

**A BAPTIST MEETING-  
HOUSE: THE STAIRCASE  
TO THE OLD FAITH; THE  
OPEN DOOR TO THE NEW**

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A Baptist meeting-house: the staircase to the old faith; the open door to the new by Samuel J. Barrows

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**SAMUEL J. BARROWS**

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To the Memory  
OF  
A FAITHFUL AND BELOVED MOTHER.

## PREFACE.

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SOME eighteen months ago, while visiting New York, the writer caught a passing glimpse of the old church building which, when a young child, he attended with his mother. The fragrant recollections it awakened were embodied in an article in the "Christian Register." This article suggested a second, the second a third, until finally the series was continued to its natural conclusion. This involved not only a transcript of recollections, but a statement of experience. By the kind invitation of the American Unitarian Association, these articles have been revised and gathered together in the present volume, which, like the experience it describes, is an unpremeditated growth. The *nom de plume* which was used extemporaneously in the first article, it was found necessary to continue through the series. It has become so identified, therefore, with the growth of the book, that it seems best to retain it.

The writer is fully aware that there are important religious and philosophical problems con-

fronting both Orthodoxy and Unitarianism which are not treated in this book. He has simply aimed to present those which he encountered in his transition from the old faith to the new. He has often been asked by friends of the communion which he left, what it was that led to such a complete change in his religious views, as if by some magical or miraculous process an instantaneous conversion had been effected. To such inquiries, the book itself is the best answer. Many who cannot accept its final conclusions may yet be induced to see the natural and successive steps by which religious convictions are developed.

It is seldom that two persons passing from one form of faith to another traverse precisely the same pathway; but the actual experience of one who has made the journey may not be without help to those who are on the road.

Grateful for all the nurture he received in the old household of faith, and equally grateful for the shelter and development he has received in the new, the writer humbly lays this tribute, the fruit of his experience, upon the altar of his religious faith.

S. J. B.

*Boston, Mass., Sept. 17, 1885.*



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## BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE.

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### I.

#### AN UPPER ROOM.

SCHLIEMANN, in his early excavations at the site of Troy, declared that there were several successive cities built on the top of each other and covered with the débris of the ages, an opinion which he afterward modified. Whether it be true or not of Troy, it is true at least that there have been several New Yorks, and that the New York of to-day, with its Broadway and elevated railroads, its East River Bridge, its electric lights, its Central Park, its palatial residences, its magnificent temples of worship and halls of trade, its boulevards, its enormous hotels and apartment houses, and its territorial growth from Harlem River to Yonkers,—the New York of to-day is but little like the New York of thirty years ago. Beyond this point the recollections of the writer do not reach very extensively; a trip to High Bridge, made six years before, being the earliest event which the memory has distinctly photographed. The oldest inhabitant, leaping as he may without crutches over an historic interval