

**POWER IN WEAKNESS:
MEMORIALS OF
THE REV. WILLIAM
RHODES, OF DAMERHAM**

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Power in Weakness: Memorials of the Rev. William Rhodes, of Damerham by Charles Stanford

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CHARLES STANFORD

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Power in Weakness :

MEMORIALS

OF

THE REV. WILLIAM RHODES,

OF DAMERRHAM,



BY CHARLES STANFORD,

OF CAMBRIDGE.

" Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong."

Longfellow.

LONDON :

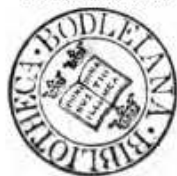
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1858.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE writer of the following "Memorials" has been told that he should introduce them by some account of the motives which have led to their publication. His statement is simply this:—When Mr. Rhodes was taken to heaven, it was the earnest hope of his widow, that Mr. Ryland, his earliest and most esteemed friend, might be able to prepare for the press a short essay on his life, with a selection from his papers. That gentleman, however, was obliged to decline the undertaking from want of leisure. She then applied to the present writer, wishing him to write a biography, and offering to defray the charge of the work; but he also felt obliged to excuse him-

self, partly from a similar reason, partly from the conviction that nothing he could write would reach her enthusiastic ideal of what was due to her husband's memory; and also from the fear that a book written by an unknown scribe about an unknown worthy, would secure but a very limited acceptance, and thus, perhaps, with her straitened circumstances, occasion her some fresh pecuniary anxiety. When, however, a few months later, this excellent lady died, he again thought over the matter. The more he examined the manuscripts left by Mr. Rhodes, and the more he studied the beautiful spirit of his life, the more deeply did he feel that it could not be the will of God for such a life to remain a secret. There seemed to be no person but himself fully acquainted with it, and at the same time charged with the duty of making it known; to relieve his oppressive sense of responsibility, therefore, he first contributed a few articles on the subject to the *Baptist Magazine*, and the substance of

these, with many fresh biographical particulars and literary extracts, he has now collected. He begs to present his grateful acknowledgments to all who have favoured him with a sight of letters written by his late revered friend; and it is his earnest prayer to Almighty God, that He may be pleased to make this small service useful to the Church: especially that it may afford some guidance and encouragement to students for the Christian Ministry; to some of Christ's afflicted disciples; to some who are "poor, yet making many rich;" and to some of his slighted but devoted servants in the field of rural missionary labours, who are doing their best, with God's help, to make "the wilderness rejoice, and the solitary places glad."

CAMBERWELL, October, 1858.

POWER IN WEAKNESS.

CHAPTER I.

"Within this leaf, to every eye
So little worth, doth hidden lie
Most rare and subtle fragrance."
Bishop of Oxford.

CHILDHOOD.—YOUTH.—CONVERSION.

JOHN FOSTER says, "The story of many a common soldier, or a highwayman, or a gipsy, or a deserted child, and many a beggar, will keep awake the attention which is much inclined to slumber over the account of a philosopher." Perhaps, therefore, little interest will be excited in some minds by this account of Mr. Rhodes, in whose life the principal events were processes of thought, and who had but little "external biography;" who passed through no strange scenes,

and was the subject of no picturesque adventure ; yet he was such a noble and holy man, was endowed with such rich gifts as a Christian teacher, and was at the same time so withdrawn from society by severe afflictions, that in love to the church as well as in gratitude to the Saviour whose grace made him what he was, it now seems to be the duty of some one who knew him to show the world how he lived and died.

He was born in the year 1792, in the Wiltshire village of Damerham, where his father was a carpenter. Looking back, through many years, to his first impressions of existence, he could recall with keen distinctness some tender words of his sister while nursing him ; the charm which certain sights in nature had for him ; the unspeakable love which he felt for a child of his own age, who was a little after his companion in wild, playful, daring mischief ; the rapture with which he spelt his way through some poems and romances contained in two ancient black-letter volumes, almost the first books he ever saw. "Those days," he used to say, "are still quite a scene of light in my memory. I often find it