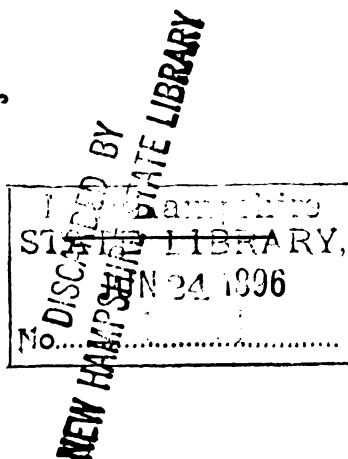


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THE  
**CHRISTIAN TREASURY,**

CONTAINING  
  
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MINISTERS AND MEMBERS  
  
OF  
  
VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS.



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THE HIDING-PLACE.

THE Isle of Wight has long been distinguished as a favourite resort of travellers in quest of health or pleasure: and there are few localities that, within an equal compass, can present a greater variety of beautiful scenery—sublime and secluded, rural and romantic. Equally diversified are the reminiscences and associations which attach an interest to particular spots. Melancholy reflections connect themselves with the memory of an exiled and imprisoned monarch. Joyous sympathies rest on the spot selected as the favourite domestic retreat of our present Queen. Consecrated are the scenes of Legh Richmond's faithful ministry, and the quiet resting-places where his "Young Cottager" and "Dairyman's Daughter" await the consummation of the just.

One sequestered cave is visited with affecting interest, from the traditionary tale of its having been the retreat of a French prisoner who had escaped from prison, and there, for a considerable time, concealed himself—probably entertaining a hope of getting on board some vessel, and ultimately effecting his complete escape. But the hope proved fallacious; and the unhappy exile, though concealed from his pursuers, perished for want in his place of retreat!

The poor Frenchman needed another Refuge. It is possible that he sought and found it. If so, though his body perished in the cave, his soul was secure and safe. On the other hand, though success had attended his enterprise, and he had regained his desired home, yet, if the other Refuge had been neglected, he had ultimately perished—in a far more fearful sense than that of merely premature death.

Reader, has it ever occurred to you that you need a Hiding-place. To seek a hiding-place or refuge, supposes danger or calamity, realized or anticipated. He who flees for shelter ima-

gines himself pursued by an enemy or avenger, or endangered by a storm. You, perhaps, entertain no such apprehensions, and are therefore unconcerned about seeking a hiding-place. A very short time may strip you of your fancied security, and convince you of the unspeakable value and indispensable necessity of what you now think little of. Be entreated not to lay aside this paper until you have devoted a few minutes to serious consideration of existing or impending dangers, and the desirableness of having a settled refuge to which you may continually resort.

You are in danger of the storm of worldly sorrow. At present, perhaps, all around you is pleasing, and all within is joyous and gay. You are in the possession of vigorous health, worldly sufficiency, and relative delights. So was Job on the morning of the very day in which he was stripped of them all. (Job i. 11.) And you, however favoured your present circumstances, have no security against the visitations of overwhelming calamity. This consideration need not, and ought not to damp the grateful enjoyment of your present happy lot; but it certainly suggests the wisdom of engaging a shelter—a place of security, succour, and repose, to which to resort when assailed by storms—so possible, so probable, in a world like this.

From not knowing a refuge in trouble, how many have been driven to utter despair! But there are others, whose troubles, sorrows, perplexities, and dangers, have been quite as great, who could yet calmly say, "God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble"—"In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion. He shall set me upon a rock." Those people have a special invitation: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy

## BRETHREN, PRAY FOR US.

BY GARDINER SPRING, D.D., NEW YORK.

Scarcely is the importance of the Christian ministry, that we are constrained to solicit for it one particular favour. It is a request in which we feel a deep personal concern. Pray for us. "Pray for us," says Paul; pray for us is the hearty response from every Christian pulpit in the land, and in the wide world. If the prayers of good men were solicited by such a man as Paul; and if, with his giant intellect, his eminent spirituality, and his intimate communion with God and things unseen, this holy man needed this encouragement and impulse in his work; who will not say, "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified?"

It is a delightful thought to a young man entering upon the ministry of reconciliation, that, unworthy as he is, the prayers of thousands of God's people are continually going up, on his behalf, to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God. He seems to hear the Church of God saying to him, We cannot go to this sacred work; but we will follow you with our prayers! He seems to hear many a Christian parent say to him, We have no son to send to this hallowed vocation; but go you to it, and you shall not want an interest in our prayers! Not a few of the Churches of this land have enjoyed the high privilege of sending forth into the spiritual harvest no inconsiderable number of beloved youths from their own more immediate family. And it has been the usage of such Churches, to an extent that is gratefully remembered, to assemble for the more special service of commending their young brethren to the care and faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God. How fitting, in every way, is such a service! how full of encouragement to the heart that trembles under a view of the responsibilities of the sacred office! how delightful this spiritual impetus to a mind almost ready to sink under its own conscious infirmities! And how unspeakably precious the thought to all who labour in this great work, whether in youthful or riper years, that they are thus habitually remembered in the prayers of the Churches! Let the thought sink deep into the heart of every Church, that their minister will be very much such a minister

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as their prayers may make him. If nothing short of Omnipotent grace can make a Christian, nothing less than this can make a faithful and successful minister of the gospel.

We entreat the Churches to regard with a more deliberate and devout mind the great work itself to which their ministers are devoted. To explain the doctrines and enforce the duties of genuine Christianity; to defend the truth against all the subtlety and versatility of error; to sustain within their own minds that sense of God's presence, and of those moral sanctions which are revealed in his Word, and that deep and tender impression of the things that are unseen and eternal, that are necessary to give earnestness, and that consistent life and deportment that are necessary to give effect to their preaching;—to do this in a way that shall adapt itself to times, places, occasions, and characters, and without being disheartened by difficulties, appalled by enemies, and weary of the yoke which they have taken upon them, is no ordinary work. If a people are looking for rich discourses from their minister, their prayers must supply him with matter; if for faithful discourses, their prayers must urge him, by a full and uncompromising manifestation of the truth, to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God; if for powerful and successful discourses, their prayers must make him a blessing to the souls of men. Would they have him come to them in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace, with a heaving bosom, a kindled eye, and a glowing tongue, and with discourses bathed in tears and elaborate with prayer? their prayers must urge him to pray, and their tears inspire his thrilling heart with the strong yearnings of Christian affection. It is in their own closets that the people of God most effectually charge upon the souls of their beloved ministers to take heed to the ministry they have received of the Lord Jesus.

And who and what are ministers themselves? Frail men, fallible, sinning men, exposed to every snare, to temptation in every form; and, from the very post of observation they occupy, the fairer mark for the fiery darts of the foe. They are no mean victims the great adversary

is seeking, when he would wound and cripple Christ's ministers. One such victim is worth more to the kingdom of darkness than a score of common men; and on this very account their temptations are probably more subtle and severe, than those encountered by ordinary Christians. If this subtle deceiver fails to destroy them, he artfully aims at neutralizing their influence by quenching the fervour of their piety, lulling them into negligence, and doing all in his power to render their work irksome. How perilous the condition of that minister, then, whose heart is not encouraged, whose hands are not strengthened, and who is not upheld by the prayers of his people! It is not in his own closet and on his own knees alone that he finds security and comfort, and ennobling, humbling, and purifying thoughts and joys; but it is when they also seek them in his behalf, that he becomes a better and happier man, and a more useful minister of the everlasting gospel.

Nothing gives a people so much interest in their minister, and interest of the best kind, as to pray for him. They love him more, they respect him more, they attend more cheerfully and profitably on his ministrations, the more they commend him to God in their prayers. They feel a deeper interest in his work the more they pray for him; and their children feel a deeper interest both in him and in his preaching, when they habitually listen to supplications that affectionately commend him to the throne of the heavenly grace.

The results of a preached gospel are associated with the most interesting realities in the universe; nay, they form no small part of these affecting realities themselves. There are no such bright and refulgent exhibitions of the ever-blessed and adorable Godhead, as are made where a preached gospel has free course and is glorified. That wondrous exhibition of the divine nature, that progressive development which is in itself so desirable, and in its consequences so endeared to every holy mind, never shines forth with such impressive distinctness and subduing lustre, as when the hearers of his truth and grace, proclaimed from lips of clay, indicate that appearing of his great glory. Had the people of God on the earth minds as pure as the seraph intellect around the throne, with what deep concern, solicitude, and prayer, would they watch the course and follow the labours of the humble and faithful ambassadors of the cross, as they proclaim this glorious gospel, and as the effects of their preaching

discover new and perpetual exhibitions of the manifested Deity! The effects of their preaching upon the souls of men are nothing less than the savour of life unto life in them that are saved, and in them that perish of death unto death. The same light and motives that are the means of fitting some for heaven, abused and perverted, only fit others for hell. O it is at a fearful expense that ministers are ever allowed to enter the pulpit without being preceded, accompanied, and followed by the earnest prayers of the Churches. It is no marvel that the pulpit is so powerless, and ministers so often disheartened, when there are so few to hold up their hands. The consequence of neglecting this duty is seen and felt in the spiritual declension of the Churches, and it will be seen and felt in the everlasting perdition of men; while the consequence of regarding it would be the ingathering of multitudes into the kingdom of God, and new glories to the Lamb that was slain.

On his own behalf, therefore, and on the behalf of his beloved and respected brethren in the ministry, the writer would crave an interest in the prayers of all who love the Saviour, and the souls of men. We are the dispensers of God's truth, and at best fall far below our mighty theme. The duties of our calling return upon us with every returning week and day. They often come upon us with many and conflicting demands. They sometimes put all our thoughts in requisition, and at the very time when we have lost the power of thinking; and all the ardour and strength of our affections, when we are the least susceptible of them. There is associated with these demands that pressing solicitude, and corroding anxiety, which exhausts our vigour, prostrates our courage, and drinks up our spirits. And then there are so many disappointments in our work, that we need the sympathy of prayer. Our spirit is sometimes stirred within us, and we go forth to our people flushed with the hope of rescuing them from everlasting burnings; and in some hapless hour of self-sufficiency, we vainly imagine the work and triumph are our own. We are instant in season, and out of season; we make a business of preparing for the conflict—sometimes polishing our arrows, and sometimes leaving them rough and barbed. We put on our armour, and enter the field with the determination to lay out all our strength, and with the confident assurance that we must do execution. But what a lesson of self-abasement!—we cannot

convert a single soul. "We have piped unto them, and they have not danced; we have mourned unto them, and they have not lamented." We urge the Divine commands, and they trample upon his authority; we urge his threatenings, and they despise his justice; we speak of his promises, they heed not his faithfulness; of his Son, and they tread him under their feet; of his patience and long-suffering, but their impenitence and obduracy are proof against them all. We reason and expostulate with them, until the obstacles to their conversion seem to us to rise the higher by every effort to surmount them; until we sink in despondency, and cry out, What mighty power can break these adamantine hearts! what omnipotent grasp can rescue these perishing men from everlasting burnings! O ye blood-bought Churches, your ministers need your prayers, for the exceeding greatness of that power which God wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

We have prayer-meetings for the heathen, prayer-meetings for Sabbath schools, and for the blessing of God upon the distribution of religious tracts. Why shall we overlook the great means of God's own appointment for the salvation of men? May there not be something in the form of a prayer-meeting for the ministers of the gospel? If nothing better can be suggested, why may there not be a general understanding among Christian men, and Christian families, to set apart the morning of every Lord's-day for this great and special object? This was the usage in the family of my venerable father, and it has long been my own. And it is a most precious privilege. The time is a fitting one; and such a service would not fail to exert a delightful influence on the privileges of the sanctuary. "Before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear." Should God give to the Churches the spirit of prayer for their ministers, it would be with the purpose of answering it. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." It is written, that "on every dwelling-place of Mount Zion he will create a fire and a smoke;" nor will the altar be profaned, nor the incense less fragrant, if those words of hope are more often upon the lips of those who offer it: "Clothe thy priests with salvation, that thy saints may shout with joyfulness!" Nor is this all. Let the ministers of the gospel have an *habitual* remembrance at the domestic altar. "It is no small thing," says a modern writer of our own city,

"for any congregation to have daily cries for God's blessing ascending from a hundred firesides. What a spring of refreshment to a pastor! The family devotions of praying Kidderminster, no doubt, made Baxter a better minister, and a happier man; and it is possible we are reaping the fruits of them in his 'Saints' Rest,' and 'Dying Thoughts.'"

Ye, then, that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest. When the Churches cease to pray for ministers, ministers' will no longer be a blessing to the Churches. Brethren, *pray for us*, that we may be kept from sin; that we may walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time; that our hearts may be more devoted to God, and our lives a more impressive exemplification of the gospel we preach; that we may be more completely girded for our work and our conflicts, and put on the whole armour of God; that we may be more faithful and more wise to win souls; and that we may keep under our body, and bring it into subjection, lest, after having preached to others, we ourselves be cast away. When we turn our thoughts toward barren ordinances, and a fruitless ministry, our hearts sink within us, and we would fain throw ourselves at the feet of the Churches, and implore a remembrance in their prayers. If you ever enter into the "secret place" of the Most High, and get near the heart of Him your souls love, plead earnestly that His own power may attend the stated ministrations of his Gospel. If ever you lie on Jesus' bosom, remember *us*. Open your desires; tell your Immanuel of his costly sacrifice and wonderful love; tell him of his power and our weakness; speak to him of the unutterable glory and the interminable anguish beyond the grave; with tears of solicitude urge your suit, and tell him that he has committed the treasure to earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be all of God.

#### THE FRENCH MASON,

BEING THE STORY OF A CONVERSION.\*

A TWO-FOLD character is stamped on all God's works. The material universe, for example, is at the same time *one and diverse*: it is one by the great and immovable laws to which matter is subjected; it is diverse by the infinite variety of beings of which it is composed, and by the changes which it undergoes in the course of

\* From a Foreign paper.