doing so trifling a thing; we shall rather build up great walls around our houses, so that the destroying angel may not get in.” Do you think, if they had done so, their first-born would have been saved? No; there would have been death in every such household; these high walls would have proved useless. Nothing but the red mark on the doorway of the dwelling would be of any avail in warding off the fell stroke.

So it is with the sinner. All the walls which pride, and self-righteousness, and good works can rear, will do nothing to keep out the sword of avenging Justice. But *the sprinkled blood of covenant mercy will*; for “*the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth* (and alone cleanseth) *from ALL SIN!*” [\[65\]](#)

I remember, many years ago, attending the deathbed of a young man in E——. He told me, one day, he had dreamt of being in a shop in —— Street, which seemed to be hung round with armour and coats of mail. A number of people in the shop were girding these on; while a man was standing with a drawn sword in his hand outside the door, ready to slay them as they passed into the open street. One after another he cut down;—the armour was no protection to them—their bodies were lying dead and wounded on the pavement. In great fear and terror, the young man said, his turn seemed at last to come, when he, too, must try to cover himself with the same armour, and rush out by the fatal door. He knew not what to do. In looking around him, he observed, in the uppermost shelf, something resembling a web of coarse linen, lying apparently neglected. He resolved to take it down, and wrap himself in a portion of it, instead of the unavailing sheaths of iron and steel. Covering his head and body, he darted out, following the footsteps of the others. The sword descended; but it bounded back again. It was unable to pierce the linen covering. He alone was safe in that crowd of dead and dying.

Beautifully did this youthful dreamer apply his own “vision of the night.” It was:—How vain are all the boasted sheathings of the armour of self-righteousness; and how safe and glorious is that “white linen” covering of the righteousness of Jesus! To the eye of reason, the panoply of iron and steel seems the best, and strongest, and securest. Many will not “submit themselves to the righteousness of God,” and persist in using the others. But they will be a poor protection against the sword of God's avenging justice. Happy are those who have been led to look *above* for another righteousness, and who have listened to the Divine injunction, “*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ!*” [\[66\]](#)

Reader, let me ask, is this your case? Don't think, because you are young, and have committed few sins, that you are safer than those who have committed many, and that you have not the same urgent need to flee to Jesus for refuge. In Canaan of old, the manslayer was in danger of his life, whether he had killed one or several. One single life, like one single sin, exposed him to the fury of the avenger.

Nay, more. The Hebrew fugitive *might elude* his avenger! He might manage, for days, or weeks, or years, to screen himself from his wrath. He might go, as David did to avoid Saul, to some cave of Adullam; he might hide in the gloomy recesses of some forest;—amid the oaks of Bashan, or the rocky gorges of the Jordan, or amid the cedar-heights of Lebanon;—in the words of Ezekiel, “dwelling safely in the wilderness, and sleeping in the woods.” [\[67\]](#) But it is different with the sinner and *his* Avenger:—“*Vengeance is mine; and I WILL repay, saith the Lord.*” [\[68\]](#) Who can escape *His* glance? Who can hide from *His* all-seeing eye?

“If I should find some cave unknown,
Where human foot had never trod,
Even there I could not be alone—
On every side there would be God.

“He smiles in heaven, He frowns in hell,
He fills the air, the earth, the sea;
I *must* within His presence dwell,
I cannot from His anger flee.”

The *fourth* thing I want to say to you is:—That *many young and old* HAVE fled to Jesus, the Gospel City of Refuge, and have found themselves safe and happy there.

How delightful it is, year by year, to trace the footsteps of those, whether young or old, rich or poor, who have repaired to that blessed shelter! I shall close this little volume by telling you of *two* such, now inhabitants of the better *celestial City*. Very different they were in years, in country, in outward position. But they were alike in this,—that they fled in life to the gates of the Gospel Refuge; and to both *the NAME* of Jesus was specially precious.

The one was C—— T——, a little girl thirteen years old—the age, I daresay, of some whose eyes are falling on these pages. I saw her when she was bright and happy in her adopted home in England—a sweet spot in the county of Kent, on one of those wooded heights or uplands which command an extensive prospect of the Thames, as he winds along, hearing on his lordly bosom the commerce of the world. Little did any then dream, that that little life, so full of promise, was to be early taken—her sun going down before it was “yet day!” So, however, the will of God was; her summons came suddenly, unexpectedly. Her disconsolate parents saw “the desire of their eyes taken away by a stroke.” The dear child herself was naturally of a timid, reserved disposition; she felt more than she said. Her kind, unselfish heart delighted in devising plans of usefulness and carrying them out. The entire of her pocket-money was latterly spent in the purchase of little books for the infant-school children—all of whom loved her much—or in publications for loan among the elder Sunday class. She won the affections of old as well as young. “The little lady who used to speak so prettily to us,” was the description given, with full eyes, by more than one of the villagers who had known her loving ways, and heard her loving voice. In another neighbourhood still more familiar to her, she used to go to the cottages with her Bible, and offer to read to the inmates who most needed it; always putting her little hands together first, to ask for God’s blessing, and then making some simple remarks she thought might be of use. Those whose hearts most sorely mourned her, had the fullest assurance that the grace of God had been early poured into their dear child’s heart. But on thinking, too, on the past, they began at times to wonder whether these pleasing traits of character and efforts to do good, were really prompted by love to Jesus, or whether they might be rather the effect of habit and the imitation of others. They anxiously searched among her little books and desk-treasures to see if they could find anything to confirm their fondest thoughts regarding this. I believe it was even made the subject of earnest prayer to God, that some such precious testimony might be found. After all her other books had been examined in vain, imagine what were the feelings of delight and thankfulness, when, as one day she who loved her best was taking the cover off her Bible, the two following letters dropped from it on the ground:—

“B. Parsonage, *August*.

“My dearest Papa and Mamma,—I am going to write this in case I should go to that *happy* land where sorrow is not known, suddenly; and that you may have *no* fears about my soul. I know my state, and that my *precious* Saviour has called me, and I humbly accept this *glorious* invitation as a poor WRETCHED sinner. I *strive* not to expect redemption by my own poor merits. I have no comparative fear of death, but as a passage from a wicked world to a happy, happy home. Though I am by nature very wicked, it is all washed away by my Saviour’s blood. The Holy Spirit has taught me what to pray for, and how to pray. I hope all my dear friends will forgive me if I have been angry when they have spoken to me about my faults. I should like, dearest parents, whatever little money and things I have, to be given to the Church Missionary Society and the Bible Society. My dear Saviour has forgiven me all my INNUMERABLE sins, and so, dear parents, you need not fear about my soul. I believe my Saviour will *not* forsake me if I trust in Him, and I know that all my righteousness is as filthy rags.—I remain, dearest parents,” &c., &c., &c.,

“C. M. T.”

The other paper that was found, was probably intended for her brothers and sisters. It is as follows:—

“When you are in trouble, go to God and tell Him all about it. The Saviour who called little children to come to Him will listen to you, no matter what the subjects be, if you be but in earnest and need His help. If you have a difficult lesson to learn, a hasty spirit to subdue, an unkind word to bear, a proud spirit to humble—whatever your difficulty, take it to God in the name of Jesus, and He *will* help you. If even we, who see so little beneath the surface, are not pleased with outward appearances without good qualities within, how much less is the great God who searches the inmost recesses of the heart? ‘The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the

heart.' What we require is a new heart cleansed by the Holy Spirit, full of all the graces mentioned in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, (chap. v. 22.) Oh! go then to Jesus and ask of Him in earnest prayer to pardon your sins, and to confer upon you the blessed gift of a new heart."

My young friends, have *you* fled like C—— T—— to an all-gracious Saviour? Is the "*name* of Jesus," so sweet to *her*, equally precious to you? Does it "soothe your sorrows," "heal your wounds," and drive your tears and fears all away? Can you say, in the spirit of her beautiful and comforting letter,—

"Till then I shall His love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of His *NAME*
Refresh my soul in death."

Having told you of one recently "fallen asleep in Jesus," who had early repaired to the shelter of the Gospel Refuge, I shall now tell you of an aged servant of Jesus who has, more recently still, entered on her glorious rest.

She was a former parishioner of mine. Her home was a lowly cottage in one of the loveliest villages of Scotland. Poor in this world, and an almost constant sufferer, she was rich in faith,—one of "Christ's jewels;"—her life was "hid with Christ in God." If I could venture to name two peculiarities in her spiritual being which distinguished her more than others, it would be these: Love for *the NAME* of Jesus, and a *Life* of PRAYER. "His *name*," to her, was "like ointment poured forth." [69] Often have I delighted to sit with her in her cottage, with her Bible on her knee, and hear her speak of "the *name* which is above every name;" walking about these six Refuge-Cities, "telling all the towers, marking the bulwarks, and considering the palaces." She had herself long before, in early life, fled to the Gospel stronghold. I think her favourite city would have been Golan, "Joy." Her heart seemed ever to be filled with "peace and *joy* in believing."

Doubtless much of this calm serenity and joy she derived from her life of *prayer*. It is no small matter for the writer of these pages to know, that there was not a day for upwards of sixteen years in which he was not personally and specially remembered by this lowly saint at a throne of grace.

One forenoon during this past year, she had entered her cottage, carrying a pitcher of water down from the well in her garden. It was the last time she crossed her threshold. When her door was opened, she was *found alone on her knees*; BUT *her spirit had fled!* Prayer, as it had been her ever fond delight in life, had been her solace and comfort in death. Her last act was drawing water out of the better "*wells of salvation*." She began with *prayer*, but ended in *praise!* She began her prayer on earth, and "finished it with the angels!"

Reader! when you come to die, could *you* be equally happy, equally safe? Would you be able thus to rejoice and triumph in the *name of Jesus*? Could you declare, with either of these two glorified spirits, before God "took" them, "*We HAVE a strong city; salvation hath God appointed for walls and for bulwarks?*" [70] Has the Holy Spirit taught you, as it taught them, that you are sinners by nature, and in a state of condemnation? Have you heard God's voice behind you, declaring that "He can by no means clear the guilty?" [71] And are you able now joyfully to say, "I heard Thy voice, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and *I hid myself?*"

Are you, like them, really "hid" *within* the gates? The manslayer of old required to be *within* the refuge-city. Even if he were but one footstep without, the avenger of blood could cut him down. It did not matter *how* near he was, if he was not *inside* the portals!

And so it will avail you nothing to know about Christ, and hear about Christ;—to survey the strength of the city's walls, the glory of its battlements, and the beauty of its palaces. It is "*the righteous who RUNNETH into it,*" who alone is "*safe.*"

What more, in closing, have I to say, but to repeat the solemn word, "*Haste thee, flee for thy life!*" Every hour you put off, the time is shorter; the avenger is nearer; the chances of escape are fewer. There is no time for delay. I say this to the very youngest. I say more. As young feet can run fastest, so it is with young souls. You will never go to Jesus so easily as now. Let nothing keep you back. It is said that on digging up the ruins of Herculaneum, (the city that was buried under the lava of Mount Vesuvius,) the body of a man was found in an upright posture, in the act of running out of the door of his house to escape destruction. He had a bag of gold in his hand. Others had escaped in safety. But this miser loved his gold more than his life. He had returned to fetch it, thinking he would have time enough to escape the terrible doom; but the burning stream overtook him. He was encased in a living sepulchre.

It was one, too, of the saddest incidents connected with these Cities of Refuge of old, when some poor, breathless, panting fugitive—just when he was in sight of the city—when he had almost reached the gate, sank exhausted. Or perhaps the case of some other who had lain down weary to sleep, but who had been startled by the avenger at his side, and the drawn sword gleaming before his eyes;—years after, the pile of stones marking the spot where his blood had been shed.

But, oh, sadder, sadder far, for any, young or old, to perish within sight of Christ! To suffer the love of sin, or the love of pleasure, or the love of the world, to make them “too late!” To be *almost*, but not *altogether* saved! To be cut down by the sword of wrath, or overtaken by the fiery stream, with heaven in view!

God grant that this may not be the case with any one of *you*!

I shall conclude with a happier picture:—The citizens in these Refuge-cities of old, were sometimes seen clustered on the top of the walls, watching the approach of the manslayer, and cheering him on when faint and exhausted. So, think of the happy citizens of the New Jerusalem: Patriarchs, prophets, saints, departed friends, who are now safe within its gates, watching you from these glorious heights, beckoning to you not to tarry, but to be “followers of them who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises.” “Verily I say unto you, There is joy in heaven among the angels of God over every sinner that repenteth.”

We have been speaking of the “*name* of Jesus.”

Read the motto over the gateway of all these six cities. Read the motto over the door of the Gospel Refuge:—“*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name given under heaven among men by which the sinner can be saved, but the NAME of Jesus.*”

Jesus, my Refuge! look on me:
When weak and weary, worn, opprest:
I cast my every care on Thee—
Thou art my *Rest*.

Jesus my Refuge! guide my way,
Dispel the gloomy shades of night,
Oh, shine Thou forth with cheering ray!—
Thou art my *Light*.

Jesus, my Refuge! storms may rise,
Affliction sweep with tempest-shock,
My spirit to Thy shelter flies,
Thou art my *Rock*.

Jesus my Refuge! legion-foes
May seek to drive me from the field,
But in Thy strength I shell repose—
Thou art my *Shield*.

Jesus, my Refuge! Thou in store
Hast happiness without alloy,
Pleasures unmingled, evermore—
Thou art my *Joy*.

Jesus, my Refuge! on the brink
Of Jordan, in my latest strife,
Thou wilt not suffer me to sink—
Thou art my *Life*.

Jesus, my Refuge! oh, supply
My every want, whate'er befall;
Through life, in death, eternally,
Thou art my *ALL!*
Anon.

THE ROCK OF CASTELLO.

The Rock of Castello.

The Rock of Castello.

As I was walking on a bright summer evening, among the Italian Alps, I came to one of the lovely valleys of the Waldenses. These, perhaps I should tell my young readers, are a pious race of Christians, who have, age after age, boldly “contended for the faith once delivered to the saints,” and kept the lamp of truth brightly burning, when all around was darkness.

This beautiful spot is surrounded by very lofty mountains, whose tops are almost lost in the clouds, while the little stream that murmurs below has its banks covered with vines and mulberry trees, rich corn fields, and happy villages. When I first entered it by the Alpine pass of La Croix, the whole valley was shrouded in a dense fog, with the exception of one bold and very remarkable Rock, which towered in solitary grandeur above the sea of mist, and seemed from its height like an island suspended in mid-air!

Upon inquiring what this Rock was, I was informed it is a place famous in the history of the Valley. When the poor peasants were persecuted by their foes, their cottages and hamlets plundered, their loved sanctuaries burnt with fire, and "all their pleasant things laid waste," they would retire with their wives and little ones up to this rocky citadel, which the God of nature seemed to have reared as a shelter for His defenceless people.

Within this Rock that same God had wonderfully provided for their safety and comfort. It contains a large cavern, capable of holding many at a time; and in the very centre of this cave is a fountain of water, which yields a never-failing supply. When driven thither by the storms of persecution, the exiles provided themselves with food, from the plentiful wild fruits of the adjoining mountain, so that the Bible promise was made good to them, "Their bread shall be given them, and their water shall be sure!" Swords and cannon and other means of defense they had none, but a single man, stationed at the mouth of the cave, was enough to defy hundreds of armed soldiers. He had only to hurl fragments of loose stones (which were supplied from the sides of the cavern) down upon the foe, and they were instantly beaten back, thus fulfilling God's words to Israel, "Five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight."

Often, often, then, when the wintry tempests and Alpine storms, and drifting snows, were raging fiercely around, adding to the terrors of the enemy, did these peasant warriors find in the Rock of Castello a secure shelter and retreat. With their fountain and blazing fire, their Bibles and their God, they would make the rocky cavern ring with praise. They "feared the Lord," and had no other fear. He had "given his angels charge over them," and they could boldly make the challenge, "God is for us, who can be against us?"

When I heard about this Rock, which the "God of *Nature*" had upreared as a citadel for his oppressed people, it reminded me of a better Rock, which "the God of *Grace*" has provided for perishing sinners!

Dear Children!—You are all, by nature, like these poor Christians of the Alps, the inhabitants of a Valley. It is called "*The Valley of Tears!*" Like theirs, too, it is a lovely valley, far too lovely for sinful man; but though lovely, its name tells you it is a *Valley of Weeping*. Sin has made it so. And more than this, it is a *Valley of Danger*, a *Valley of Death!*

It is full of *Enemies*. I can not tell you them all, "their name is Legion, for they are many." There are:

THE WORLD.	Ungodly men, bad companions, tempting you to sin, and trying to keep you back from fleeing to Jesus!
YOUR OWN HEARTS.	The enemy within, the worst of all, because the most deceitful of all!
SATAN.	The great enemy, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. The last enemy, a sudden enemy, but oh! remember, a <i>sure</i> enemy; other enemies <i>may</i> come, He <i>must</i> come,
DEATH.	and the time of his coming is generally "at <i>midnight</i> ," when you least look for him!

Methinks I hear my young readers exclaiming, If my enemies are so many, if my danger is so great, is there no place I can flee to? "What must I do to be saved" from those enemies in this *Valley of Tears*? Oh! whither shall I flee from the "wrath to come?"

Hear the voice of God:—He is pointing to a Rock rising from the midst of the Valley, and is calling aloud to you, "Flee to this Stronghold, ye prisoners of Hope!"

Do you ask—When shall I flee? He answers, "*Now* is the day of salvation!"

Do you ask—May I not *wait* a few years? I am yet a young inhabitant of the Valley. Death, if he be the *surest* enemy, is the *last* enemy; have I not yet time enough? God answers—To-day! while it is called to-day! "Verily, there may be but a step between thee and Death!" "Haste thee; flee for thy life."

Do you ask—But must I leave all the pleasures of sin, and so much that I love in this valley of tears? God answers, “What is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Do you ask—But is there no *other* refuge than this, no other means of safety but, amid storm and tempest, to climb to this Rock? God answers, “Neither is there salvation in any other! For there is none other name given under heaven, by which a sinner can be saved, but the name of Jesus.”

Dear children, let this be *your* prayer: “Lord, lead me unto this Rock, that is higher than I!”

Oh! with what delight does that Great God look upon children, such as you, when they “flee for refuge to lay hold on this hope set before them;” and when they join their hearts and their voices together, saying, “Oh! come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise unto the Rock of our salvation!”

But I would like to tell my Young Readers something more about this Great “Refuge from the storm”—this Great “Covert from the tempest.” Let us seat ourselves for a little in the Alpine valley, under the brow of the Rock of Castello; it may help us to some thoughts of the better “Rock of Ages!” I dare say many a poor Waldensian, when taking shelter in this earthly refuge, would be often reminded by it of the Rock that can never be shaken!

First, The Rock of Castello *is very High*. So is Jesus; so High, that He is called *the Son of the Highest*—“The Ancient of Days!”—“God over all.” “The heaven of heavens can not contain Him!”

Second, The Rock of Castello *rises from the Valley*: so Jesus rose from poor parents in this valley of tears. He “humbled Himself,” to take upon Him our nature; so that “although he be HIGH, He might have respect unto the *lowly*!”

Third, The Rock of Castello *was quite close at hand*; though lofty, it was always near for fleeing to: so is Jesus, the “Rock of Ages.” We have not to say, “Who shall ascend into Heaven to bring Christ down?” “He is not far from any one of us.” Indeed, He is so very near, and so very accessible, that the only wonder is that there should be any found who do not “flee to Him for refuge!”

Fourth, The Rock of Castello *was wont to shelter many children and helpless infants*; many poor mothers, driven from their homes, carried their babes thither in their arms. Jesus, the living Rock, does the same. He delighted, when on earth, to fold children to his bosom, and say, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not!” It was neither His nor His “Father’s will” that so much as “one of these little ones should perish.” He was so HIGH that angels adored Him; so meek and lowly, that infants smiled in his arms!

Fifth, The Rock of Castello *has a large cleft or opening in it, which admits into the cavern*. Jesus is a *rent and smitten* Rock! You can enter by faith *into* Him only through His opened side. Oh! what a smiting that was, by the rod of God’s justice! and yet, had there been no such smiting, you and I, Dear Children, must have *perished*!

Sixth, The Rock of Castello *was a Secure Hiding Place*. No other spot in all the valley could have afforded shelter but this. On any of the surrounding mountains there would have been certain destruction to the exiles, from the Alpine snows, and fierce hurricanes and storms. But here, in their cavern, nothing could touch them, and if the storm raged, it spent its fury on the Rock!

Jesus is, indeed, a *safe Shelter*, while every other refuge will prove “a refuge of lies!” The tempest of God’s wrath, and the curses of God’s law, are still raging fiercely all around. But what matters it? They can not touch *You*, my Young Friends, *if sheltered in the Rock*! Upon that Rock, eighteen hundred years ago, they exhausted all their fury. Jesus shelters and delivers you from that fearful storm of Law-curses, by himself being “made a curse for you!” The tempest may smite *Jesus the Rock*, but it can not touch those who have “won Him, and are FOUND IN Him.”

Seventh, The Rock of Castello *has a Fountain in it*. Jesus, the Living Rock, has opened a Fountain not only “for Sin,” but “for Uncleaness.” He does not wish only to *justify* you, by sheltering you from the Storms of the Law,—but He wishes also to *sanctify* you, and fit you for glory. He does not only wish to make you *Safe*, but to make you *Holy*. The Holy Spirit is this *Fountain* in the Rock. Oh! Dear Children, bless God for this “Well of Water, springing up unto everlasting life.” It washes, and cleanses, and refreshes you. Without it, your naturally *unholy* hearts could never be fitted for the holy, happy heaven, of a Holy, Happy God.

Eighth, The Rock of Castello *remains as it was to this hour*, while all its brave inmates of past generations are no more. Jesus is an *Everlasting* Rock, unchanged and unchangeable. This is still “His name, and still His memorial,” “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!” For six thousand years, sinners have been crowding in, and “still there is room!”

Ninth, The Rock of Castello *was only a safe retreat so long as those who fled for refuge remained within its cave*. The enemy were continually on the watch, and to venture out, would be to *perish*! Jesus, the “Rock of Ages,” thus speaks to

you, "Abide in me!" "Out of me, ye can do nothing." It is only "the Righteous who runneth *into* Him that is *safe!* To *abide* in Jesus is to be secure from every danger, to *leave* Him is *destruction!*"

Tenth, The Rock of Castello *had to be fled to in the first moment of danger.* The only safety of the persecuted was in *instant flight.* On the first tidings of the enemy, houses, and lands, and vineyards, and all they possessed, had to be left, and, "forgetting the the things that were behind, they pressed forward" to their Rock! Jesus tells *you*, dear children, your only safety consists in *immediate* flight to Himself, the Rock of Ages! Delay may be fatal! The storm-blast is gathering, the sky is darkening, there is the distant muttering of the thunder. The enemy is on the march—Satan is watching—Death is approaching. Already he may have strung his arrow. "Flee to the stronghold, ye prisoners of Hope,—

TO-DAY."

Oh! forbid that this should be *your* history now, and your history through eternity (How awful are the words!)—

"They lightly esteemed the *Rock of their Salvation!*"

Reader!—Have *you* fled to this Living "Rock of Ages?"—Have you made it your prayer,

"Jesus! Refuge of my Soul!
Let me to Thy bosom fly?"

And in *that* bosom, and *that* refuge, are you hiding yourself until all Earth's "calamities be overpast?" The deeper you hide yourself in the clefts of the smitten Rock, the safer you are. Oh! do you ever pause and think that there is a day coming, when this Valley of Tears "and all the works that are therein, shall be burned up?" When "God shall arise in the glory of His Majesty, to shake terribly the Earth." When every mountain peak shall be black with tempest—and the whole valley shall be a sheet of living fire! Then (as I saw on the evening I entered this Alpine valley), there shall be but One Rock seen rising far above the mist, and thunderings, and lightnings, and tempest! JESUS CHRIST, the Rock of Ages! the Sinner's Refuge! and the Sinner's Friend! Many voices shall be heard beneath in the valley, calling upon *other* Rocks, but it will be to hide them from the "*wrath of the Lamb!*" The loose fragments of stone thrown down from the Rock of Castello crushed hundreds: "On whomsoever This Stone shall fall, it will *grind them to powder!*"

Oh, when the voice of the Great Judge shall resound through the dens and caves of the Earth with the Question,—"Sinner, *where are thou?*"—How blessed if you shall be able, from your safe shelter, to reply, "Here am I, Lord! I heard Thy voice, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself!" Hid yourself! where? Hid myself in

"THE ROCK OF AGES."

JESUS, MY ROCK.

When the storm and the tempest are raging around me,
Oh! where shall I flee to be safe from their shock?
There are walls which no mortal hands built to surround me,
A Refuge Eternal,—'Tis JESUS MY ROCK!
When my heart is all sorrow, and trials aggrieve me,
To whom can I safely my secrets unlock?
No bosom (save one) has the power to relieve me,
The bosom which bled for me, JESUS MY ROCK!
When Life's gloomy curtain, at last, shall close o'er me,
And the chill hand of death unexpectedly knock,
I will look up to HIM who hath felt it before me,
And cleave all the closer to JESUS MY ROCK!
Companions may smile, and the world may deride me,
And with the cold finger of ridicule mock;
But no trial, nor coldness, nor death shall divide me,
From the Shelter of Ages!—from JESUS MY ROCK!
O Thou! who on earth, in the days of thy sorrow,
Didst fold to thy bosom the Lambs of thy Flock,
Prevent me (though young) putting off till to-morrow,
In fleeing for refuge to—JESUS MY ROCK!

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Job. ii. 4.

[2] Psalm ix. 6.

[3] Ezek. xviii. 4.

[4] Prov. xi. 21.

[5] Rom. iii. 23.

[6] Gen xix. 17.

[7] Rom. viii. 35.

[8] Rev. iii. 7.

[9] Matt. xix. 14.

[10] Psalm viii. 2.

[11] Psalm xxxi. 21.

[12] Isa. vi. 3.

[13] Mark i. 24.

[14] Ex. xii. 5.

[15] Jer. xxiii. 5.

[16] Heb. vii. 26.

[17] John viii. 46.

[18] Rev. iii. 7.

[19] Acts iv. 27.

[20] Luke ii. 52.

[21] "The Land and the Book."

[22] Gen. xii. 8.

[23] John iv. 14.

[24] Isa. liii. 4.

[25] Heb. vii. 25.

[26] Isa. xxviii. 16.

[27] Isa. ix. 6.

[28] Deut. i. 31.

[29] Psalm xl. 17.

[30] Luke xv. 5.

[31] Psalm iv. 8.

[32] John x. 28.

[33] Mark i. 7.

- [\[34\]](#) Col. i. 20.
- [\[35\]](#) Eph. ii. 6.
- [\[36\]](#) Eph. ii. 13.
- [\[37\]](#) Rom. viii. 83.
- [\[38\]](#) Luke xi. 21.
- [\[39\]](#) Psalm xviii. 2.
- [\[40\]](#) Prov. xviii. 10.
- [\[41\]](#) Psalm ix. 9, 10.
- [\[42\]](#) 1 Cor. xv. 55.
- [\[43\]](#) Isa. xxxii. 2.
- [\[44\]](#) Zech. xiii. 7.
- [\[45\]](#) Nahum i. 7.
- [\[46\]](#) Rom. viii. 1.
- [\[47\]](#) Luke xi. 22.
- [\[48\]](#) Isa. xxvi. 4.
- [\[49\]](#) Psalm xxii. 12, 13.
- [\[50\]](#) Phil. ii. 9.
- [\[51\]](#) 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.
- [\[52\]](#) 1 Pet. i. 8.
- [\[53\]](#) Matt. xxv. 21.
- [\[54\]](#) Acts viii. 8.
- [\[55\]](#) John xv. 11.
- [\[56\]](#) Heb. xiii. 8.
- [\[57\]](#) Num. xxxv. 25.
- [\[58\]](#) Rom. viii. 34.
- [\[59\]](#) John vi. 35.
- [\[60\]](#) John vii. 37.
- [\[61\]](#) Heb. i. 14.
- [\[62\]](#) Isaiah xxvi. 2.
- [\[63\]](#) Psalm cxviii. 19.
- [\[64\]](#) Psalm cvii. 4.
- [\[65\]](#) 1 John i. 7.
- [\[66\]](#) Rom. xiii. 14.

[\[67\]](#) Ezek. xxxiv. 25.

[\[68\]](#) Rom. xii. 19.

[\[69\]](#) Sol. Song i. 3.

[\[70\]](#) Isaiah xxvi. 1.

[\[71\]](#) Exod. xxxiv. 7.