

cerned religion, and when he had to contend against hardened sinners, that he allowed himself to be moved and excited beyond the bounds of moderation.—*Henry's "Life and Times of Calvin."*

A PLACE TO PRAY.

The Jews, when they built their houses, always made a provision for secret worship. Over the porch or entrance of the house was a small room of the size of the porch, raised a story above the rest of the house on purpose for prayer. It was to this place that Christ directed His disciples to repair, when He said, "enter into thy closet." This was the place where Peter went when it is said, "he went up to the house-top to pray;" and where he saw the vision of a "great sheet let down from heaven."

Have some sacred spot consecrated to the worship of God. Have set times for it, with which nothing must be allowed to interfere. Read God's Word as though you heard Him speaking to you in the sacred page. Kneel before God, and make a full surrender of yourself to Him; thank Him for the mercies you have received; confess your sins; plead for pardon through the blood of Jesus; and ask Him to give you such blessings as you see and feel that you need; not forgetting to intercede also for others. You can do nothing well without God's blessing; and you cannot expect His blessing without asking for it. Every thing will go wrong when you begin the day without prayer; and, when you come to neglect it altogether, soon your feet will be caught in the "snare of the fowler."

"Never, my child, forget to pray,
Whate'er the business of the day;
If happy dreams have blessed thy sleep,
If startling dreams have made thee weep,
With holy thoughts begin the day,
And ne'er, my child, forget to pray."

Pray Him, by whom the birds are fed,
To give to thee thy daily bread;
If wealth her bounty should bestow,
Praise Him from whom all blessings flow;
If He, who gave, should take away,
O! ne'er, my child, forget to pray."

The time will come when thou wilt miss
A father's and a mother's kiss;
And then, my child, perchance you'll see
Some who in prayer ne'er bend the knee;
From such examples turn away,
And ne'er, my child, forget to pray."

H. N.

—*The Christian Treasury for February.*

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

How many go up to the House of the Lord without any definite intention of worshipping Him! "A day in Thy courts," says the Psalmist, "is better than a thousand;" and why? "The Lord will give grace and glory." Now, do not too many fall into a habit of undervaluing the *devotional* part of the service? They appreciate and desire good preaching, and, if the sermon is attractive, they find the sanctuary a delight; but, if the minister does not awaken an interest by his discourse, they consider the time as nearly lost. Good preaching is desirable. The more of it we can have, the better. It is God's ordinance for human salvation. But the prayers and praises, that precede and follow the discourse, are something better and higher than customary forms. It is not meant to charge that so low an estimate is often placed on them as this expression might imply; but that there is too little heart in them, in the case of very many Christians, there can be no manner of doubt. They do not take sufficient care to enter the sanctuary with a *preparation* for worship. They do not cherish those awful views of His glory, whose honour dwells there, that are suitable to the place, the day, and the occasion. Perhaps they feel free to indulge in light or worldly conversation or to pass the time

before the service begins,—if indeed they are so punctual as to be there a little before the time,—in reading something that is not exactly consonant to the business properly in hand. And, when the pastor says, "Let us pray," it is to be feared that of those who are thus addressed some leave him to unaided supplication. They are not solicitous enough that "the meditations of their hearts be acceptable."—*Ibid.*

THE SUFFERING SOLDIER.

I was lately sent for to visit an old soldier, and countersign the certificate for his small pension. I love old soldiers. They are always courteous, always entertaining, not seldom instructive. When the grace of God has reached the heart, they are often men of no ordinary attainments in spiritual things. They go at once to the root of the matter without reserve, without affectation. I love their manly simplicity. They seem to have gained the habit of speaking and acting as those whose familiarity with death and danger has taught them to be in earnest.

In a small chamber in a back street of one of our largest towns I found the old pensioner. His story, if they could hear him tell it in his low and silvery tones, broken by frequent paroxysms of suffering, would secure the attention of my readers. He fought through the Peninsular war under the Duke of Wellington. He was at the battles of Salamanca, Busaco, and the storming of Badajoz, besides other engagements of less importance. In those days, alas! ungodliness prevailed in the army. Some regiments, we have been told on pretty good authority, had not a single Bible. But it was pleasant to hear from my old friend that the regiment in which he served was blessed with a pious chaplain. "And, oh," said he, "how have I heard him preach, just before we were going into battle, and when we could hear the cannon thundering, about making preparation for eternity!" That preparation, I believe, this soldier had then through grace already made. The son of a pious father, he was also a soldier of Jesus Christ, while he served his country in the field.

Seventeen years ago he met with a dreadful accident, in consequence of which, and of the treatment which he then received, the spinal cord was injured in some extraordinary and most unusual manner. He writhes for hours together in a way almost too shocking for description. It can be compared only to the distortions of a worm when we trample on it. I have seen him repeatedly in this condition; my Scripture reader has visited him for several years; and has generally found him thus afflicted. The little rest he has is procured by the aid of soporific medicines, and, when he awakes from his short sleep, which seldom lasts more than an hour, it is to resume an existence of intolerable and unceasing restlessness. Intolerable, did I say! and yet this old veteran is contented, nay, is happy! His only desire, when he indulges one, is to depart and to be with Christ. In him patience has its perfect work. If his afflictions abound, his consolations much more abound. Sometimes, indeed, he tells me that he is tempted with hard thoughts of God, and has desponding fears. But he knows from whence they come, they are Satan's fiery darts, and he takes refuge from them in the blood of the Cross. In short I never saw a more afflicted Christian; I never met with one whose state of mind was more expressive of tranquillity and peace. And this after a life of convulsive pains, distortion, and misery, hopeless so far as the body is concerned, which has now continued with little intermission for seventeen years. Here is the patience of the saints. Were it not that I should be sorry to afflict them even with the spectacle of so much suffering, I should long to take the gay and thoughtless to the chamber of this poor veteran. They might learn from his own lips whether or not the consolations of Christ are enough to sustain us when even the dimmest hope of earthly consolation

has long since fled. There, too, would I lead the infidel, that he might judge by its effects whether the Gospel be a fable. And yet how thoughtlessly I write! In the same house dwells the old man's son-in-law; that son-in-law a scoffer and an infidel. For it is not evidence that infidels require, but a heart to receive it, and a conscience to make them feel its power. Even, when Stephen died, his murderers did but gnash their teeth; and the sight of patient suffering itself goads and irritates the unbeliever whom it does not subdue. So true it is that, if the testimony of God in His own Word be set at naught, other evidence is offered in vain. If a man believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would he believe thought one rose from the dead.—*Ibid.*

VAIN EXCUSES.

"But to Israel He saith, All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."—*ROMANS x. 21.*

How descriptive this of the Jews? And no less of sinners now, as is seen in the vain excuses they make for their neglect of religion and their indifference to it.

1. One does not like the plan of salvation. So it was with the Jews. They were in love with the law; they wanted to be saved by their works; and so there are those now who do not like to renounce themselves, relinquish all reliance upon their own merits, and trust entirely in Jesus Christ for eternal life, and receive it as the gift of God through Him.

2. One says he must wait till the Lord's time comes. Extremes meet. The other, above-named, thinks he can do all, and yet does nothing; this one thinks it must all be done for him, and therefore does nothing; so they both agree in doing nothing, and the practical effect of the two errors is the same, and one persevered in is as fatal as the other. To hope to be saved by our works is vain, and it is also vain to hope for salvation while we sit down with the presumptuous plea of waiting God's time. Sinner, you have already waited too long! It is time now to turn and live; turn, for why will you die?

3. Another says he has many other things to engage his attention, so much to do that he has no time to attend to the concerns of the soul, to the invitations and entreaties of Jehovah. Just as if religion were not the one thing needful, and it were not enjoined upon us as a duty, to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness!

4. Another says, there is time enough yet. So here again extremes meet. One has no time, and another has so much time that he is in no hurry; and both do nothing, but disobey God and invent excuses for their disobedience. Time enough! But who can tell what shall be on the morrow? And who gives us liberty to boast of time which we have not and may never see? Now, now, sinner, now is the accepted time; now, now is the day of salvation!

5. But, to sum up all excuses in one—some will say, God is too merciful, and has made too many promises, to exact us off; He surely will not destroy the work of His own hands. So said the Jews; but where are they now and where have they been for these eighteen hundred years? And, sinner, where will you be by-and-by, if you regard not the outstretched hand of God, and listen not to His warning and inviting voice? Did He not say to the unbelieving Jews, Ye shall die in your sins; whether I go, ye cannot come? And does He not say the same to you, if you believe not? Beware, then, how you trifle with the calls of God. Beware how you reject the Son of His love, and resist and grieve His Blessed Spirit! He is just as well as merciful; He has threatenings as well as promises, and you will find Him faithful and true. Believe, and you shall live; refuse, and you must die! Away, then, with your vain excuses! Come to Jesus Christ, and trust in Him for salvation. Come, O come, without delay.—*Home and Foreign Record, (American.)*