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**MEMORIES
OF STAMBOURNE**
by Charles Spurgeon

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE issue of this small volume will mark an epoch in my life full of interest to my friends, and solemnly instructive to myself. In the end of May, 1891, I suffered from the virulent influenza, then raging; but all thought I had recovered, and it was judged wise that I should take a change of air. I went for a few days to the region near to Stambourne, delighting myself in what I called "my Grandfather's country." I was very happy in the generous and hearty hospitality of Mr. Gurteen, of Haverhill, and enjoyed myself mightily. But on the Thursday of the week an overpowering head ache came on, and I had to hurry home on Friday, to go up to that chamber wherein, for three months, I suffered beyond measure, and was often between the jaws of death. Now that I trust I am really recovering, I amuse myself with arranging what had been previously prepared, and with issuing it from the press.

I praise the Lord who has, in answer to many prayers, lengthened the thread of my life. I am indeed favored by having enjoyed the affectionate sympathy of so many belonging to all parts of the Christian church. Their loving earnestness amazes me: I did not dream that I was so well beloved. May I worthily use this enlargement of my time for earthly service, whether it be long or short!

I am deeply indebted to many assistants in the compilation of this little book, in which the venerable Mr. Beddow has been my chief helper; and Mr. Houchin, the present pastor at Stambourne, a great auxiliary. To Mr. T. H. Nash, who accompanied me with his camera, I am greatly obliged for several of the photographs which will, I trust, redeem from dullness any page of mine which may be clouded with the shadow of my then unforeseen affliction.

In such work as this I have found recreation, doing just a little, as my weakness permitted; so that no one need fear that I have exerted myself unduly. I am one of those who cannot rest unless they have something to do. I can hardly hope that my reader can be so interested in my subject as I have been; but I have done my' best to let him see that even a humble village has its annals, and that these may be worthy of record.

WELCOME TO STAMBOURNE.

A FEW OF THE FEW THINGS TO BE SAID OF THE VILLAGE.

BY

C. H. SPURGEON.

STAMBOURNE. We print it in capitals; but: we anticipate the question, *Where is it?* It is not easy to tell the traveler among gay capitals and snow-crowned Alps where this humble hamlet hides inside Of course, you know it is in Essex, not very far from the borders of Suffolk: but if you know no more, we are not at all surprised at your slender learning, nor are we quite sure that we can give you much more information. Still, let us try. Have you never heard of *Birdbrook* — name musical with sweet voices of flowing runnels and flitting songsters, surrounded with bowers of rushes, sedges, bushes, brambles, and climbing honeysuckle? Well, Bird-brook is almost Stambourne; only, as it has a railway station, it is not quite so rustic. And there is *Ridgewell*. The Romans there, or thereabouts, or between it and Stambourne, had quite a notable settlement: they liked watching on the ridges of hills where there were wells to supply the thirst of the camp. The well on the ridge, and divers nameless brooks, have lent their tiny rivulets to form the bourne whereof our village is the index, a bourne which soon loses its personality in the stream of the Colne, which in due time assumes the rank of a river. Is Stambourne the place where first the bourne needs to be stemmed? Or is it Stanebourn, the spot where the brook first needs to be crossed with stanes or stones?

If you have not yet discovered Stambourne, let your ear attend to the sounds of names more familiar to fame. Do you not know *Toppesfield* and *Wethersfield*, and *Finchingfield*, and *Bardfield*? Are all these villages fresh fields to you? Are you yourself so obscure as not to have heard of *Sturmer* or *Helions Bumpstead*? Must we give you up? We shall certainly do so if the august name of *Steeple Bumpstead* has never bumped against your memory. *Hempstead* we will not insist upon, though Dick Turpin was born

there; for there seems to have been a Hempstead everywhere in days when hemp was the great vindicator of justice, and stood the magistrate in such excellent stead, when men would not be converted by the stocks, nor sanctified by being whipped at the cart-tail, Harvey, the great Harvey, sleeps in pieces in the church of the afore-named Hempstead; but it may be that your blood has circulated for years without your knowing who first discovered the fact. But, then, you have a cousin living at *Great Yeldham!* Have you not? Surely “Yeldham great oak” must have been one of the visions of your youth, and it must abide among the memories of your riper years. No? Not know GREAT Yeldham? Go to! Prisoner in some vast furnace of smoke, which is called a city, what knowest thou of the freshest, greenest, purest things which yet linger under the sun ?

If my adventurous pen must altogether quit Hill Farm, and Stambourne Hall, and take a wider range, I call to remembrance in the mid distance places such as *Castle Hedingham*, and *Sible Hedingham*, and *Halstead* in one direction; and *Clare*, and *Haverhill* in another. These are the towns and cities to which Stambourne looks up with due reverence and awe, regarding them as subordinate Londons, towns of vast importance, which, seen once in a life-time, raise a man to the same position in his native village as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in town. To those regions where my fellow-creatures love to congregate, and create sewage and influenza, coal-smoke and yellow fogs, I will do no injustice: they must have many and great attractions, for they actually attract; but, oh, that one could abide among the buttercups of the meadows, and the poppies of the cornfields, and the sacred coverts of the brown-leaved woods! Alas, these joys are more for fancy than for fact! for, when we seek them out, the pastures happen to be swampy after rain, the green lanes are knee-deep in mud, and the copses have a chili blast tearing through them, which sends us home to gruel, hot water, and a tallow candle. All is not paradise, even in the parish of Stambourne.

Maybe, the village would have died out of memory altogether, were it not that, in its center, Puritanism had set up one of its most venerable shrines. Driven from the Anglican Establishment by that silly craving for Uniformity, which produced a needless breach in a church which might have been united, a number of the best educated and most spiritual of England’s pastors preached to their flocks in such conventicles as they could find, or could provide (1662). Mr. Henry Havers would seem to have been a man of talent, as well as of piety, and either out of his own

wealth, or from the great liberality of some member of his congregation, there were: erected a large meeting-house, and a manse, far above the usual provision for dissenting ministers in those days. Everybody seems either openly or secretly to have sided with Mr. Havers; and it is recorded that no one could be found to fill the office of churchwarden for the parish. The people, who formed the congregation, were at first called Presbyterians, and then Independents: that is to say, the congregations of the district were at first linked together somewhat on the Presbyterian plan; but as error began to leaven the mass, those churches which remained true to the gospel found it convenient, and indeed essential, to keep themselves to themselves, and thus to become Independents. Having an endowment left them in 1735, by a “lady bountiful”, of some thirty or more acres of land, which the minister could farm for himself, the place was not solely dependent upon voluntary offerings; but even if it had been, a host of well-to-do farmers, who came in from the neighboring villages, were quite able to have supported the pastor in comfort. Things are very different now: for many a farmer has enough to do to keep himself out of the workhouse.

In this paper we ought to have said something about the parish church; but we are not architecturally minded. Its chief interest to us is the fact that while our grandfather (Mr. James Spurgeon) was preacher at the meeting, Mr. Hopkins was rector at the church. They preached the same gospel, and, without surrendering their principles, were great friends. The Bible Society held its meetings alternately in connection with the church and the meeting-house. At times the leading resident went to church in the morning, and to chapel in the afternoon; and, when I was a boy, I have, on Monday, gone to the Squire’s to tea, with Mr. Hopkins and my grandfather. The glory of that tea-party was that we four, the three old gentlemen, and the little boy, *all ate sheared bread and butter together for a treat*. The sugar was very brown, but the young boy was very pleased, and the old boys were merry also. Yes, Stambourne had its choice pleasures!

It is pleasant to read of the harmony between these two men of God: they increased in mutual esteem as they’ increased in years. As Mr. Hopkins had more of the meat, and Mr. Spurgeon more of the mouths, the Rector did not forget to help his friend in divers quiet ways; such as a five-pound note for a sick daughter to go to the seaside, and presents of comforts in illness;. On one occasion, it is said, that having a joint of beef on the rectory table, the clergyman cut it in halves, and sent his man on horseback with one half of it: to the Independent Parsonage, while it was yet hot: a kind of joke not

often practiced between established and dissenting ministers. Yet, if our readers could see the hearty letter in which the present Rector, Reverend D. Rice Jones, and his kind wife, invite us to stay with them, they would perceive the same unity of spirit in another form. It is from this generous epistle that we make a quotation which will lie four-square with our subject. "Having been, in a very humble way, from my boyhood, a contributor to literature, my heart leaped with joy, when, on examining one of our old registers, I found at the beginning of one of the books, instead of the mere record of deaths and marriages, the following inscription, beautifully written in large letters: —

‘HISTORY OF STAMBOURNE.’

The title was followed by a closely-written page of narrative which caused me to shout to a friend, ‘ Hurrah! Here’s a find!’ Alas! when we had arrived at the bottom of the first page we had reached the end of the ‘History of Stambourne.’ The Rector who began that history must have been a spasmodic genius; and when he had ended that first page of his great work, his courage or his intellectual resources failed him, and he made a full stop where there should only have been a comma!

Never mind; we are going over to see what there may be in the old parish registers, and with the assistance of such a clergyman as Mr. D. Rice Jones, and such an Independent preacher as Mr. Houchin, we think we shall find some good thing even in the Essex Nazareth.

As. "The History" is not forthcoming, I must give a "general view" kindly supplied me by Mr. Houchin, which will sufficiently well inform us concerning the village. It may need correction by the census of 1891, but that correction is not likely to be in the direction of enlargement. We fear there is a decline. Everything is being sucked into the vortex of London; and the more’s the pity it should be so.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE PARISH OF STAMBOURNE.

Stambourne may be regarded as the first or last of the Colne Valley villages, as it contains the spring which is the principal source of that river. This is the only spring in the parish, and it is situated at: the extreme west — called Stambourne Green, and forms a stream which runs through the center of the parish in an easterly direction, receiving the surface water from the greater portion of the land which slopes from north and south towards it on either side, the remainder going over to the north and south sides of the parish, being also brought into the main stream by two brooklets which fall into it on the east, whence it runs on to Yeldham.

This is entirely an agricultural village, having no business or manufacture of any kind unconnected with the land: even the straw-plait trade, which formerly occupied the women, has entirely failed.

The population is between four and five hundred. There are one hundred and five cottages — some of which were over-crowded twenty years ago, when only one was empty; but now one-fourth of them are vacant, and some in ruins, owing to the migration of the laborers during the last few years. Few farmers are resident in the parish, most of the farms being held offhand. The village contains; one blacksmith, one shoe-maker, two or three jobbing carpenters, two public houses and one general shop; but it has no doctor, chemist, butcher, or policeman within three miles. The soil here is a strong loam, resting on a very deep bed of solid clay, and is considered good corn land; and it can endure long drought much better than too much wet. There are no snakes or adders, the soil being too cold; no dry; but a small lizard lurking in damp buildings. No primroses are found growing naturally here, although a few are cultivated in the people's gardens; but this loss is compensated by an abundance of cowslips and paigles, while the woodlands are adorned with harebells, anemones, and wild hyacinths, in their season.

There are a few pretty residences here. Stambourne Hall, occupied by Mr. John Willett, is a stately home, containing many commodious rooms, built in the old heavy gabled style — with massive ornamented chimneys — and set at right angles, forming two sides of a square looking south and west,

so as to secure most of the day's sun. It stands; in a pretty garden, surrounded by a large and well-wooded park. The Rectory is a snug and cosy dwelling, nestling in the midst of trees and shrubs, some little distance from the road. The Independent Parsonage is situate in the heart of the village, in the midst of a large garden, and surrounded with shrubs and trees, and is a pleasant and commodious house; and as one passes through this village, he must also be attracted by the residence at Hill Farm, and by the house of Mr. Joseph Unwin at the Mill. The Church is very prettily and quietly situated by the roadside, and has a large burial-ground surrounded by the trees of the Hall Park. It is faced next the road by a fine row of chestnut trees, laburnums, and blooming limes, which, in the spring, have a very rural and attractive appearance.

There is but one Dissenting Chapel, which is of the Congregational order. This stands near the minister's residence. It has a good burial-ground, and also stables and sheds for the horses and vehicles of those members of the congregation who drive in from a distance. It is shaded by lofty chestnut trees and limes, which, when covered with blossom in the spring, together with an abundance of lilacs, laburnums, and the flowers of the minister's garden, make up a very charming scene. It is a lively spot on Sabbath days, as troops of children flock to the Sunday-school, and others congregate from the hamlets around.

There is no School Board in Stambourne, but the National School is used according to the terms of the new Act, and is managed by a committee of parishioners, and a school-attendance committee, consisting of the Rector, Independent Minister, and a Guardian of the poor. All fit children are now in attendance, and this must soon effect a great change in the elementary education of the people. We trust it will be a blessing to all.

This is about all that need be said in merely introducing Stambourne to the reader; who, if he be as fond of topographical works as the present writer, will not despise the outline, though it be not the picture of Jerusalem, but only a rough sketch of one of the villages of Judah. If this suffice not to give him a glimpse of Stambourne, let him mentally put together certain up and down roads, with broad margins of green, and walls of hedge; ponds as brown and foul as stale beer; ducks and goslings *ad lib.*; plots of woodland; fields of "tarmuts" and "wuzzel," oats and barley; a windmill; two or three nice houses, with gardens and lawns; numbers of cottages, which could hardly be less picturesque; great wealth of fine trees; stretches

of meadow land; valleys and undulations; pigs; and donkeys; and withal, a general disorderliness of fertility, and a sense of being out of the world, and having nothing particular to do, and you are, getting an idea of *Stambourne*. On the opposite page we present the reader with a fair picture of Stambourne Hall.

MEMORIES

OF

STAMBOURNE.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.

Some portions of the following paper were written in 1863, and set down in letters on the spot, as is shown by internal evidence.

A few pages were published in the Evangelical Magazine in 1868. The original sketch is here reproduced, with several corrections and some changes in arrangement, rendered needful by its becoming part of a joint publication. For some items of information which would have been otherwise lacking, I am indebted to the kind courtesy of the Reverend J. C. Houchin, who has permitted the use of articles written by him in "The Haverhill and Stambourne District Magazine, 1883." The quotations are, as a rule, acknowledged at the foot of the page; but where this is not done, this general word must cover all.

Of several beloved friends for whom this record was specially intended, two dear cousins have, before its completion, passed away from "the earthly house of this tabernacle" to the "Father's House."

They are gone. We are going. The retrospect and the prospect suggest the insertion of the lines on "THE FUTURE HOME," with which the article closes.

BENJAMIN BEDDOW.

Bradford-on-Avon

MEMORIES OF STAMBOURNE.

AT the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation, Ulrich von Hutten, who distinguished himself both as a swordsman and a satirist, wrote a certain book, entitled, "Letters of Obscure Men." With a very different object, with more than a spice of the satire by which Hutten's pages are seasoned — or, may be, without any satire at all — some pleasant, perhaps diverting, and not wholly unprofitable papers might be written as "Letters from Obscure Places." Perchance there is no place, however obscure or unattractive, but has, to some persons, associations pleasing, useful, or sacred. Who ever sojourns anywhere, for a while even, in scenes unattractive, for among people not lovely, and departs without some sense of regret ?

*"There is a sort of unexpressed concert
A kind of shock that sets one's heart ajar:
At leaving even the most unpleasant people
And places, one keeps looking at the steeple."*

Some places, otherwise little known or noticed, have been signalized by special providences, or hallowed by the sanctities of personal religion. Who had ever heard of the oaks of Mature, but for Abram's dwelling under their shade? Who would have remembered Gerar, but for Isaac's sojourn? Where had been the record of Bethel, but for Jacob's vision, or that of the ford Jabbok but for his memorable and prevailing strife?

With many the name of Stambourne is obscure, and few know much of its history. Yet it has a history, and we think some points of it drawn from their obscurity may have some interest for the Christian mind. With me, the name of Stambourne has always been linked with thoughts and experiences of early days, so that in after life I often wished to see it again. Where my Grandfather, Benjamin Beddow, was pastor so long, his grandson could not but find himself at home.

In 1863, I took advantage of a short holiday, to visit a spot so familiar to me in my childhood, and so linked with cherished associations. I went, by train, from London to Yeldham, and having no more luggage than could be conveniently carried, I walked on to Stambourne. I had but a dim remembrance of the village, though I had a pretty clear mental picture of

the old Meeting-house, as well as of the old house in which the minister lived.

As it was Saturday, my first thought was to lodge at the village Inn, to go to the service on Sunday, and to listen to the aged minister. But the sight of the village, and a walk up the street, made me feel that I should be a marked man in the village, and still more a marked man in the congregation. The unexpected presence of a stranger might be disturbing to the preacher; so that it would be hardly fair to go without giving some previous notice. The going, as I meant to have gone, was therefore given up, and I determined to call at the minister's house and introduce myself that same evening.

I went to the Inn and asked if I could have tea. Yes, it could soon be ready. The Inn was but a cottage with brick floor and deal table, and though in the midst of a farming district, milk was not to be had. Bread, butter, and sugar were found. It was not a very bright prospect that opened before me.

As there was no private room, I sat with the host and his wife, and asked for such information as I could get about the village and its concerns. What I gathered did not amount to much. How little is known of a prophet in his own country, especially in its inn! They knew Mr. Spurgeon, and could direct me to his home, which was almost within sight of their own. After tea, I walked on to the minister's house. My visit was a surprise, but my reception was cordial. Miss Ann Spurgeon came into the room to meet me, and, receiving my name, called her father.

When he came to "take stock" of the visitor, he gave me the usual greetings, and then asked, as a first question, "Can you preach?" To which I replied, that I had had some years' practice in that holy art. "Well, then," was the rejoinder, "will you preach for me to-morrow?" "Certainly, sir, if that will help you." The good man walked up and down the room, exclaiming as he walked, with lifted hands, "Quite a Providence! Quite a Providence!" He then explained that he had received a letter that very day informing him that an expected preacher for Sunday was hindered by illness from coming; and as it was impossible to obtain a substitute, he was trying, when I came in, to gather a few thoughts, intending, if at all possible, to preach himself "But," said he, musingly, "my preaching days are past, and I am glad that any friends are found to conduct the services on a Sunday Now, thank God, I shall be relieved about to-morrow."

Thus it was settled that I should preach, in what had once been my own grandfather's pulpit. Only those who have experienced it knew the joy of such a prospect.

When I was a child, people living beyond the neighborhood might have asked, "What and where is Stambourne?" Circumstances and events have since made it more widely known. Some notes written in 1863 are here transcribed, and may give some notion of what it was then.

"Stambourne is a small scattered village, not far from Halstead, in Essex. It has been for years almost shut out from the world, and though a railway now passes near it. it has still such a far-away character as would astonish dwellers in our great towns and cities. To this day there is no post-office, and it is long before the surge of the outer world is felt in Stambourne."

Some further extracts of letters written in the summer of 1863, may give the reader some glimpses of quiet village life in Stambourne: —

"After a walk of several miles, I sit down in the parsonage. To me, the place is full of interesting associations. This is a curious old dwelling; a large house with thin walls, which, though not over upright, are not, as yet, deemed likely to fall, albeit showing signs of decay. This parsonage is two hundred years old, and consists of a stout framework of wood, filled in with lath and plaster. Strong timbers of oak, some of them roughly hewn, combined with oaken rafters and laths, give shape to the roof, which is overlaid with thickly-set tiles, once red, but now varied and enriched in color by velvet moss and brown and purple weather stains. Great beams to support the floors, seen within the rooms, are laid across the ceilings, in several instances resting over the centers of the windows; the openings for the windows being formed in the wooden framework of the wall. Why, the older builders often lodged a huge beam just over a window, is hard to tell."

"A massive pile of chimneys rises above the roof, making the house look a little top-heavy. The mortice and tenon joints, at the angles of the windows and elsewhere, are much shrunk and partially decayed. The *legs* of the house, as one may say, have become somewhat rickety, and it must *sway* with the wind and weather, after the fashion of detached timber-framed buildings, according as the pressure is received from one direction or another. The floors slope this way and that. Stairs 'tilt' across, somewhat '*more* 'than *rather*' out of the horizontal line. Banisters lean; windows get

rhomboidal instead of square; and door-leaves, remaining square, refuse to shut into the openings they once fitted, but which are now queerly awry. You might almost imagine that some earthquake wave had been arrested in mid-progress that it might spare something sacred, and that it had left its memorial in the undulating lines of the whole structure, illustrating the original strength of the fabric by the fact that it still continues to stand.

“The southern wall. of the house sustains the branches of a vine, which spreads its elegant leaves, and yields its clustering fruit in due season, reminding us of our Savior’s beautiful parable of himself and his disciples, as the Vine and the Branches.”

We have lingered on these details of the picture, because this ancient parsonage has been the abode of pious families, and the center of quiet village life, through long-drawn years, and there is much about its associations to awaken a sentiment of reverence. For more than two centuries “the tabernacle of the righteous” has been on this spot. If the stone should cry out of the wall, and the, beam out of the timber should answer it, what: tales they might tell! — happily, in this case, not tales of accusation, exposing wickedness, or denouncing woe. What conflicts and victories have these walls known! What sufferings of the godly, what hopes and anxieties, what: fears and joys, and what communion with God! Every room has been hallowed by the breath of prayer: its roof-tree has been vocal with the song of praise without ceasing. Almost every Lord’s-day, for many years, the large central room was occupied, in the interval of public service, by Christian people, who edified and comforted one another by godly conference, combined with the voice of intercession and the melody of psalms and hymns. It might be said of these, “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.” In this secluded dwelling, successive pastors have peacefully spent their lives, and its chambers have been consecrated by the departure of saints, who have “died in the faith.” We may say that the eyes of the All-seeing, with complacent regard, have rested on it as the scene of “life’s last hours” to many of his beloved children. In this venerable home, angels have witnessed the devotions of the chosen of the Lord; or “encamped round about them that fear him;” and thence these holy ones have escorted “heirs of salvation” to their everlasting home.

“Like the old dwelling,” to quote again from a letter written on the spot, in 1863, “the aged minister, the Reverend James Spurgeon, shows and feels the signs of decay and coming dissolution. An uncertain memory and a general failure of the whole man, render him almost incapable of preaching, and occasion mistakes in public address; but, I am told, ‘he makes no mistakes in prayer.’ This, from examples which I observed and enjoyed in family worship, I can readily believe. The pilgrim is patiently and hopefully expecting to be called home, and continues happily walking with God, and waiting patiently till it be said, ‘God took him.’”

“The good man has been talking to me this morning with the simplicity of a child, about his privileges, and the mercies of his Heavenly Father towards him; and how he feels ‘more desire for the will of God, and more delight than ever in all good things;’ and how he ‘has had a long life, and enough of it;’ and how he ‘should be glad to go home — -next week, if it were the Master’s will — or *next day* — at least, I think I should.’ ‘Ah, sir, what a wonderful thing the love of God is! The love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS our LORD, too!’

“Many a quiet talk he has to himself. }how cosily the good man sits in his chair, with a large Bible on his table! and as he turns to the pages of the big Book lying open before him, he catches some sentence about his Savior, and anon speaks with him in a still, small voice, perhaps unconscious of any other presence in the room. The visitor’s heart is touched, as he recalls the sentiment of the child’s hymn, and notes its illustration, in the experience of this, aged believer: —

*‘Thy Word is everlasting truth,
How pure is every page!
That holy Book shall guide our youth,
And well support our age.’*

“So our venerable host meditates aloud, thinks or reposes from thought, or takes the solace of a pipe, quietly observing to his guest, ‘I will not tempt *you*.’ Then he gets up, staff in hand, and slowly moves to the garden. ‘I must needs move’, says he, ‘else my knees will get so stiff with sitting, that I can’t walk at all.’

Let us look back a little into the remote history of the place. Whence came these buildings? How came this to be the Manse? and whence these memories?

Henry Havers was the first minister. He was of an ancient Essex family, was born in the County, and educated at Katherine Hall, Cambridge. He first preached at Ongar, was afterwards chaplain to the Earl of Warwick, and in 1649 was minister of Fifield. It was under the Commonwealth that he was presented to the living of Stambourne: we gather, therefore, that he was in favor with the Parliamentary side.

At the memorable and fatal period of August 24th, 1662, when many men made great sacrifices for conscience sake, Henry Havers was Rector of the parish. As he declined to conform to the requirements of the new Act of Uniformity, he was compelled to resign his living and his home; yet he still continued to teach his neighbors, and, as occasion offered, to preach to such of his flock as could be got together, as well as to others who chose to join them. In this he was so indefatigable and successful, that he became the apostle of the region.

“Being a man of property, he was, in this respect, much better situated than many of his brethren. He purchased a farm in the parish called New House, adjoining the grounds of the Rectory, whither he removed his household, and where many came to him for spiritual instruction. Their meetings for worship and preaching were held as often as they could be, free from molestation, and they enjoyed the greater quietness on account of the seclusion of the place; for it is situated some half mile from the public road, and to this day there is no cart-way up to it, but along a soft muddy lane.

“Bishop Kennet says of Mr. Havers: ‘I knew him to be a very moderate and quiet man, who kept possession of his own house and lands in that parish, and had an outhouse fitted up for a meeting, which was the better filled because the parish church was too much neglected.’” Of course, it was in many cases the sad want of anything good in the church which drove people to the private meetings, where Christ was fully preached.

“That which, tradition points out as the site of the above-mentioned outhouse is still an interesting spot, containing indelible marks of the purpose to which it was once appropriated; it is very suggestive of the circumstances and feelings of those for whose use it was set apart. It is a small piece of ground containing about 25 poles, apparently cleared in the wood, some 300 or 400 yards from the house on the north side of the lane, and surrounded by a deep moat, which still exists, and was probably crossed by a drawbridge, which, being turned off on the inside, would secure them from sudden surprise. But two years; after the Ejection they

were sorely tried by the passing of the Conventicle Act, and the Five-mile Act in the following year. Many of the little flock were cited before the Archdeacon at Braintree, charged with attending Conventicles preached to by Mr. Havers; some eight or ten at a time being thus arrested in the years 1665, 1669, and 1670, and tried; some as excommunicated persons, and some for not attending church, or not receiving the sacrament, for three years; while Mr. Havers himself was reported to Sheldon, the Archbishop, for having a conventicle at Stambourne.

The many names of persecuted persons show a good amount of well-principled piety, as well as nonconformity, existing in the parish in those troublous times, which will be seen more clearly if we bear in mind that though the charges brought against them may seem trivial, if not contemptible, to us, yet at that time they were very grave and carried heavy penalties in ruinous fines, long terms of imprisonment, and even death. Notwithstanding all these troubles, Mr. Havers and his faithful few held on until those cruel laws, which for ten long years had been growing more and more rigorous, began to be relaxed. In 1672 Mr. Havers availed himself of the indulgence granted, and took a license for his own house to be a Presbyterian Meeting-place, and another for himself to be a Presbyterian Teacher." (Haverhill and District Magazine, 1883.)

While quietly pursuing his work he was wonderfully preserved in the most troublesome times; and having lived as "a light shining in a dark place", he sank to rest with a mild radiance which made him long remembered.

The memory of one marvelous escape, of which, when a boy, I delighted to hear, is still abiding. To some readers the incident may be familiar as being told in reference to other persons; but it may well enough have been true in scores of cases, since spiders and their webs are by no means rare upon the face of the earth, and furnish one of the readiest curtains of protection.

Receiving friendly warning of an intended attempt to apprehend him, and finding men were on his track, he took refuge in a malt-house, and crept into the empty kiln, where he lay down. Immediately after, he saw a spider lower itself across the narrow entrance by which he had got in, thus fixing the first line of what was soon wrought into a large and beautiful web. The weaver and the web, placed directly between him and the light, were very conspicuous. He was so much struck with the skill and diligence of the spider, and so much absorbed in watching her work, that he forgot his own danger, By the time the network was completed, crossing and re-crossing

the mouth of the kiln in every direction, his pursuers came into the malt-house to search for him. He noted their steps and listened to their cruel words while they looked about. Then they came close to the kiln, and he overheard one say to another: "It's no use to look in *there*; the old villain can never be there: *look at that spider's web; he could never have got in there without breaking it.*" Without further search they went to seek elsewhere, and he escaped safely out: of their hands.

After some time, "Mr. Havers purchased the plot of ground on which the Parsonage House and the Chapel now stand, on which he erected a large timber-built house called his mansion, and a chapel which, with galleries on three sides would hold about two hundred persons." (Haverhill and District Magazine, 1883.)

After the Meeting-house was built, the Manse was occupied by Mr. Havers as the first minister; and it became, thenceforth, the dwelling for each successive minister of the place.

"Here," says Mr. Houchin, "Mr. Havers carried on the good work for a number of years more and it would seem that before his death he vested the entire property in trust for the future benefit of the cause he had thus been the means of establishing." A Mr. Thomas Green gave an excellent library to Mr. Havers, for the use of those who should follow him in the ministry of the gospel in this place. Some forty or fifty volumes still remain, chiefly folios, and containing the solid divinity of the Puritan Fathers. A preacher with a mind to study, and with such good aids thereto, should grow to something amid such surroundings.

"Henry Havers was succeeded by his grandson, who bore the same name. He was a scholarly and excellent man, and during his pastorate, in 1716, the congregation was returned as containing seventeen persons who had votes for Essex, three who had votes for Suffolk, and six who are described as 'Gentlemen.'

"He continued his ministry till he died, in 1724; and what is somewhat singular, he was followed by a nephew, who also bore the same name. He was M.A. of the University of Cambridge, and ministered here for twenty-four years, to 1748. Thus the first three ministers were of the same family, and each was named Henry Havers; their united pastorates covering a period of eighty-six years. The *last* is described on his tomb as 'a man of excellent talents, singular integrity and humility', a serious observer of

providence, and faithful, in the discharge of his office.' In his pastorate the chapel was enlarged to nearly double the size, and it was entered by two doors on the east instead of one on the south.

“During his ministry, in 1735, a further endowment was made to the place, in the gift of Little Collins Farm, by Mrs. Graciana Hallows, for the use of himself” and all future ministers of this church. During the whole of this time the popular feeling was evidently in favor of the chapel, and all, or most, of the principal families of the neighborhood were members of the congregation; which not only gave strength to the cause, but entirely shielded the poorer people from those social disabilities and persecutions which so severely tried their brethren in other places. This prevented the creation of those bitter animosities which in some places perpetually alienate the adherents of Church and Dissent, but which never seem to have prevailed here.

Of the *second Henry Havers* but little is recorded. Enough is known to show that he was a zealous and faithful man. He not only bore the name, but emulated the excellence of his predecessor; and after a ministry of many years, followed him to his heavenly home.

To the *third Henry Havers* is given an equal meed of praise. A manuscript copy of verses, written by a village rhymmer after the death of the third Havers, has been preserved. Though rude in composition, the verses strongly convey the abiding impression which these men left among the flock, and which was transmitted to their children.

The lines, written after the death of the third Havers, show that the writer knew him well, was a member of his congregation, was lovingly attached to him, and was living when his pastor died. He dwells on his vivacity, courage, wisdom, outspoken sincerity and general worth, and says, that whilst excelling as a preacher, he yet *excelled his preaching by his prayer*. The only existing copy of these lines is in the possession of the writer of this notice. The manuscript bears no date. It is worn and brown with age, and part of it has been torn away, so that verses twenty-one to twenty-four and twenty-nine to thirty-two are missing. There were once thirty-two verses. The original, or preserved copy, is written on a sheet of foolscap paper, having a water-mark of which the date is gone. The writing was in four columns, two on each half-sheet. It has been folded so that the creases divide it into eight pieces, and by friction each crease is almost worn through. The pen has been used with loving care, and the sheet has a

neatly-ruled black border. The now unknown author had little metrical skill, but his work is interesting, as giving some dim glimpses of history in the shadowy and half-forgotten past. So much of the document as still remains is here given.

**“ON THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THOSE EXCELLENT MEN THE THREE
HAVERS OF STAMBOURNE.”**

1. *The third Havers now is dead,
And tho' to him 'tis gain;
Yet the sore thought fills us with dread —
Or loss fills us with pain.*
2. *The very name to us was dear,
It well deserved regard;
The name has stood near five score years:
This makes the parting hard.*
3. *Havers the first was rector here,
His zeal for God was warm;
The living not to him so dear
That he would e'er conform.*
4. *He left his church and living too,
To keep his conscience clear;
His great concern was good to do,
And much good did he here.*
5. *He was far from being a Jude,
He was a star of light;
Yea, one of the first magnitude,
And always shined bright.*
6. *Yea, he was like unto the sun
In a bright summer day;
Bright he begun and bright went on,
And bright he went away.*
7. *A second Havers then there was
For to succeed the first,
And he was zealous in God's cause,
And faithful to his trust.*

8. *He did not only bear the name
Of his predecessor;
But his behavior was the same,
And much the same his temper.*
9. *He did not strive for this world's gain,
Or seek the praise of men:
No, but he spared for no pains
That he our souls might win.*
10. *He did not study human laws,
And so neglect divine;
He did not mind the world's affairs,
But held. a heavenly mien.*
11. *His Lord's talent he did not hide,
But well improved the same;
To God he lived, in Christ he died,
And left one: of his name.*
12. *So a third Havers then we had
The work to undertake;
Amidst our grief this made us glad:
Of him I now would speak.*
13. *My weeping muse is at a loss
How to begin or end;
I want for words to speak the worth
Of our departed friend.*
14. *His natural temper was vivace,
His natural courage bold;
He had a mind that was sagasse,
and tongue that ne'er cajoled.*
15. *He had conception clear and large,
In learning was profound;
His work he faithfully discharged,
In a doctrine always sound.*
16. *He was an excellent divine,
But few with him could pair;
In preaching he did most outshine,
But rather in his prayer.*

*17. And when he spake to God in prayer,
How reverent was his frame!
And with what a serious air
He taught us in God's name!*

*18. One thing of him I here will say,
Which some of us may shame,
How reverently he kept God's day,
And used God's sacred name.*

*19. Religion here was not confined
Unto the Sabbath days;
No, it did sit upon his mind,
And shone through all his ways.*

*20. He feared his Lord, but feared no man
Yet owned all in their place;*

* * * *

*25. Death cut him off when in his prime;
And he from us is gone;
For he could stay no longer time,
And we are left to mourn.*

*26. In death he freely did submit,
And to God's will resign;
His soul to Christ he did commit,
And now in heaven doth shine.*

*27. Now let us think, did we improve
These shining stars of light?
Did we esteem them high in love,
And steer our course aright?*

*28. Let us look back upon the path
These holy men have trod ;"*

* * * *

The last of these godly men was "gathered to his fathers" in the prime of life. All three "sleep in Jesus." Their bodies are laid side by side beneath the floor of the Meeting-house, in which, when living, they delighted to proclaim the savior's dying love and living power.

“The next three pastors of the church were the Reverend Antony Mayhew, Henry Hallam and — King, whose united ministry carried on the work for another thirty-eight years. Up to this time (1735) — and how long after is not known — the Book of Common Prayer was used in the worship, showing that although the founders could not subscribe their assent and consent to everything contained therein, they did not discard the whole book on that account, but continued to use those portions of it which they found to be helpful and edifying. The pulpit Bible of that date, with quarto edition of Prayer Book, are still extant” (1883.)

Ministers pass away; but the “ministry of reconciliation” is continued. The servants die, but the Master lives “after the power of an endless life.” Preachers may be silenced, but preaching does not cease. “The WORD of the LORD endureth for ever.”

The last three ministers have been the Reverend Benjamin Beddow, the Reverend James Spurgeon, and the Reverend J C. Houchin, the present minister.

Not many churches can show so peace fill a record of pastorates. Nine ministers have sufficed for two hundred and thirty years, from 1662-1891.

THE REVEREND B. BEDDOW, grandfather of the present writer, was the minister for thirty-four years — from 1776 to 1810. He was married to a sister of Mr. Lemon, who was thrice mayor of his native city, Norwich.

“There are persons still living,” says Mr. Houchin (1883), “who knew Mr. Beddow, and who speak of him as a worthy and useful minister.” A curious remembrance of one of these survivors (October 20th, 1890) gives a glimpse of the man “in his habit as he lived.” In a note to a friend, Mr. Houchin records the following incident: —

“Visiting widow Hardy, of Stambourne Green, I enquired, ‘Have you any recollection of Mr. Beddow, as minister here?’

“Oh, yes. He was a very familiar old gentleman, and used to wear a three-cocked hat. He had a large family, and in a joking way would say: “My children will eat up two apple-dumplings, and look round for a third:.”

“At that time you had many well-to-do farmers in the congregation?”

“Yes, we had; and they were very good to the minister, and brought him many presents; and one would take a child a month, and another a month,

when it seemed necessary; for they had a family fast. He always called his wife “Madame.” They kept two cows, and when he went for them, he would say, “Madame, I am going for the cows.”” This mixture of minister and farmer was a consequence of the gift of Little Collins Farm and of the Pastor becoming, to a great extent, his own farm-manager and cattle-tender, so that in his double Pastoral office, sacred and secular, he was obeying the precept in Proverbs 27:23:

“Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.”

My grandfather I never saw; but I have a clear recollection of “Madame.” She was a portly and very handsome woman. She did not look so old as she was. Her face was remarkably smooth and unwrinkled. Her rounded cheek glowed with health and color — a color largely due to certain indelible streaks of crimson, only noticeable on close inspection. Her full, ruby lips were of a delicate satin-like texture; and her countenance, with lustrous grey eyes, reflected all abiding peace and joy. I seem to see her now, as she came, at times, to stay at my father's house. Her coming and going were great events to the young folks, seeing that she came and went in a post-chaise; and I remember some people used to say they were afraid she would overthrow the chaise in getting in. It could not be denied that she was a woman of weight. When she was at my father's, along with my mother's mother — godly woman, too, who lived with us — and an elderly aunt, who was also a grandmother; I used to class them together, and sometimes, having prepared a chair for a pulpit (I spake as a child), I would say, “Now, all you grandmothers, come and hear me preach.” Was there, in this, any fore-cast of future life? Did “coming events cast their shadows before”?

In the rural residence at Stambourne, Mr. Beddow led a peaceful life; and gave himself to “feed the flock of God,” under the rule of the Good Shepherd. He enjoyed the seclusion of the place, and brought up a large family of children; several sons, and one daughter. It was the privilege of all to follow the steps of their father, and to “walk in the truth.” All of them are now (1891) gone to their rest. One of them died before his father. He was very fond of music, and was wont to assist “the service of song in the house of the Lord,” and in domestic worship, by playing on the violoncello. His last hour was filled with music and song. “the ruling passion strong in death” prompted him to ask for his favorite instrument. When it was

brought, he rose from the bed, sat in a chair, and with full voice, struck into melody and song: the dying man's last notes of praise were the pledge and the precursor of nobler praise in the better world. One would like to know the hymns and tunes which sounded through the room; certainly verses from Watts. Words of his may best express the sentiments suited to the time and scene: —

*“I'll praise my Maker with my breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.”*

There is a tender pathos in the last touch, when the player put aside his instrument, saying — “Farewell! I shall need you no more!” And when he had made an end, “he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost,” swiftly passing away to join “the full celestial choir,” to sing a new song, and to be made like the perfect model, since he must “see him as he is.”

Another son, the Reverend Barnabas Beddow, was for many years a preacher among the Baptists. He was successively minister at Wickhambrook, Redruth, Grampound, and Great Sampford. In a good old age, after retiring from the pastorate, he died at Stanstead, in 1868, being eighty years of age.

Of the rest of the family no details need be given. They have the worthy record, “These all died in faith.”

One of the grandsons, the writer, Benjamin Beddow, is now (1891) a retired pastor. He was for many years engaged as a Congregational minister at Burley, Barnsley, Newbury, Wanstead, and Bradford-on-Avon. His pastorate at Bradford-on-Avon was closed March 25, 1883, but he continued to preach frequently to the congregation till the end of June, 1883.

Another grandson, now deceased, gave up his practice as a surgeon, took terms at the University of Cambridge, and became a Curate in the Church of England. After some years he emigrated to Australia. resumed practice as a surgeon, received an appointment in a Government Department, and closed his life in Melbourne.

The rest of the family have each one been honorably engaged in some secular calling.

There is one noticeable incident in the history of Mr. Beddow's pastorate, which brought much consolation to his mind as a pastor, and is associated with the memorable name of Cornelius Winter.

Mr. Beddow had held a former pastorate, near the place so long connected with the name and work of Mr. Winter. There was a time, during his residence at Stambourne, when he was afflicted with depression of mind, and was sorely tried by a season of apparent spiritual barrenness. Little good seemed to be done around him. He was ready to write bitter things against himself, and to imagine that his work had been to a great extent in vain. "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down," and who comforted Paul "by the coming of Titus", sometimes sends very special consolation in such experiences, or causes some light to arise in the darkness. Thus it was with his troubled servant at Stambourne. When pressed, almost beyond endurance, he was surprised and delighted by a most unexpected visit from the Reverend Cornelius Winter, on a special errand of Christian love. The mission was thus explained: — The host and the guest had been previously unacquainted, but there were some young men, attendants on Mr. Winter's ministry, who were bound to the pastor of Stambourne by precious ties of spiritual relationship. These young men had avowed their discipleship after Mr. Beddow had left the neighborhood, and he had never been informed of his usefulness to them. Having discovered that Mr. Winter was going to preach in Essex, some fourteen or fifteen of them subscribed a sufficient sum to pay expenses, and requested him to visit Stambourne on their behalf, sending also, by his hand, some memorial of their Christian gratitude and love to their former minister and friend. This was well and graciously done; and we commend these young men of the far-off past to the men of the present time.

Those who know the character and history of Mr. Winter, will easily imagine the generous and loving spirit in which such a commission would be fulfilled. By his stay at the village Manse, he cheered the spirits and comforted the heart of the desponding pastor, and delighted him with the story he had to tell of fruit from his labor in days gone by. This event was regarded as a special providence. The memory of Mr. Winter's visit was cherished with gratitude and love. His holy conversation, devout prayers, kindly spirit and cordial sympathy could never be forgotten. He himself

never knew the amount of benefit his brief sojourn had conferred. May not the host and guest be still rejoicing together in the “Father’s house”, the everlasting home?

The garden was a delight to the dweller in the Manse. It is large, and part of it lies in the rear of the dwelling. On two sides of the square, at some distance behind the house is seen a tall, thick yew hedge, well cut and kept, on the shorter side about sixteen yards long and nearly seventy yards on the longer side. At the angle of this evergreen fence stands a rounded piece of box, of unusual size — -about four feet high. Behind the screen of yew is a broad grass walk. Two sides of the square plot are bounded by quickset, and beyond this are fields which are part of the farm belonging to the Meeting-house estate. The grassy walk, well sheltered by the tall yew hedge, affords a delightful retreat for solitary musing or secret devotion; a fit scene for an Isaac’s meditations at eventide. I understand that my grandfather often made this place “the still retreat of prayer.” Here, methinks, faithful servants of God, filled with thought, engaged in worship, pouring out their tears unto the Lord, or breaking forth into songs of praise, have, by their frequent footsteps, consecrated the still unbroken sod, and for their thoughtful successors have filled the scene with memories to prompt and aid devotion like their own. The quiet of this seclusion suggests its fitness for “converse with God in solitude”, and recalls the sweet lines written by Cowper, in his garden at Olney: —

*“The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree;
And seem by thy sweet bounty made,
For those who follow thee.”*

Pacing this “calm retreat,” dwelling on its associations, my thoughts were turned to a story told me by an old Yorkshireman who had lived in a village in Lancashire, and knew a very godly pastor, who had a habit of walking in the lanes, and, like Jonathan Edwards, murmuring in a low voice his utterances before God. He was sometimes overheard, and on one speaking of this to a neighbor the reply was, “Yes, sir, the verra hedges was wick (Wick—quick, alive.) wi’ prayer.”

After a pastorate of thirty-four years, Mr. Beddow closed his life and service at Stambourne in 1810. At one side of the pulpit: in which he used to preach is placed a tablet, bearing an inscription to his memory.

IN MEMORY OF

THE REVEREND BENJAMIN BEDDOW,

WHO DIED JUNE 26, 1810,

*After having faithfully discharged his pastoral office in this place for
thirty-four years.*

*This stone was erected to his memory by a few friends out of respect to
their deceased Pastor.*

The REVEREND JAMES SPURGEON came to reside in the Manse at Stambourne in 1810. He had often visited his predecessor during the last days of his life, and aided him by pulpit service; for he was then minister in the neighboring town of Clare. He preached a funeral sermon, for him in the old Meeting-house, and almost immediately succeeded to the pastorate. He was thenceforth the occupant of this quiet home till his decease in, 1864.

Some incidents connected with my visit to Stambourne in 1863 may be here set down, as noted in subjoined extracts from letters written on the spot.

“Sunday was a pleasant day, when I preached in the old Meeting-house. The rustic audience were pleased, and found, I hope, some profit. The glorious Gospel finds those who love it here; and preaching may still do much in proportion to the limits of the field. People, some of them living three or four miles away, come to listen. They are grateful for an endowment which secures a stipend and a residence for the pastor, though the flock can do but little towards his support.

“On Monday morning I took a stroll in the lanes and fields, where harvest work was going on. I met one of the laborers, who spoke to me about the services he had attended, and then about past days.

I count now’, said he, ‘you be Mr. Jeames’ son. I knew your father, sir — he was a good man.’ The man then told me he had been ill, and was that day working for the first time after his recovery. ‘I did feel thankful, sir, this fine day to be in the field, and particular when I rested for dinner. I sat

down under a stock of corn, and put my smock over my head to keep the sun off, and thanked God for his goodness. As I sat there I picked up a wheat ear, and saw how nice it looked. I rubbed it in my hand, and said ‘o myself, “What a many corns! and all these come from one single kernel! How wonderful it is, *and that’s the way our Heavenly Father feeds his children!*”’

“The general state of things in the village has continued long, and is likely to continue with little change.” A note made in August, 1863, may give some idea of a seclusion which many residents in towns can scarcely nowadays conceive.

“Just after I had closed my letter, and displayed it in the front window (the usual practice), the letter-carrier brought yours and took mine away. This process shows how much we are out of the world. Every house is its own post-office. Riding, like Sancho, on a donkey, which we may call Dapple, her majesty’s servant brings a bag from Yeldham, delivering and collecting letters once a day, within a circuit of some miles. If anyone has a letter to send, it is put up in the window. The postman, as he goes by, keeps a sharp look-out, and if he sees a letter thus displayed he calls for it, and takes it to be transferred to the bag for Halstead, thence to find its way to that great busy world, from which these rural dwellings are so much shut out. . . .

“During the residence of the Reverend James Spurgeon, the trust of the Meeting-house and of the estate belonging to it: lapsed, through the death of all the trustees, and the failure to elect others. By length of possession the minister might have legally claimed it as his own; and he was so advised when he went to claim his vote as a freeholder in the county. Instead of asserting any such claim, he immediately caused the property to be put in trust, in agreement with the intention of the original donor, and for the purposes required by the first deeds.”

The Reverend C. H. Spurgeon came down from London to preach on the jubilee of his grandfather’s pastorate, in 1860. It was a very interesting occasion, and friends streamed in from every quarter. The Reverend John Spurgeon was. there, and the Reverend James Spurgeon, Junr., then a rising preacher at College. A large covered space was extemporized at Mr. Gatward’s farm, by the use of a barn, and tents, and tarpaulins. In the afternoon, Mr. C. H. Spurgeon made some allusion to Thomas Binney’s question, “How to make the best of both worlds”, and expressed his opinion that no man could serve two masters, or live for more than one

world. The ardent spirit of a Congregationalist minister was aroused, and he interrupted the speaker. This was a mistake; but though it raised discussion, it produced no result upon the evening congregation, which was as thronged and as enthusiastic as that which preceded it. We only refer to it for the sake of the sequel to the anecdote. Years after, the gentleman who interrupted had such an opinion of C. H. Spurgeon that, in a very kind and genial letter, he reminded him of the incident, and asking for a sermon from him, pressed the request by quoting the old saying about Cranmer: "If you do my Lord of Canterbury an ill turn, he will be your friend all the days of your life." At that time it was not in the power of C. H. Spurgeon to grant the request, for the season had long been promised to others; but he felt that he would right gladly have done so had it been within the region of the possible.

Great were the crowds of that day: very busy were all the ladies of the region in making tea, and very liberal were the gifts. The venerable old man, whose jubilee was thus celebrated, seemed to feel rather the weight of the years than any special exhilaration because of their having reached to fifty. Within himself he held a quiet jubilee of rest, which the world could neither give nor take away.

"The ancient Meeting-house once had an M roof, loaded, like that of the Manse, with red tiles. After these services, the heavy tiled roof was removed, a new one being constructed, open-timbered within, and outwardly covered with blue slate. It had been to many none other than the House of God, and their birthplace for heaven.

"The ancient Manse, saving some modern repairs, not to say patches, is (1863) very much what it was, only advancing in architectural decrepitude, and making one. think, in its condition, of the old covenant: 'Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.'

"Like the Manse, the aged minister shows in 'calm decay' the tokens of approaching dissolution. During this evening-time of a long life, the 'old disciple' and servant of Christ is waiting till his change come, looking to the undiscovered country, 'having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ', knowing that 'if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Meanwhile, the scenes of earth are not forgotten, and its dearest associations bring a solemn and subduing tenderness into the family devotions."

When some reference was made to Berkshire in a conversation with the aged minister, he spoke of a visit he paid to Hungerford while yet a student at Hoxton, and brought from its hiding-place a precious memorial of that visit, which had been treasured up for nearly sixty years. It was a letter from a young person at Hungerford who had been won to Christ by his ministry.

If these tokens be so precious here, what will it be to meet hereafter converts of whom it may now be said,

“What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.” — 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.

“One day he had a chat with me about his children, and about ‘Charles’ — as he had good right familiarly to call him — and about the place in which he preaches, and about his last visit, to which he referred with evident gratification.

“‘I have never seen’, said he, ‘the great Tabernacle in London. I can never hope to see it now, but I am satisfied to hear about it. I am sure great blessing will yet come out of it.’

“When we knelt down together, this was not forgotten. It was deeply affecting to listen to the petitions of one ‘dwelling on the sides of eternity’ — a patriarchal pilgrim almost at the end of his journey — praising God for all the good received and wrought by his family; asking for children and grandchildren, especially let those engaged in the sacred ministry, that God would greatly help them, and save them from being injured by the world’s applause, and keep them in humility, and give: an abundant measure of his Spirit, and make them tenfold more useful than aforesaid. Who can tell how much they have been indebted to the prayers at this altar of the household?

Next to the road, in front, the garden is bounded by a laurel hedge, an ornament and defense. Within this enclosure stand two large antique yew trees, each cut into fantastic shape, and so trimmed as to make arbors, yielding a pleasant shade for the pastime of children, the converse of friends, or the solace of age.

The sheltering canopy of one of these trees witnessed the incident in the boyhood of the Reverend C. H. Spurgeon, which is thus described in ‘The

Life of the Reverend R. Knill': "During his residence at Wotton-under-Edge, he visited the Reverend James Spurgeon, the minister of an ancient chapel at Stambourne, Essex; and walking in the garden with his host's grandson, then about ten years old, he felt, he afterwards said, a prayerful concern for the intelligent and inquiring boy, sat with him under a yew tree, put his hands on his head, and prayed for him; telling him at the close that he believed 'he would love Jesus Christ, and preach his gospel in the largest chapel in the world.' When this curious prediction obtained something like fulfillment in the young preacher of the Surrey Music Hall, both parties, in a short correspondence, referred to the old garden incident with feelings akin to wonder. Who can trace the subtlety of such suggestions on the tenor of one's life? All will, at least, be able to appreciate the aspiration prompted by these occurrences — 'O Lord God omnipotent! Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. Help me, as thy servant, to go on laboring and rejoicing. These are tokens of thy favour too great to be: left unrecorded. What would thousands of gold. and silver be, compared to the conversion of souls, and the calling out of preachers?" ("Life of R. Knill," by C. M. Birrell, p. 212.)

We quote the incident as Mr. Birrell gives it, in Mr. Knill's Life, hoping that Mr. C. H. Spurgeon will say more upon it, if he is so moved.

Recalling these things, one could not but be struck with the strange, yet natural and strong connection which exists between this little village and the Great City. What golden links, unseen and unknown by the world, yet recognized in the sight of heaven, have inseparably bound together the associations of this obscure Essex village with the Capital of the land; and the oft-crowded Metropolitan Tabernacle with this secluded ministerial home!

"Old Mr. Spurgeon," says Mr. Houchin, "was a high-Calvinist, though not a hyper-Calvinist, in doctrine; as to Church polity, he was a firm Independent; and, as a preacher, he is spoken of as possessing considerable ability and power." His ministry was for many years attended by a large congregation; very large indeed, if compared with the surrounding population. He held on for eighteen years after the age of seventy, until he was eighty-eight.

The prayers of the minister "old and full of days" have ceased to be daily offered in the time-worn tenement; but he has joyfully gone where they are exchanged for praise.

He has “come to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.” He is “absent from the body, present with the Lord.” He departed this life, February 12, 1864, in his eighty-eighth year, and was buried in the graveyard adjoining the Meeting-house, in which his work and worship had been continued so long.

“Compassed with infirmity ,” and some of us bowing with years; surrounded by “them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust,” let us lay to heart the lessons of bygone days, and humbly wait the issue of the days to come.

Let us each .say,” My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” Thus may we learn to look beyond our own graves, as well as beyond the graves of the departed, and still beloved ones, to the unchanging home of the “chosen generation,” where “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

The Reverend James Spurgeon was succeeded by the present minister, Reverend J. C. Houchin, in 1864. When he entered upon his work there were a few old men in the church, who, though very poor and illiterate, possessed solid piety, and were sound believers in God, in Christ. and in prayer ‘They that feared the Lord spake often one to another;’ and every available hour of the Sabbath-day was filled up with meetings for prayer; and an extra evening in the week was set apart for special prayer for the divine blessing.

“There were only two persons then remaining in the congregation of any considerable means, both very aged, but their hearts were opened to offer some pecuniary help towards putting the buildings in a better state. Other members of the congregation followed to the extent of their means; then others in the neighborhood, and some at a distance; the result being, that in a few years we had built a new parsonage-house, and a new school-room, and had re-built the chapel, putting other buildings into fair repair, altogether at a cost of more than $\text{œ}1,100$. Meanwhile, the blessing of God was on our spiritual work. The congregations were good, a great spirit of hearing was bestowed, and numbers were added to the church. The

Sunday-school and other agencies were also revived, and these are still going on, we are thankful to say, not without some signs of the divine favor and blessing, which we earnestly desire may abound yet more and more to the honor of our great Savior and King.” (From an article by Reverend J. C. Houchin, in the *Haverhill and Stambourne Magazine*, 1883.)

The old Manse and Chapel are now among the things that were remembered and regretted by many; but their removal was inevitable. They were so far gone to decay (in 1865) that no builder would undertake to repair them. There was no alternative but to pull down and build anew. Even those who loved them best felt: that if they were not taken down they would “make haste and come down” of themselves.

On the occasion of the demolition, the Reverend J. C. Houchin preached a sermon, finding an appropriate text in the words, “Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

There is consolation in the assurance that “That which cannot be shaken may remain.” While earthly sojourners quit: their homes, or the dwellings themselves “vanish away,” it is a satisfaction to contemplate the future home; the thought of which suggested the insertion of the lines which follow.

THE FUTURE HOME.

*A city seen from Heaven descending,
Builded of GOD — not made with hands;
Her walls ‘gainst every foe defending,
Secure in peerless beauty stands.*

*There — blest abode! no sun is needed,
No softer moon-beam there to shine;
For God’s own glory unimpeded,
Fills the whole scene with light divine*

*There saints shall rest, and Jesus lead them
Where ever-living fountains rise;
The Lamb, who fills the throne, shall feed them
Beneath serene and cloudless skies.*

*Filled with the fullness of all blessing,
Each child shall know as each is known,
And each, a perfect love possessing,
Shall triumph in the LORD alone.*

*Sighs, tears, and sorrow, all forsaken,
Each chased away by GOD'S own hand;
O blissful thought! — to die! — to waken
In that bright and glorious land!*

B. BEDDOW.

JOHN BERRIDGE AND STAMBOURNE GREEN.

BY REVEREND. B. BEDDOW.

DURING my visit to Stambourne, I went to look at a spot associated with the work of the famous John Berridge, which is thus described in an article entitled “Dame Darman”, in the *Sunday at Home* for 1865, p. 26 (We thank the Religious Tract Society for hearty consent to borrow a portion of the article from their excellent magazine.) “This is a spot of small interest to the antiquary: and one which the traveller might pass without knowing that he had passed it. Stambourne Green no longer answers to the name it still bears. It was once an open green, or common, over which the donkeys and pigs, and ducks and geese of the villagers had a free run and feeding ground; where village gossips strolled, and village children played, and many a village courtship was begun. Law, without the slightest respect to village swains or their belongings, has empowered the enclosure of Stambourne Green. My own inducement to go thither was to see the spot where the Reverend John Berridge had more than once stood to preach to a crowd of rustics. No wide or open space is now to be found. The ‘waste’ has been ‘enclosed’, and the road across The common is flanked by a hedge-row and trees on either side. Tradition still points out the place where Berridge stood to preach. It is in front of a blacksmith’s forge, where the bellows heave to urge the fire, and the anvil rings to the stroke of the hammer, as they did the day that John Berridge stood before it, though the workmen that then used them are, like himself and his hearers, passed away for ever.

“Mr. Berridge was never acquainted with Dame Darman, though he knew that his work was not without fruit. Many for miles round might never have heard the gospel but for these itinerant labours . . . Some portions of the history of ‘Dame Darman’ connected with this Stambourne Green were learned in the course of visits to her cottage paid long ago. To an enquiry about her early days, and how she came to be a Christian, she replied to a lady friend: —

“ ‘Ah, ma’am ‘tis wonderful how the Lord works! I can remember the time when there was no gospel about here, — none to preach it, and no one to look after the people, so far as I ever knew. At last there was a great talk about John Berridge, a church parson, who was going to preach on Stambourne Green. A most unlikely thing, as folks said, for a real parson to do; and I thought I should like to go and see the fun.’

“ ‘You thought it would be “fun” then?’ asked the listener.

“ ‘Why, you see, ma’am, I was a silly gaping mauther (A foolish young girl.) then, fond of going to fairs and dances. and I went that day with a lot more, the same as going to some such sport. But I heard what I never heard or knew before, and I began to be very serious, about it. When I went home, my father asked me where I’d been, and I told him I’d been to hear Berridge preach. Father was very angry with me. He never used to be very kind to me. He saw something strange in me. He thought the parson had made me “glum.” He asked me what business I had to go to hear “such stuff”; and then he swore a great oath, and said, “If ever you go again, I’ll give you such a hiding as you never had in your life afore.”

“ ‘You see, ma’am, I’d had many a “hiding” afore; but father never beat me for going to fairs and dances, and I thought, may be, he didn’t mean it, and would never do it. So when John Berridge came again in about a month, I went to Stambourne Green to hear him; and when I came home I found my father in a dreadful rage; and though I didn’t believe he’d beat me, he kept his word. Oh, my dear lady, he did give me such a hiding as I never had in all my life afore. Would you believe it, ma’am? he took a thick stick and laid on me till I dropped down and couldn’t stand. He “licked” me till I was blue, and green, and black all over. “He’d beat all that nonsense out of me.” Poor father! he didn’t know what he was a-doing! Yes, I remember I was never able to turn myself over in bed for days after.’

“ ‘All the stripes, however, failed to beat out what the daughter had learned from John Berridge, or rather what she had been taught of God; and from that time, according to her little light, she began to be a Christian, stumbling and suffering, ignorantly and imperfectly, but yet sincerely a Christian. She had been convinced of her sin and danger, but she had been led to that precious blood which ‘cleanseth us from all sin’; and she had found that Saviour whose presence, became her solace and her stay.

“ ‘Has the reader found ‘like precious faith’, and like inestimable privilege?

“As her religion did not depart, so neither did her father’s displeasure against it. She was often beaten with many stripes, and in all her suffering she had not one earthly friend to sympathize with or to encourage her.

“Desiring to escape the effects of her father’s hard usage, she accepted the first proposal of marriage which was made to her. She had not the knowledge and instruction which many Christians have received, who, notwithstanding, shut their eyes to the Pauline precept about marriage — ‘only in the Lord,’ and blindly risking the consequences of being ‘unequally yoked together with unbelievers’, have ‘pierced themselves through with many sorrows.’ She ignorantly accepted an ungodly husband, and did not escape the consequences. Her husband was a brutal, drunken, savage man. He beat her as she had been beaten aforetime, and perhaps more frequently. She had exchanged one wretched home for another. ‘I found’, she said, ‘that I had only jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire.’

“Her children, as they grew, joined the father in mocking their mother’s piety, and learned to scorn her infirmities, which were largely due to the ill-treatment she had received.

“When I first knew her she lived in a small cottage, and being utterly unable to work, she was allowed the sum of one shilling and sixpence a week as ‘parish pay.’ Even this she could scarcely call her own. Her son, who lived in her house, when he had no work, and that was not seldom, made no scruple of sharing his mother’s scanty meal; and when any better food was sent for her use, it was common for the bearer to stay and see her eat, to make sure she was not deprived of it. In the midst of all these hardships, I do not remember that she made a single complaint or spoke an unkind word, unless the narratives of her sufferings, which were drawn from her, should be so regarded. For daily mercies, and for what she looked upon as special providences, she was continually grateful. Her humility, serenity and peace were probably perplexing and unaccountable to many of her neighbours; but there were those who believed in a peace, which, though familiar to experience, passeth all understanding. They might have been sure she had learned obedience to the Bible precept, ‘Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God’; and they might have perceived that she knew the meaning of the promise, ‘The peace of

God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.’

“Methinks I see the poor lone woman sitting in the chimney corner, with a Bible on her knees and spectacles on her nose; both the book and the helps to read it being gifts of Christian love. God’s blessed sunlight streams in through the diamonded panes of the little window, casting on the irregular floor strange patches of light and shadow. The sunbeam was but an emblem of God’s holy Word, which had entered the once dark mind as ‘a light shining in a dark place.’ Best of all, God had lifted up ‘the light of his countenance’, and caused his face to shine, giving ‘peace’, the pledge of the peace of heaven.

“What a pleasant picture, for the preacher if he could have seen it! yet how often the work of the preacher is a ‘work of faith’! How much work he does without seeing its appropriate results, or without seeing them all! He sometimes has a seed-time of which another reaps the harvest. John Berridge knew nothing in this world of the effect of those services at Stambourne Green on that ‘silly gaping mauther’ who heard him there. He knew nothing of the great change which passed upon her, as she stood with the group of kindred companions, who had come ‘to see the fun’; nothing of the sufferings which she endured for righteousness’ sake; nothing of the hard life, and scanty fare, and crippled age, and nothing withal of the sustaining faith of this poor woman, and her endearing and grateful recollection of that servant of God who preached ‘the word of faith’ to her ear, whilst the gracious Spirit of the Lord bore the message to her heart.

“Yet the Lord knew it all; and it may have been the privilege of his servant, and a part of his reward, to learn these things in that region of perfection and love, where, with mutual interchange of holiest thoughts, the communion of saints is undisturbed for ever.”

Among those who were born to the Lord at Stambourne Green, under the preaching of the rare John Berridge was one Caleb Price, a true witness for the Lord. He was altogether uneducated, but being full of zeal, and having good understanding in the things of God, he gathered a congregation at Steeple Bumpstead, and enjoyed the blessing of his Master. The stories told of him were often amusing enough. A tradition tells us that he was one day preaching up the virtues of perseverance, and he cried, “*Persevere*. Yes, dear friends, you must *persevere*. There is nothing like *perseverance*.”

You should *persevere*, and *persevere*, and *persevere*, like Queen Elizabeth. She *persevered* and *persevered* till she was crowned KING!”

How curious it is that the minister, who, in his youth, followed the footprints of Berridge in Waterbeach, and around Cambridge, should now be, in this little volume, editing a record of his gracious deeds!

PERSONAL REMARKS,
RECOLLECTIONS &
REFLECTIONS.

BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, LONDON,
grandson of JAMES SPURGEON,
FORMERLY PASTOR OF STAMBOURNE MEETING,
FROM 1810 TO 1864.

FUNERAL SERMON FOR A GRAND OLD MAN.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

MANY preachers made use of the holy life and peaceful death of James Spurgeon, sen., to stir up their hearers' minds. In London it so happened that a venerable deacon of our church passed away during the same week, and so the Tabernacle friends heard of two aged worthies, and considered their holy examples at the same moment.

Those who are privileged to bear many striking testimonies for God in their lives are often taken home without any special witness-bearing in their closing hours. My grandsire's departure was not quite so. He had a long and peaceful evening of life in which his patience glorified his Lord; and very gradually he passed away, with all that ease and confidence which one might expect in a man whose faith was firm and unwavering. He had not so many raptures as certain saints, and had times of severe inward conflict; but the peace of God which passeth all understanding kept his heart and mind by Christ Jesus. He had no question as to the safety of a soul who trusts in Jesus only; and knowing that he: himself did this, he had no doubt about his own safety and glory.

The following are some of the things we lovingly said of him: —

I have photographed upon my heart just now, the portrait of one very, very dear to me, who has been taken up to his rest and reward. I am somewhat bold to venture to produce a rough sketch of a man worthy to have been drawn by the chief of word-painters, He was one who began at the beginning, and endured unto the end. He was not supremely great, but he was, through grace, pre-eminently good. This man, while yet a youth, commenced to preach the Word of God, for he had felt its power. Sprung of ancestors who had loved the Lord and served his church, he felt the glow of holy enthusiasm for the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Having proved his capabilities, he, entered Hoxton College, and after the close of its course, settled in a spot where for more than fifty years he continued his

labours. The old-fashioned doctrine affords material for long pastorates; its opposite has so little in it that wearied hearers cry for change. In his early days, his sober earnestness and sound doctrine were owned of God in many conversions both at home and abroad, and he was a power for good in all the region wherein he dwelt. Assailed by slander and abuse, it was his privilege to live it all down. He outlived his enemies; and though he had buried a generation of his friends, yet he found many warm hearts clustering round him to the last. His holy influence formed for him many holy friendships as loving and lasting as the relationships of nature. Visiting his flock, preaching in his own pulpit, and making very many journeys to other churches, years followed one another so rapidly, that he found himself the head of a large tribe of children and grandchildren, most of them walking in the truth, many of them ministering unto the Lord. At the age of fourscore years, he preached on still; until, laden with infirmities, but yet as joyful and as cheerful as in the heyday of his youth, his time had come to die. He was able to say truthfully, when last he spake to me, "I do not know that my testimony for God has ever altered, as to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel; I have grown in experience; but from the first day until now, I have had no new doctrines to teach my hearers. I have had to make no confessions of error on vital points, but have been held fast to the doctrines of grace, and can now say that I love them better than ever." Such a one was he, as Paul, the aged, witnessing to what he had received of the Lord, and longing to preach so long as his tottering knees could bear him to the pulpit.

I am thankful to have had such a grandfather. He fell asleep in Christ but a few hours ago, and on his dying bed talked more cheerfully than most men do in the full vigour of their health. He had a twinkle in his eye, and a smile on his face till the end. Most sweetly he talked of the preciousness of Christ; and chiefly of the security of the believer, the truthfulness of the promise, the immutability of the covenant, the faithfulness of God, and the infallibility of the divine purpose. Among other things which he said at the last was this, which is, we think, worth your treasuring in your memories. One who would comfort him said, "You are resting on a sure foundation, for Dr. Watts sings —

*'Firm as the earth Thy gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust;
If I am found in Jesus' hands,
My soul can ne'er be lost.'* "

But the comparison used in this verse did not suit my grandfather, and he said, “What, Doctor, is not the gospel firmer than the earth? Could you not find a better comparison? Why, the earth will give way beneath our feet one day or another, if we rest on it. I could not rest upon it now. The comparison will not do. The Doctor was much nearer the mark, when he said: —

***‘Firm as His throne this promise stands,
And He can well secure
What I’ve committed to His hands,
Till the decisive hour.’*** ”

“Firm, as his throne:” said he, “he must cease to be King before he can break his promise, or lose his people. Divine sovereignty is the foundation of grace, and makes every promise sure.” He fell asleep right quietly, for his day was over, and the rest-time was come: what could he do better than go to sleep on the bosom of Jesus? Long had he trusted in the Lord Jesus in life, and therefore it was no new thing to rely upon him as to the life to come.

Oh, that all men would accept the Saviour whom the Father has appointed, and at once enter into eternal life!

My grandfather, who is now with God, once ventured upon punishing a volume of hymns. I never heard anyone speak in their favour, or argue that they ought to have been sung in the congregation. In that volume he promised a second, if the first should prove acceptable. We forgive him the first collection because he did not inflict another. The meaning was good, but the dear old man paid no attention to the mere triviality of rhyme. We dare not quote even a verse. It may be among the joys of heaven for my venerated grandsire, that he can now compose and sing new songs unto the Lord. When we say we dare not quote, we do not refer to the meaning or the doctrine: in that respect we could quote every line before the Westminster Assembly, and never fear that a solitary objection would or could be raised.

Here is a copy of grandfather's memorial in the present Stambourne Meeting.

IN MEMORY OF

THE REV. JAMES SPURGEON,

Who for fifty-four years was the faithful and beloved Pastor of the Church in this place, and for four years previously of the Independent Church at Clare.

He departed this life on the 12th day of February, 1864, in the 88th year of his age.

THE OLD PARSONAGE AT STAMBOURNE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

THE drawing of the old Manse at Stambourne has far more charms for me than for any of my readers; but I hope that their generous kindness to the writer will cause them to be interested in it. Here my venerable grandfather lived for more than fifty years, and reared his rather numerous family. In its earlier days it must have been a very remarkable abode for a dissenting teacher; a clear evidence that either he had an estate of his own, or that those about him had large hearts and pockets. It was in all respects a gentleman's mansion of the olden times. The house has been supplanted by one which, I doubt not, is most acceptable to the excellent minister who occupies it; but to me it can never be one-half so dear as the revered old home in which I spent some of my earliest years. It is true the old parsonage had developed devotional tendencies, and seemed inclined to prostrate its venerable form, and therefore it might have fallen down of itself if it had not been removed by the builder; but, somehow, I wish it had kept up for ever and ever. I could have cried, "Builders, spare that home. Touch not a single tile, or bit of plaster": but its hour was come, and so the earthly house was happily dissolved, to be succeeded by a more enduring fabric. The new house, as Smith told me, was "built on the same destruction." It stood near the chapel, so that the pastor was close to his work. One Sabbath morning (grandfather could not bear to hear us say Sunday), my dear grandmother felt ill, and so did not go out to the service. Before service had ended she had gone to be with Jesus; she was found sitting with her Bible open before her, marking the passage, "The hand of God hath touched me." From this text her funeral sermon was preached. I have put in here such an approach to a portrait as I could find: it was taken by some travelling artist who visited the district, and took off several of the family. Such deaths as those of my gracious grandmother made the old house sacred.

It looks a very noble parsonage, with its eight windows in front; but at least three, and I think four, of these were plastered up, and painted black, and then marked out in lines to imitate glass. They were not such very bad counterfeits, or the photograph would betray this. Most of us can remember the window tax, which seemed to regard light as a Latin commodity — *lux*, and therefore a luxury, and as such to be taxed. So much was paid on each aperture for the admission of light; but the minister's small income forced economy upon him, and so room after room of the manse was left in darkness, to be regarded by my childish mind with reverent awe. Over other windows were put up boards marked DAIRY, or CHEESE-ROOM, because by being labelled with these names they would escape the tribute. What a queer mind must his have been who first invented taxing the light of the sun! It was, no doubt, meant to be a fair way of estimating the size of a house, and thus getting at the wealth of the inhabitant; but, incidentally, it led occupiers of large houses to shut out the light for which they were too poor to pay.

Let us enter by the front: door. We step into a spacious hall, innocent of carpet. There is a great fireplace, and over it a painting of David, and the Philistines, and Giant Goliath. The hall-floor was of brick, and carefully sprinkled with fresh sand. We see this in the country still, but not often in the minister's house. In the hall stood "the child's" rocking-horse. It was a grey horse, and could be ridden astride or side-saddle. When I visited Stambourne, in the year 1889, a man claimed to have rocked me upon it. I remembered the horse, but not the man, so sadly do we forget the better, and remember the baser. This was the only horse that I ever enjoyed riding. Living animals are too eccentric in their movements, and the law of gravitation usually draws me from my seat upon them to a lower level; therefore I am not an inveterate lover of horseback. I can, however, testify of my Stambourne steed, that it was a horse on which even a member of Parliament might have retained his seat.

Into this hall came certain of the more honoured supporters of the Meeting to leave their cloaks, and so forth, on wet Sundays. The horses and gigs went down to the stables and sheds in the rear; the whips usually went into the pews: and a few of the choicer friends left their wraps and coats in the minister's hall. What fine people were Mr. and Miss Jarvis, who were generous patrons, and yet were among the lowliest of friends! Never a word of boasting fell from their lips, but their lives were delightful to think

upon. Neither in life nor in death did they forget their Pastor and his household.

How I used to delight to stand in the hall, with the door open, and watch the rain run off the top of the door into a wash-tub! How much better to catch the overflow of the rain in a tub than to have a gutter to carry it off! So I thought; but do not now think. What bliss to float cotton-reels in the miniature sea! How fresh and sweet that rain seemed to be! The fragrance of the water which poured down in a thunder-shower comes over me now.

Where the window is open on the right was the best parlour. Roses generally grew about it, and bloomed *in the room* if they could find means to insert their buds between the wall and the window-frame. They generally found ample space, for nothing was quite on the square. There had evidently been a cleaning up just before my photograph was taken, for there are no roses creeping up from below. What Vandals people are when they set about cleaning up either the outsides or the insides of houses! On the sacred walls of this "Best Parlour" hung portraits of my grandparents and uncles, and on a piece of furniture stood the fine large basin which grandfather used for what he called "baptisms." In my heart of hearts I believe it was originally intended for a punch-bowl; but in any case it was a work of art, worthy of the use to which it was dedicated. This is the room which contained the marvel to which I have often referred.

Here is one of the references: — "We remember well, in our early days, seeing upon our grandmother's mantel-shelf an apple contained in a phial. This was a great wonder to us, and we tried to investigate it. Our question was, 'How came the apple to get inside so small a bottle?' The apple was quite as big round as the phial: by what means was it placed within it? Though it was treason to touch the treasures on the mantelpiece, we took down the bottle, and convinced our youthful mind that the apple never passed through its neck; and by means of an attempt to unscrew the bottom we became equally certain that the apple did not enter from below. We held to the notion that by some occult means the bottle had been made in two pieces, and afterwards united in so careful a manner that no trace of the join remained. We were hardly satisfied with the theory, but as no philosopher was at hand to suggest any other hypothesis, we let the matter rest. One day the next summer we chanced to see upon a bough another phial, the first cousin of our old friend, within which was growing a little apple which had been passed through the neck of the bottle while it was

extremely small. ‘Nature well known, no prodigies remain’; the grand secret was out. We did not cry, ‘*Eureka! Eureka!*’ but we might have done so if we had then been versed in the Greek tongue.

“This discovery of our juvenile days shall serve for an illustration at the present moment. Let us get the apples into the bottle while they are little: which, being translated, signifies, let us bring the young ones into the house of God, by means of the Sabbath School, in the hope that in after days they will love the place where his honour dwelleth, and there seek and find eternal life. By our making the Sabbath dreary, many young minds may be prejudiced against religion: we would do the reverse. Sermons should not be so long and dull as to weary the young folk, .or mischief will come of them; but with interesting preaching to secure attention, and loving teachers to press home the truth upon the youthful heart, we shall not have to complain of the next generation, that they have ‘forgotten their resting-places.’”

In this best parlour grandfather would usually sit on Sunday mornings, and prepare himself for preaching. I was put into the room with him that I might be quiet, and, as a rule, *The Evangelical Magazine* was given me. This contained a portrait of a reverend divine, and one picture of a mission-station. Grandfather often requested me to be quiet, and always gave as a reason that I “had the magazine.” I did not at the time perceive the full force of the argument to be derived from that fact; but no doubt my venerable relative knew more about the sedative effect of the magazine than I did. I cannot support his opinion from personal experience. Another means of stilling “the child” was much more effectual. I was warned that perhaps grandpa would not be able to preach if I distracted him, and then — ah! then what would happen, if poor people did not learn the way to heaven? This made me look at the portrait and the missionary-station once more. Little did I dream that some other child would one day see my face in that wonderful Evangelical portrait-gallery.

In the front of the house towards the left, nearly hidden by a shrub, is a very important window, for it let light into the room, wherein were the oven, the mangle, and, best of all, the kneading-trough. How often have I gone to that kneading-trough; for it had a little shelf in it, and there would be placed “*something for the child!*” A bit of pastry, which was called by me, according to its size, a pig or a rabbit, which had little ears, and two currants for eyes, was carefully placed in that sacred shrine, like the manna

in the ark. Dear grandmother, how much you laboured to spoil that “child”! Yet your memory is more dear to him than that of wiser folks, who did not spoil “the child.” Do you now look down from your mansion above upon your petted grandson? Do you feel as if he would have been better if you had been sour and hard? Not a bit of it. Aunt Ann, who had a finger in it all, would spoil “the child” again if she had a chance.

The mangle was of use to the whole parish, and there was always sure to be some one or another turning it. It was, of course, of a very ancient sort, but it was efficient. I have heard of an East Anglian dame putting herself down upon the schedule as Head of the household, and when the census man questioned her, as to whether that was not her husband’s position, she replied: “He isn’t the master here. What’s he good for, except to turn the mangle?” I have also heard it said of certain divines, that all they could do by way of preaching was to mangle the text; but that relates to a worse kind of mangling. I have heard a good deal of chat in that room; but never any provoking judgment upon the rougher sex, which ran to the length of that which I have quoted. The people who came turned the mangle for themselves, and measured time by minutes; but they chatted on upon a thousand now-forgotten themes: talking did not hinder mangling.

I should not wonder but what I heard some of the rough village wit of which Mr. Beddow has given me a specimen, in what he calls

A GROTESQUE LITTLE DRAMA.

Three boys in a village had rather hard times at home. Through the pressure of poverty, and partly, it was said, through the stinginess of their mother, the lads were often half-starved and very hungry. One day, during their mother’s absence, they resolved to have a good feast of porridge.

The meal-bag was brought out from the drawer. The saucepan, with water, was put on the fire. One boy put in meal from the bag; one stirred the mixture; and one watched at the door.

When they were busy with the cooking, some other lads, happening to be close by, listened to the talk of the brothers, which ran thus: —

“Stir up, Dick.”

“Put in, Tom.”

“Jack, take care your mother don’t come.

When the brothers next appeared in the village, they were saluted with a sort of chorus — a repetition of their own cries — ”*Stir up, Dick! Put in, Tom! Jack, take care your mother don’t come!*” For a long while it was a standing joke among the village boys to tease these brothers by shouting after them this kind of mocking refrain.

At another time we might have heard another specimen of the wit of our village: —

Two rustics were in the garden. One, finding the other in his way, gave him a tap on the head to make him stand aside. The victim whiningly, complained, “You’ve hurt my head.” “Head, man,” said his mate, “*Head!* it’s only a *pimple*, it ain’t come to a *head* yet!”

Hardly knowing where else to put it, we will here insert Mr. Beddow’s story of

BARNEY’S CHERRY TREE.

“One day when B — and his brother John were in the garden, a village boy stopped at the fence and asked, ‘Mr. John, will you please to show me Barney’s cherra-tree?’

‘What do you mean, my boy?’

‘Well, you see, Mr. John, I told Barney. as how I set an apple-pip in our garden, and this year its growed into a little tree. But Barney said as that wor nothing: he set a cherra-stone last year, and this year its growed into a tree, with cherras on it.’

“This recalling of his joke made Barney stoop to hide his burning face, and John asked, ‘How is this? what does it all mean?’ Then the listening lad cried aloud, in remonstrance, ‘O Barney! I doubt that’s a story, Barney!’

“It was a boy’s jest — a Munchausen tale, though Barney knew nothing of the famous Baron. In after life Barney learned to be more particular. He heard of George Washington, and henceforth scrupulously respected the truth. I have heard him tell this tale for the amusement and warning of his young friends; but I was sorry that they saw any fun in it. That is poor wit

which consists of untruths and exaggerations, and to play upon the good faith of youth is not to exhibit great power of intellect.”

The dairy at the back of the house was by no means a bad place for a cheese-cake, or for a drink of cool milk. It makes one think of the hymn:

“I have been there; and still would go.”

The cupboard under the stairs where they kept the sand for the floors would be a real Old Curiosity Shop nowadays; but there it was, and great was the use of it to the cottagers around.

There was a sitting-room all the back of the house, where the family met for meals. In that which looks like a blank side in our picture there certainly was a window looking out upon the garden; perhaps it was a little further back than the picture goes. A very pleasant outlook there was from that window down the green garden paths, and over the hedge into the road. ‘When I last saw the “Keeping-room”, a bit of ivy had forced its way through the lath and plaster, and had been trained along the inside of the room; but in my childish days we were not so verdant. I remember a mark on the paper which had been made by the finger of one of my uncles, so they told me, when one year the flour was so bad that it turned into a paste, or pudding, inside the loaf, and could not be properly made into bread. History has before this been learned from handwritings on the wall. The times of the old Napoleon wars and of the Corn Laws, must often have brought straitness of bread into the household; and a failure in the yield of the little farm made itself felt in the family.

There was a mysterious jack over the fire-place, and with that fire-place itself I was very familiar; for candles were never used extravagantly in grandfather’s house, and if anyone went out of the room, and took the candle with him, it was just a little darker, not very much; and if one wished to read, the fire-light was the only resort. There were mould candles now and then in the best room, but that was only on very high days and holidays. My opinion, derived from personal observation, was that all everyday candles were made of rushes and tallow.

Our young readers in London and other large towns have probably never seen a pair of snuffers, much less the flint and steel with which a light had to be painfully obtained by the help of a tinderbox and a brimstone match.

What a job on a cold raw morning to strike, and strike, and see the sparks die out because the tinder was damp! We are indeed living in an age of light when we compare our incandescent gas-burners and electric lights with the rush-lights of our childhood. And yet the change is not all one way; for if we have more light, we have also more fog and smoke, at least in London. Our "Keeping-room" was a very nice, large, comfortable dining-room, and it had a large store-closet at one end. You should have seen the best china! It only came out on state occasions, but it was very marvellous in "the child's" eyes.

A quaint old winding stair led to the upper chambers. The last time I occupied the best bedroom, the floor seemed to be anxious to go out of the window, at least, it inclined that way. There seemed to be a chirping of birds very near my pillow in the morning, and I discovered that swallows had built outside the plaster, and sparrows had found a hole which admitted them inside of it, that there they might lay their young. It is not always that one can lie in bed and study ornithology. I confess that I liked all this rural life, and the old chintz bed-furniture, and the paper round the looking-glass cut in the form of horse-chestnut leaves and dahlias, and the tottery old mansion altogether.

I am afraid I am amusing myself rather than my reader, and so I will not weary him with more than this one bit more of rigmarole just now. But there was one place upstairs which I cannot omit, even at the risk of being wearisome. Opening out of one of the bedrooms, there was a little chamber of which the window had been blocked up through that wretched window-duty. When the original founder of Stambourne Meeting quitted the Church of England, to form a separate congregation, he would seem to have been in possession of a fair estate, and the house was quite a noble one for those times. Before the light-excluding tax had come into operation, that little room was the minister's study and closet for prayer; and a very nice cosy room too. In my time it was a dark den; — but *it contained books*, and this made it a gold-mine to me. Therein was fulfilled the promise, "I will give thee the treasures of darkness." Some of these were enormous folios, such as a boy could hardly lift. Here I first struck up acquaintance with the martyrs, and specially with "Old Bonner," who burned them; next, with Bunyan and his "Pilgrim"; and further on, with the great masters of Scriptural theology, with whom no moderns are worthy to be named in the same day. Even the old editions of their works, with their margins and old-fashioned notes, are precious to me. It is easy to tell a real

Puritan book even by its shape and by the appearance of the type. I confess that I harbour a prejudice against nearly all new editions, and cultivate a preference for the originals, even though they wander about in sheepskins and goat-skins, or are shut up in the hardest of boards. It made my eyes water a short time ago to see a number of these old books in the new manse: I wonder whether some other boy will love them, and live to revive that grand old divinity which will yet be to England her balm and benison.

Out of that darkened room I fetched those old authors when I was yet a youth, and never was I happier than when in their company. Out of the present contempt, into which Puritanism has fallen, many brave hearts and true will fetch it, by the help of God, ere many years have passed. Those who have daubed up the windows will yet be surprised to see heaven's light beaming on the old truth, and then breaking forth from it to their own confusion.

MR. KNILL AND THE NEW ARBOUR.

THE story of Mr. Knill's prophesying that I should preach the gospel in Rowland Hill's chapel, and to the largest congregations in the world, has been regarded by many as a legend, but it was strictly true. Mr. Knill took the county of Essex in the year 1844, and traversed the region from town to town, as a deputation for the London Missionary Society. In the course of that journey he spent a little time at Stambourne Parsonage. In his heart burned the true missionary spirit, for he sought the souls of young and old, whenever they came in his way. He was a great soul-winner, and he soon spied out the boy. He said to me, "Where do you sleep? for I want to call you up in the morning." I showed him my little room, and he took good note of it. At six o'clock he called me up. There stood in my grandfather's garden two arbors made of yew trees, cut into sugar — loaf fashion. Though the old manse has given way to a new one, and the old chapel has gone also, yet the yew trees flourish as aforetime. We went into the right-hand arbor, and there, in the sweetest way, he told me of the love of Jesus, and of the blessedness of trusting in him and loving him in our childhood. With many a story he preached Christ to me, and told me how good God had been to him, and then he prayed that I might know the Lord and serve him. He knelt down in that arbor and prayed for me with his arms about my neck. He did not seem content unless I kept with him in the interval between the services. He heard my childish talk with patient love, and repaid it with gracious instruction. On three successive days he taught me and prayed with me, and before he had to leave, my grandfather had come back from the place where he had gone to preach, and all the family were gathered to morning prayer. Then, in the presence of them all, Mr. Knill took me on his knee, and said, "This child will one day preach the gospel, and he will preach it to great multitudes. I am persuaded that he will preach in the chapel of Rowland Hill, where (I think he said) I am now The minister." He spoke very solemnly, and called upon all present to witness what he said. Then he gave me sixpence as a reward if I would learn the hymn —

*"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform,"*

I was made to promise that when I preached in Rowland Hill Chapel that hymn should be sung. Think of that as a promise from a child! Would it ever be other than an idle dream? Years flew by. After I had begun for some little time to preach in London — Dr. Alexander Fletcher was engaged to deliver the annual sermon to children in Surrey Chapel; but as he was taken ill, I was asked in a hurry to preach to the children in his stead. "Yes," I replied, "I will, if you will allow the children to sing, 'God moves in a mysterious way.' I have made a promise long ago that so that should be sung." And so it was: I preached in Rowland Hill's Chapel, and the hymn was sung. My emotions on that occasion I cannot describe, for the word of the Lord's servant was fulfilled. Still I fancy that Surrey was not the chapel which Mr. Knill intended. How was I to go to the country chapel? All unsought by me, the minister at Wotton-under-Edge, which was Mr. Hill's summer residence, invited me to preach there. I went on the condition that the congregation should sing, "God moves in a mysterious way" — which was also done. To me it was a very wonderful thing, and I no more understood at that time how it came to pass than I understand to-day why the Lord should be so gracious to me.

The following letter from Mr. Knill to my grandfather is very interesting, as showing how the good man thought of the matter: —

"Chester, 17th April, 1855.

"REVD MR. SPURGEON.

"Dear Sir,

"Perhaps you have forgotten me: but I have not forgotten my visit to you and your ancient chapel, and the fine trees which surround it, and your garden with the box and yew trees, and your dear grandson with whom I conversed, and on whose head I placed my hand, when I prayed with him in the arbor.

"Two years ago he wrote to me, reminding me of these things, and of his warm feelings on the occasion.

"Last week I was at Leamington, and dined with a young artist, who had come from London to see his parents. His conversation was much about a popular young minister from the country, whom he had heard preach at Exeter Hall, whose name was Spurgeon. He said I knew him. How is it possible, said the gentleman? I told him

of my visit, and of your grandson's letter to me, and of his preaching to John Berridge's people at Waterbeach, near Cambridge. Oh, it was a fine season of interest and rejoicing! I hardly slept the following night for joy.

"A day or two afterwards I dined near Warwick with a party of friends. Their conversation was also about your grandson, not knowing that I had heard of him. Two of the party had been his hearers in London, and were very full of the subject. One of them said, 'He mentioned your praying with him at his relative's in the garden.' I have prayed much *about* him and *for* him, that God may keep him at the foot of the cross, that popularity may not puff him up.

"Will you please give me his address, as I should like to write to him? Forgive me for this intrusion. I feel much about this clear youth, very much. I have four or five of our ministers in London, and my heart goes out much after them. I have been settled in this city upwards of seven years, and have received more than four hundred members into the church.

"Matthew Henry's Chapel is still standing, but is in the possession of the Unitarians. Ours is an off-shoot from some of Matthew's old members, who would have orthodox preaching.

"The Lord bless you and all your family. I have a distant recollection of seeing some of them at your House.

"Yours very truly,

(Signed) "RICHARD KNILL."

After that, I went to preach for Mr. Richard Knill himself, who was then at Chester. What a meeting we had! He was preaching in the theater, and consequently I had to take his place at the footlights. His preaching in a theater took away from me all fear about preaching in buildings of doubtful use, and set me free for the campaigns in Exeter Hall and the Surrey Music Hall. How much this had to do with other theater services many know.

*"God. moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."*

After more than forty years of the Lord's loving-kindness, I sat again in that arbor in the year 1887. No doubt it is a mere trifle for outsiders to hear about, but to me it was an overwhelming moment. In July of the year 1887 I went down to Stambourne and walked about the place like one in a dream. The present minister of Stambourne meeting-house, and the members of his family, including his son and his grandchildren, were in the garden, and I could not help calling them together around that arbor, while I praised the Lord for his goodness to me. One irresistible impulse was upon me: it was to pray God to bless those lads that stood around me. Memory begat prayer. He who had blessed me would remember others also. I wanted the lads to remember, when they grew up, my testimony of God's goodness to me. God has blessed me all my life long, and redeemed me from all evil, and I pray that he may be the God of all the young people who read this story.

The singularity of the story seems to be that Mr. Knill should foresee the usefulness of a child. But why not? He was a singularly consecrated servant of God, whose communion with the Lord was intimate to a high degree. Therefore the secret of the Lord was with him. There are still things which the Lord reveals to his friends, saying of them much the same as that which he said to Abraham: "Shall I hide this thing which I do, from Abraham my friend?" Many other cases are on record. We find three of them before us in *Clarke's Mirror*: —

"Mr. Wiseheart, being condemned by the Cardinal of St. Andrews and his Bishop to be burnt, as he was at the stake, he saw the Cardinal sitting at one of his castle windows, to see execution done upon him; whereupon he said, 'He who in such state from that high place, feeds his eyes with my torments, within a few days shall be hanged out at the same window, to be seen, with as much ignominy, as he now leans there with pride': which accordingly came to pass."

"Some godly persons being brought before Bishop Bonner, one of them, called Roger Holland, said thus unto him: ' God hath heard the prayers of his servants, whom ye have daily persecuted, as ye do us now. But this I dare be bold in God to speak (which by his Spirit I am moved to say), that God will shorten your cruelty, so that for a time you shall not molest his church; and, dear brethren, that you may perceive the truth of this, know that, after this day, in this place, there shall not any by him be put to the

trial of fire and faggot;' and accordingly they were the last that suffered in Smithfield for the truth."

"In Luther's youth, it pleased God that he fell into a violent disease, which threatened him with death; at which time there came an old priest to him, that said, 'Sir, be of good courage, your disease is not mortal; God will raise you up again to afford comfort to many others, which also came to pass.'"

The foreseeing Spirit may have reasons for letting in light upon his servants in peculiar cases; and assuredly it is by no means so wonderful a thing as when he gives life to dead souls, and opens blind eyes. There are more things occurrent in the life divine than most men dream. What we have seen and heard we testify.

STAMBOURNE MEETING- HOUSE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON

IT was a rare old chapel. I wish it could have remained for ever as I used to know it: let me see if I can sketch it with my pen. When I was a boy of twelve, I made a drawing of the back of the old meeting-house: I give it on the opposite page. I have been welcomed at a farmer's table on the promise of making a picture of his house. I am rather glad that this pencil memorial was preserved by my dear Aunt Ann, but I must now, forty-five years after, use the pen on the same subject.

The pulpit was glorious as "the tower of the flock." Over it hung a huge sounding-board: I used to speculate as to what would become of grandfather if it ever dropped down upon him. I thought of my Jack-in-the-box, and hoped that my dear grandpapa would never be shut down and shut up in such a fashion. At the back of the pulpit was a peg to hold the minister's hat: inside there was room for two, for I have sat there with grandfather when quite a little boy; but I guess that two grown-up people would have found it "quite too small enough," as my Dutch friend puts it.

Just below, and in front of the pulpit, was the table-pew, wherein sat the elders of the congregation, the men of gracious light and leading. There Uncle Haddon generally stood, and gave out the hymns and the notices; and from that semi-sacred region was raised the block of wood by which to the singers upstairs the metre of the hymn was made known — Common, Long or Short. There were big tombstones forming the bottom of this large pew, which took its name from containing *the table*, on which were spread the bread and wine on days *when they had the ordinance*: I think that was the correct phrase when our good folks intended "the communion." I don't remember hearing them style infant baptism "the ordinance;" but I suppose they thought it to be one. A few had qualms upon the question, and were baptized quietly at some Baptist Chapel.

The pews in the middle were mostly square in form, and roomy. Those on either side were aristocratic, and lined with green baize, for the most part very faded. In some cases, brass rods carried up little curtains, which made the family pew quite private, and shut out all sights but that of the grave and reverend senior who dispensed to us the Word of life. There were flaps inside the pew so as not to lose the space where the door opened, and flaps for the poor to sit upon in the aisle outside of these pews; and when the time came to go home, there was such a lifting up and letting down of flaps, and flap-seats, within the pew, and without the pew, as one never does see in these degenerate days. A little boy on a hassock on the floor of one of these holy loose-boxes ought to have been good; and no doubt was as good there as; anywhere, especially if he had a peppermint to suck, and nobody to play with.

The aisles were paved with bricks, and were generally sanded. Here and there a portion of a gravestone indicated how the floor of the old building was honeycombed with vaults and graves. There was no need to go to the parish church to encounter ancient dust. Bacillae and microbes were not dreaded in those days. There is no reason to believe that in later years any body or bodies were buried in the meeting-house: it sufficed to lay the departed within the hallowed enclosure of "the meeting-yard." It was not absolutely essential that those whose souls inherited eternal life should leave their bodies beneath the feet of their descendants for the spread of death on the Lord's-day.

On the right-hand side from the pulpit, there were two large doors which admitted a wheeled carriage into the chapel. There it stood with its shafts turned up out of the way, and the sick person comfortably housed. I don't remember another instance of a person driving into the house of God, and continuing to abide in her chariot throughout the service.

"The gallery went along the whole inside front of the meeting-house, and turned round a little way on each side. It was to me, as a child, an elevated, obscure, and unknown region. There were men with flutes who let the water run out at the ends of the tubes on the people below, and the clarionet man, for whom I had more esteem, because I could make some sort of noise when I blew through his instrument; but the fifes (why not fives?) always baffled me. The bassoon man was there, and the serpent, and the double-bass, and a lot more of them. **THEY COULD PLAY.** There's no mistake about it. At least, it was almost as certain as that other undeniable

fact, that *our singers could sing*. Well, it was hearty singing; and say what you like, it's the heart in the singing which is the life of the business. Besides those who could sing, we had about twice as many who could neither play nor sing; but excelled in sharply criticizing what was done by others.

I cannot forget the big clock which had a face outside the chapel as well as one inside. When his long body had been newly grained, he seemed a very suitable piece of furniture for a nice, clean, old-fashioned Puritan meeting-house. If I am rightly informed, the veteran time-keeper was bought by the miller, and is now upon one of his sheds. To what strange uses we may come at last!

Those natural beams, which sprang from the walls to the ceiling, and were a kind of brackets and bearers for the roof, were all in keeping with the sacred edifice; and strange to say, even the whips, which often stood upright in the corners of the pews, seemed most proper and pious adjuncts of the scene. In my young days the place *was* full; and one wondered where two such congregations came from to make the morning and the evening to rejoice.

The school-room was a late addition, and never seemed to harmonize with the original structure. The great windows along the side of the chapel gave a fine architectural appearance to the building, and the green of the great lime trees outside, which was visible everywhere, was peculiarly restful to the eye. I have never seen a place of worship which put me in a more worshipful frame of mind: so much for the power of association. The people were mainly real Essex: they talked of places down in "the Shires" as if they were quite foreign parts; and young fellows who went down into "the Hundreds" were explorers of a respectable order of hardihood. They loved a good sermon, and would say, "Mr. Spurgeon, I *heard* you well this morning." I thought the good man had *preached well*, but their idea was not so much to his credit; they judged that they had heard him well, and there's something in the different way of putting it; at any rate, it takes from the preacher all ground of glorying in what he has done. They were a people who could and would hear the gospel, but I don't think they would have put up with anything else. They were as apt at criticism as here and there one: some of them were very wise in their remarks, and some were otherwise. Well do I remember an occasion upon which the preacher had treated "the tares" after the manner of the East, and was altogether right in

so doing; but they said, "He wouldn't know a tare if he saw one. It was painful to hear a man talk so ignorant. To say that you couldn't tell wheat from tares when they were a-growing was ridiculous." The rustic critics were wrong for once; but on matters of doctrine or experience you would have found them quite a match for you.

I do not think our folks; were anything like so superstitious and weak as the peasants I came to know ten years after in Cambridgeshire. Tales of white wizards and witches were unknown to my juvenile mind; though I heard enough of them when my age was between sixteen and twenty. Then one of my best workers told me that a witch had dragged a cat down his naked back by its tail: he did not show me the marks, but he fully believed in the feline operation. We cannot forget that in the village of Hedingham, which is not more than five miles from Stambourne, a murder was committed so late as 1865, which grew out of popular belief in witchcraft. The old men I talked with, as a little child, were, I am sure, far above all such nonsense; and upon many a Biblical, or political, or ecclesiastical, or moral subject, they would have uttered great and weighty thoughts in their own savory Essex dialect.

There were, no doubt, in Stambourne a few rough fellows who did not go to any place of worship; but those who came to the meeting-house were the great majority, and the plain, practical, common-sense sermons which they heard had lifted them out of that dense superstition which still benumbs the brains of too many of the East Anglian peasantry.

One Sunday night there was a great fright at my grandfather's house: the grey pony had been stolen! It had been taken out of the stable, and the saddle and bridle, too; and the whole travelling gear was missing except the gig. Not long after, the criminal was detected, and received the due reward of his deeds. The crime was not so very great after all. A boy belonging to one of the few ungodly families had been sent to Ridgewell, to get some physic for his mother, or perhaps to call for the doctor himself, and it had occurred to him that he could ride the pony, and put it back again in its place before anyone came out of meeting to find him out. He was let off with the personal chastisement which two of my uncles had given him without reference to constable or magistrate. Rough and ready justice was cheaper for the country and for all concerned, than the law's delays. Even the culprit was; more content with it than with being taken before Squire Gooch, or some other of the Great Unpaid.

The prayer-meetings during the week were always kept up; but at certain seasons of the year grandfather and a few old women were all that could be relied upon. It occurred to me, in riper years, to ask my venerated relative how the singing was maintained. "Why, grandfather," said I, "we always sang, and yet you don't know any tunes, and certainly the old ladies didn't." "Why, child," said he, "there's one Common metre tune which is all, 'Hum Ha, Hum Ha', and I could manage that very well." "But how if it happened to be a Long or Short metre hymn?" "Why, then I either put in more Hum Ha's, or else I left some out; but we managed to praise the Lord." Ah, shade of my dear old grandsire! your grandson is by no means more gifted as to crotchets and quavers than you were, and to this day the only solo he has ever ventured to sing is that same universally useful tune! Even that he has abandoned; for audiences are growing either more intelligent or less tolerant than they used to be.

Outside the Meeting, near that long side, which was really the front, there stood a horsing-block. Ladies went up the steps, and found themselves on a platform of the same height as their horse's back. It was a commendable invention: how often have I wished for something of the sort when I have had to climb my Rosinante! To me this horsing-block was dear for quite another reason. The grand old lime trees shed their leaves in profusion, and when these were swept up, the old chapel-keeper would ram a large quantity of them under the horsing-block. When I had pulled out about as many as fitted my size, I could creep in; and there lie hidden beyond fear of discovery. My friend, Mr. Manton Smith, has written a book called "Stray Leaves," and another which he has entitled "More Stray Leaves;" I entered into his work before he was born. So good was the hiding, that it remained a marvel where "the child" could be. The child would get alone; but where he went to, his guardian angels knew, but none on earth could tell. Only a little while ago, my dear old aunt Ann said, "But, Charles, where did you get to when you were such a little child? We used to look everywhere for you, but we never found you till you came walking in all by yourself." The horsing-block was the usual haunt when there were leaves, and an old tomb would serve at other times. No, I did not get into the grave; but it had a sort of altar tomb above it, and one of the side stones would move easily, so that I could get inside, and then by setting the slab of stone back again I was enclosed in a sort of large box where nobody would dream of looking for me. I went to the aforesaid tomb to show my aunt my hiding-place; but the raised altar was gone, and the top of it, with the name of the

deceased thereon, was laid flat on the ground. Some of the side stones, which formerly held up the memorial, were used to make door-steps when the buildings were put into their present state of repair, and the top stone was made to occupy the same space, only it lay flat upon the ground, instead of being raised some two feet above it. Still, I remembered well the place, and what the tomb had formerly been. How often have I listened to the good people calling me by my name! I heard their feet close to my den, but I was wicked enough still to be "lost," though the time for meals was gone. Dreaming of days to come befell me every now and then as a child, and to be quite alone was my boyish heaven. Yet, there was a seventh heaven above that: let me but hear the foxhounds, and see the red coats of their pursuers, and I had seen the climax of delight. When the huntsmen did come down by Stambourne woods, it was a season of delirious excitement to others besides "the child." At other times, all the women and children were solemnly working at straw-plait; but what they did when the fox went by I will not venture upon guessing, for I don't remember what I did myself. The woods at the back of the chapel had a charming mystery about them to my little soul, for who could tell but a fox was there?

Somehow, I don't think our Sunday-school came to so very, very much. It was a great day when every child brought his own mug, and there was real cake, and tea, or milk and water, and an address; but that high festival came but once a year. Having been on one occasion pressed into the service when I was still a boy, but was in Stambourne on a visit, I felt myself a failure, and I fancied that some around me were not brilliant successes. Still, in those early times, teaching children to read and to repeat verses of hymns, and to say the catechism by heart, were a good beginning. Dr. Watts's Catechism, which I learned myself, is so simple, so interesting, so suggestive, that a better condensation of Scriptural knowledge will never be written; and the marvel is that such a little miracle of instruction should have been laid aside by teachers. While I am writing, one question and answer come to me with special freshness: —

"Who was Isaiah?"

"He was that prophet who spoke more of Jesus Christ than all the rest."

At the distance of fifty-three years I remember a little book which was read to me about a pious child at Colchester; I recollect "Janeway's Token for Children," and I recall the bad conduct of some juveniles of my own age, who not only kicked up a dust, but literally kicked the teachers. Memory

makes a selection as she goes along; and in my case, the choice of things retained is so miscellaneous, that I cannot discover my own character by their guidance.

The week-day school for the very juveniles was kept by old Mrs. Burleigh, and to that fane of useful knowledge I was sent. The only thing that I remember was that I heard a good deal of her son Gabriel, and therefore asked, as a great favor, that when he came home from the town where he lived, he might come and see me. I had my desire; but after all these years, I have not got over my disappointment. To see Gabriel! I don't think I had absolutely reckoned upon the largest kind of wings; but wings certainly, or something otherwise angelic. To see only a young man, a youth in trousers, with no trace of cherubim or seraphim about him, was too much of a come down. "What's in a name?" was a question not yet known to me; but no one will ever need to ask me now. Names are mere labels, and by no mean proofs that the things are there.

To come back to the old chapel, the best point about it was the blessing which rested on the ministry carried on within. The dew of the Spirit from on high never left the ministry. Wherever my grandfather went souls were saved under his sermons. My own beloved father, Reverend John Spurgeon, constantly reports to me fresh instances of the old gentleman's usefulness. When I first of all became a preacher, there were persons who said, "I heard your grandfather, and I would run my shoes off my feet any day to hear a Spurgeon." This was encouraging. Another told me that to hear my grandfather once made his wing-feathers grow a foot. He could mount as eagles, after being fed with such heavenly food. "He was always so experimental," was the summing-up of one of the most devout of working-men. "You felt as if he had been inside of a man." Buildings may perish, and new shrines may succeed them; but no earthly house will accommodate a sounder or more useful ministry than that of my grandfather.

ALL OF GRACE.

NOTES OF A SERMON DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." — Ephesians 2:8.

This is inserted with the special view of letting all men know what that gospel is, for which grandsire and grandson lived, and were ever willing even to die.

OF the things which I have spoken unto you these many years this is the sum. Within the circle of these words my theology is contained, so far as it refers to the salvation of men. I rejoice also to remember that those of my family who were ministers of Christ before me preached this doctrine, and none other. My father, who is still able to bear his personal testimony for his Lord, knows no other doctrine, neither did his father before him.

I am led to remember this by the fact that a somewhat singular circumstance, recorded in my memory, connects this text with myself and my grandfather. It is now long years ago. I was announced to preach in a growing country town in the Eastern Counties. It does not often happen to me to be behind time, for I feel that punctuality is one of those little virtues which may prevent great sins. But we have no control over railways and break-downs; and so it happened that I reached the appointed place at Haverhill considerably behind time. Like sensible people, they had begun their worship, and had proceeded as far as the sermon. As I neared the chapel, I perceived that someone was in the pulpit preaching, and who should the preacher be but my dear and venerable grandfather! He saw me as I came in at the front door and made my way up the aisle, and at once he said, "Here comes my grandson! He may preach the gospel better than I can, but he cannot preach a better gospel; can you Charles?" As I made my way through the throng, I answered, "You can preach better than I can. Pray go on." But he would not agree to *that*. I must take the sermon, and so I did, going on with the subject there and then, just where he left off. "There," said he, "I was preaching on 'For by grace are ye saved.' I have

been setting forth the source and fountain-head of salvation; and I am now showing them the channel of it, 'through faith.' Now, you take it up, and go on." I am so much at home with these glorious truths, that I could not feel any difficulty in taking from my grandfather the thread of his discourse, and joining my thread to it, so as to continue without a break. Our agreement in the things of God made it easy for us to be joint-preachers of the same discourse. I went on with "through faith," and then I proceeded to the next point, "and that not of yourselves." Upon this I was explaining the weakness and inability of human nature, and the certainty that salvation could not be of ourselves, when I had my coat-tail pulled, and my well-beloved grandsire took his turn again. When I spoke of our depraved human nature, the good old man said, "I know most about that, dear friends;" and so he took up the parable, and for the next five minutes set forth a solemn and humbling description of our lost estate, the depravity of our nature, and the spiritual death under which we were found. When he had said his say in a very gracious manner, his grandson was allowed to go on again, to the dear old man's great delight; for now and then he would say, in a gentle tone, "Good! Good!" Once he said, "Tell them that again, Charles," and of course I did tell them *that* again. It was a happy exercise to me to take my share in bearing witness to truths of such vital importance, which are so deeply impressed upon my heart. While announcing this text I seem to hear that dear voice, which has been so long lost to earth, saying to me, "TELL THEM THAT AGAIN." I am not contradicting the testimony of forefathers who are now with God. If my grandfather could return to earth, he would find me where he left me, steadfast in the faith, and true to that form of doctrine which was once for all delivered to the saints.

I preach the doctrines of grace because I believe them to be true; because I see them in the Scriptures; because my experience endears them to me; and because I see the holy result of them in the lives of believers. I confess they are none the less dear to me because the advanced school despises them: their censures are to me a commendation. I confess also that I should never think the better of a doctrine because it was said to be "new." Those truths which have enlightened so many ages appear to me to be ordained to remain throughout eternity. The doctrine which I preach to you is that of the Puritans: it is the doctrine of Calvin, the doctrine of Augustine, the doctrine of Paul, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. The Author and Finisher

of our faith himself taught most blessed truth which well agreed with our text. The doctrine of grace is the substance of the testimony of Jesus.

I shall handle the text briefly, by way of making a few statements. The first statement is clearly contained in the text: —

THERE IS PRESENT SALVATION.

The apostle says, "*Ye are saved.*" Not "ye shall be," or "ye may be;" but "ye are saved." He says not, "ye are partly saved," or "'hopeful of salvation;" but, "By grace are ye saved." Let us be as clear on this point as he was, and let us never rest till we know that we are saved.

At this moment we are either saved or unsaved. That is clear. To which class do we belong? I hope that, by the witness of the Holy Ghost, we may be so assured of our safety as to sing, "The Lord is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

Upon this I will not linger, but pass on to note the next point.

A PRESENT SALVATION MUST BE THROUGH GRACE.

If we can say of any man, or of any set of people, "Ye are saved," we shall have to preface it with the words, "By grace." There is no other present salvation except that which begins and ends with grace. So far as I know, I do not think that any one in the wide world pretends to preach or to possess a present salvation, except those who believe salvation to be all of grace. No one in the Church of Rome claims to be now saved — completely and eternally saved. Such a profession would be heretical. Some few Catholics may hope to enter heaven when they die, but the most of them have the miserable prospect of purgatory before their eyes. We see constant requests for prayers for departed souls, and this would not be if those souls were saved, and glorified with their Savior. Masses for the repose of the soul indicate the incompleteness of the salvation which Rome has to offer. Well may it be so, since Papal salvation is by works; and even if salvation by good works were possible, no man can ever be sure that he has performed enough of them to secure his salvation.

Among those who dwell around us, we find many who are altogether strangers to the doctrine of grace, and these never dream of present salvation. Possibly they trust that they may be saved when they die: they half hope that, after years of watchful holiness, they may, perhaps, be saved

at last; but, to be saved now, and to know that they are saved, is quite beyond them, and they think it presumption.

There can be no present salvation unless it be upon this footing. — " By grace are ye saved." It is a very singular thing that no one has risen up to preach a present salvation by works. I suppose it would be too absurd. The works being unfinished, the salvation would be incomplete; or, the salvation being complete, the main motive of the legalist would be gone.

Salvation must be by grace. If man be lost by sin how can he be saved except through the grace of God? If he has sinned, he is condemned; and how can he, of himself, reverse that condemnation? Suppose that he should keep the law all the rest of his life, he will then only have done what he was always bound to have done, and he will still be an unprofitable servant. What is to become of the past? How can old sins be blotted out? How can the old ruin be retrieved? According to Scripture, and according to common-sense, salvation can only be through the free favor of God.

Salvation in the present tense must be by the free favor of God. Persons may contend for salvation by works, but you will not hear anyone support his own argument by saying, "I am myself saved by what I have done." That would be a superfluity of haughtiness to which few men would go. Pride could hardly compass itself about with such extravagant boasting. No, if we are now saved, it must be by the free favor of God. No one professes to be an example of the opposite view.

Salvation to be complete must be by free favor. The saints, when they come to die, never conclude their lives by hoping in their good works. Those who have lived the most holy and useful lives invariably look to free grace in their final moments. I never stood by the bedside of a godly man who reposed any confidence whatever in his own prayers, or repentance, or religiousness. I have heard eminently holy men quoting in death the words, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." In fact, the nearer men come to heaven, and the more prepared they are for it, the more simple is their trust in the merit of the Lord Jesus, and the more intensely do they abhor all trust in themselves. If this be the case in our last moments, when the conflict is almost over, much more ought we to feel it to be so while we are in the thick of the fight. If a man be completely saved in this present time of warfare, how can it be except by grace? While he has to mourn over sin that dwelleth in him, while he has to confess innumerable shortcomings and transgressions, while sin is mixed with all he does, how

can he believe that he is completely saved except it be by the free favor of God?

Paul speaks of this salvation as belonging to the Ephesians: "By grace are ye saved." The Ephesians had been given to curious arts and works of divination. They had thus made a covenant with the powers of darkness. Now, if such as these were saved, it must be by grace alone. So is it with us also: our original condition and character render it certain that, if saved at all, we must owe it to the free favor of God. I know it is so in my own case; and I believe the same rule holds good in the rest of believers.

This is clear enough, and so I advance to the next observation:

PRESENT SALVATION BY GRACE MUST BE THROUGH FAITH.

A present salvation must be through grace, and salvation by grace must be through faith. You cannot get a hold of salvation by grace by any other means than by faith. This live coal from off the altar needs the golden tongs of faith with which to carry it. I suppose that it might have been possible, if God had so willed it, that salvation might have been through works, and yet by grace; for if Adam had perfectly obeyed the law of God, still he would only have done what he was bound to do; and so, if God should have rewarded him, the reward itself must have been according to grace, since the Creator owes nothing to the creature. This would have been a very difficult system to work, while the object of it was perfect; but in our case it would not work at all. Salvation in our case means deliverance from guilt and ruin, and this could not have been laid hold of by a measure of good works, since by nature we are not in a condition to perform any. Suppose I had to preach that you as sinners must do certain works, and then you would be saved; and suppose that you could perform them; such a salvation would not then have been seen to be altogether of grace; it would have soon appeared to be of debt. Apprehended in such a fashion, it would have come to you in some measure as the reward of work done, and its whole aspect would have been changed. Salvation by grace can only be gripped by the hand of faith: the attempt to lay hold upon it by the doing of certain acts of law would cause the grace to evaporate. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." "If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work."

Some try to lay hold upon salvation by grace through the use of ceremonies; but it will not do. You are christened, confirmed, and caused to receive "the holy sacrament" from priestly hands: does this bring you salvation? I ask you, "Have you salvation?" You dare not say "yes." If you did claim salvation of a sort, yet I am sure it would not be in your minds salvation *by grace*; for those who are most addicted to the performance of outward rites are usually the last persons to enjoy any assurance of being saved by grace: they do not even look for such a thing. The more they multiply their rites and ceremonies, the more they quit the notion of grace, and the more they lose the true idea of salvation.

Again, you cannot lay hold upon salvation by grace through your feelings. The hand of faith is constructed for the grasping of a present salvation by grace, but feeling is not adapted for that end. If you go about to say, "I must feel that I am saved; I must feel so much sorrow and so much joy, or else I will not admit that I am saved;" you will find that this method will not answer. As well might you hope to see with your ear, or taste with your eye, or hear with your nose, as to believe by feeling: it is the wrong organ. After you have believed, you can enjoy salvation by feeling its heavenly influences; but to dream of getting a grasp of it by your own feelings is as foolish as to attempt to bear away the sun-light in the palm of your hand, or the breath of heaven between the lashes of your eyes. There is an essential absurdity in the whole affair.

Moreover, the evidence yielded by feeling is singularly fickle. When your feelings are peaceful and delightful, they are soon broken in upon, and become restless and melancholy. The most fickle of elements, the most feeble of creatures, the most contemptible of circumstances, may sink or raise our spirits: experienced men come to think less and less of their present emotions as they reflect upon the little reliance which can be safely placed upon them. Faith receives the statement of God concerning his way of gracious pardon, and thus it brings salvation to the man believing; but feeling, warming under passionate appeals, yielding itself deliriously to a hope which it dares not examine, whirling round and round in a sort of dervish dance of excitement which has become necessary for its own sustaining, is all on a stir, like the troubled sea which cannot rest. From its boilings and ragings, feeling is apt to drop to luke-warmness, despondency, despair, and all the kindred evils. Feelings are a set of cloudy, windy phenomena which cannot be trusted in reference to the eternal verities of God.

We now go a step further.

SALVATION BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH, IS NOT OF OURSELVES.

The salvation, and the faith, and the whole gracious work together, are not of ourselves.

First, they are *not of our former deservings*: they are not the reward of former good endeavors. No unregenerate person has lived so well that God is bound to give him further grace, and to bestow on him eternal life; else it were no longer of grace, but of debt. Salvation is given *to* us, not earned *by* us. Our first life is always a wandering away from God, and our new life of return to God is always a work of undeserved mercy, wrought upon those who greatly need, but never deserve it.

It is not of ourselves, in the further sense, that it is *not out of our original excellence*. Salvation comes from above; it is never evolved from within. Can eternal life be evolved from the bare ribs of death? Some dare to tell us that faith in Christ, and the new birth, are only the development of good things that lay hidden in us by nature; but in this, like their father, they speak of their own. Sirs, if an heir of wrath is left to be developed, he will become more and more fit for the place prepared for the devil and his angels! You may take the unregenerate man, and educate him to the highest; but he remains, and must forever remain, dead in sin, unless a higher power shall come in to save him from himself. Grace brings into the heart an entirely foreign element. It does not improve and perpetuate; it kills and makes alive. There is no continuity between the state of nature and the state of grace: the one is darkness, and the other is light; the one is death and the other is life. Grace, when it enters the soul, is like a firebrand dropped into the sea, where it would certainly be quenched were it not of such a miraculous quality that it baffles the water-floods, and sets up its reign of fire and light even in the depths.

Salvation by grace, through faith, is not of ourselves *in the sense of being the result of our own power*. We are bound to view salvation as being as surely a divine act as creation, or providence, or resurrection. At every point of the process of salvation, this word is appropriate — "*not of yourselves*." From the first desire after it to the full reception of it by faith, it is evermore of the Lord alone, and not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth. The man believes, but that belief is only one result among

many of the implantation of divine life within the man's soul by God himself.

Even the very will thus to be saved by grace is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God. There lies the stress of the question. A man ought to believe in Jesus: it is his duty to receive him whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sins. But man will not believe in Jesus, he prefers anything to faith in his Redeemer. Unless the Spirit of God convinces the judgment, and constrains the will, man has no heart to believe in Jesus unto eternal life. I ask any saved man to look back upon his own conversion, and explain how it came about. You turned to Christ, and believed on his name: these were your own acts and deeds. But what caused you thus to turn? What sacred force was that which turned you from sin to righteousness? Do you attribute this singular renewal to the existence of a somewhat better disposition in you than has been yet discovered in your converted neighbor? No, you confess that you might have been what he now is if it had not been that there was a potent something which touched the spring of your will, enlightened your understanding, and guided you to the foot of the cross. Gratefully we confess the fact; it must be so. Salvation by grace, through faith, is not of ourselves; and none of us will dream of taking any honor to ourselves from our conversion, or from any gracious effect which has flowed from the first divine cause.

Last of all,

"BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES: IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD."

Salvation may be called, *Theodora*, or God's gift: and each saved soul may be surnamed *Dorothea*, which is another form of the same expression. Multiply your phrases, and expand your expositions; but salvation truly traced to its well-head is all contained in the gift unspeakable, the free, unmeasured benison of love.

Salvation is the gift of God, in opposition to a wage. When a man pays another his wage, he does what is right; and no one dreams of belauding him for it. But we praise God for salvation because it is not the payment of debt, but the gift of grace. No man enters eternal life on earth, or in heaven, as his due: it is the gift of God. We say, "Nothing is freer than a gift." Salvation is so purely, so absolutely a gift of God, that nothing can be more free. God gives it because he chooses to give it, according to that

grand text which has made many a man bite his lips in wrath: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." You are all guilty, and condemned; and the Great King pardons whom he wills from among you. This is his royal prerogative. He saves in infinite sovereignty of grace. At the same time, the Lord himself declare; that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This wide statement in no degree conflicts with the statement that none receive this salvation except as a gift. You must stand obliged to God's mercy for it, or else die without it. To pretend a right to it will be to insult God, whose heart is set upon the exercise of his free bounty. He will not barter and bargain with you So much grace for so many tears, so much mercy for so much repentance, so much love for so many works! The idea is contemptible. Salvation is not in the market except on these express terms — "Without money and without price." Freely may you be saved if you will cast out of your soul the last thought of making God your debtor.

Salvation is the gift of God: that is to say, completely so, in opposition to the notion of growth. Salvation is not a natural production from within: it is brought from a foreign zone, and planted within the heart by heavenly hands. Salvation is in its entirety a gift from God. If thou wilt have it, there it is, complete. Wilt thou have it as a perfect gift? "No, I will produce it in my own workshop." Thou canst not forge a work so rare and costly, upon which even Jesus spent his life's blood. Here is a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout. It will cover thee and make thee glorious. Wilt thou have it? "No, I will sit at the loom, and I will weave a raiment of my own!" Proud fool that thou art! Thou spinnest cobwebs. Thou weavest a dream. Oh, 'that thou wouldst freely take what Christ upon the cross declared to be finished!

It is the gift of God, that is, *it is eternally secure in opposition to the gifts of men, which soon pass away.* "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you," says our Lord Jesus. If my Lord Jesus gives you salvation at this moment, *you have it*, and you have it for ever. He will never take it back again; and if he does not take it from you, who can? If he saves you *now*, through faith, you are saved; so saved that you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of his hand.

MR. GOUCHIN'S ACCOUNT OF WILL RICHARDSON.

WHEN I came to Stambourne, one of the old men who had overlived their former Pastor, and whose grey hairs adorned the table-pew of the old Chapel, was William Richardson, a farm-laborer, and a man of clear and strong mind. He was able to read, so as to make fair use of his Bible and hymn-book, and he had a heartfelt knowledge of the Gospel. It is said that "Master Charles" was very fond of Will, and that Will used to like to talk with the boys, and that the two have been seen walking up and down the field together when Will was following the plough.

Will Richardson had a reputation for what they call "*cramp*" sayings, many of which used to be retailed in the village twenty years ago. On one occasion, when a young minister, just settled in the neighborhood, had occupied the pulpit for the day, in exchange with the present Pastor, he was met at the foot of the pulpit stairs by Will, who, shaking his hand, said, "Ah, young man, you have got a good many stiles to get over before you get into Preaching Road!" Will spoke the truth, as it turned out, but it was pretty straight hitting.

Visiting him one day, and finding him full of faith and giving glory to God, on my expressing a strong desire for fellowship with him in those experiences, he remarked that, when the sun shone and the bees were at work, if there was honey in one skep, there was enough to fill another. Some friends had visited him, and had observed that, if they were blessed with his experiences, they should be beyond all doubt and fear; and he replied that God only gave these great things when his former gifts had been made good use of. I quoted the parable of the talents, and he said, "That is it."

Will was wont to say, "Depend upon it, if we get one inch above the ground in our own estimation, we get just that inch too high."

On one occasion I found him excessively weak, but quite sensible, and he said, "Don't we read of one of old tried in the fire?" I quoted the passage, and he replied, "That is gold indeed." He then said that he had felt the two armies of the flesh and the spirit as lively in him now as when he was well

and about the world, and that he was disappointed and grieved to find it so, as it gave the enemy his chief advantage. So Satan had laid all his sins for years past before him, and insinuated that they must end in destruction. "But," said he, "I was enabled to say to him: 'God is a gracious and holy God, and what he has put into my heart he will not take away any more; and he has put love into my heart; and if he were to send me to hell I must love him still.' And I told him not to say any more to me about my sins, but to 'go to the Lord about them; for he knows whether I be pardoned, and made his child, or whether I be a hypocrite.' He could not carry such a message. Then there seemed to come a strong voice, which said, 'He shall die in the Lord.' And oh, the peace and the joy I cannot describe to you nor nobody! Oh, that his dear name was known and loved by every person all over the whole world!"

My last visit, in July, 1870, or four days before his death, showed the ruling passion for "*cramp*" sayings to be strong in death. He was quite sensible, and, after conversation, I took up the Bible, and, opening on the seventeenth of John, I commenced reading, when he shouted aloud, "*Oh, that is my blood horse!*" I said, "What do you mean?" and he replied, "I can ride higher on that chapter than on any other." So I read it, and prayed with him for the last time.

FINIS.

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The Library consists of books and other literature of enduring value to the Christian community. Our goal since the beginning has been to “make the words of the wise available to all — inexpensively.” We have had in mind the student, teacher, pastor, missionary, evangelist and church worker who needs a high quality reference library, one that is portable, practical and low in cost.

ON WHAT BASIS WERE THEY SELECTED?

Volumes in the Library have been added based on several criteria: usefulness, user request, breadth of content or reputation. This has meant that the collection is eclectic and may include works that contain positions with which we at AGES Software do not agree. This paradox is consistent with our design, however: any useful library consists of books on a wide variety of subjects and sometimes includes information for reference purposes only. The AGES Digital Library hopefully will reflect — as its components are released — the necessary breadth and depth for a solid personal library.

HOW WERE THESE VOLUMES PREPARED?

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Usually not. In the process of preparing the Library, we at AGES Software have taken the liberty to make certain edits to the text. As we discovered errors in spelling, certain archaic forms, typographical mistakes or omissions in the original we have done our best to correct them. Our intention has been to remove anything that might obscure the meaning or otherwise detract from the usefulness of a book for the modern reader. We

have, however, attempted to retain the essential content and thoughts of the original — even when we found ourselves in disagreement.

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