

possession of his descendants, shew that during the time William Smythies was at Cripplegate he gradually acquired a property known as the Whitehouse and lands situated in the parish of Witnesham, co. Suffolk, from his wife's relations, the Palmers, the final deed being a release to him of this property by Charles Palmer, his brother-in-law, dated 24 September 1698. To this property he retired in his old age, and for three years acted as Curate of Witnesham.

On 12 November 1674, as recorded in the register of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, the poet John Milton was buried in that church, and William Smythies, being then Curate-in-charge, presumably performed or at any rate assisted at the ceremony. Tolerant in his views and charitable to all in distress, he suffered much abuse and calumny himself through being kind to those whose religious views were different from his own. His enemies tried to prove that he was disloyal to the throne, because in one of his sermons he spoke with disapproval of "the Prince of this World," and some spiteful people brought it to the ear of the King that he was "an associate with dissenters," in those days a serious accusation, but he managed to hold his own and to continue his good works.

As a preacher and religious controversialist he was well known, and a pamphlet of his entitled "The Benefit of Early Piety," addressed to the three young sons of his friend Sir Nathaniel Hern, first published in 1684, had in 1729 reached a fifteenth edition. He is described on the title-page of this pamphlet as "Morning Lecturer at St Michael, Cornhil, London." With Sir R. l'Estrange ("The Observator"), who seems to have made it his business to attack the bishops and prominent clergy, he had a heated controversy, in the course of which he refers to his experiences before the Restoration, and says when "I had hid myself in a private place in the Essex Hundreds I was routed thence by one of Oliver's Agents because my name was then Malignant." ("Three Replies to the Observator," 1684; "The Benefit of Early Piety," 1684; "Advice to Apprentices," 1687; and other pamphlets, British Museum.)

The following entries occur in the Parish Register at Witnesham :—

"1715. The Rev^d Mr W^m Smythies, many years Curate of St Giles Cripplegate, in London, and three years Curate of this Parish, was buried in the Churchyard at the Chancell end. June 29."

"1719. M^{rs} Hephzibah Smythies, Relict of the Reverend Mr Smythies, late of Cripplegate, buried. Aged 84. May 12. She lies in the South Wing of the Church amongst her own Relations the Palmers, a Family of Good Sort and Standing in this Parish tho now reduced."

By his will William Smythies left the Whitehouse, Witnesham, with all the lands thereunto belonging, to Hephzibah his wife "during her life and after her decease to my grandson Palmer Smythies and to his heirs . . . willing him to pay yearly to my brother-in-law Charles Palmer forty shillings . . . nevertheless if it shall so happen that his mother Thamar Smythies become a widow then she the said Thamar shall after the death of my said wife have the full rents, etc., excepting the forty shillings . . . so long as she continues a widow. I give . . . goods and furniture to my granddaughter Hephzibah Meadows, desiring her to preserve the wrought Bed for her Daughter Hephzibah, now a child. Also I give unto my wife six spoons, five salts, one salver, one Ladle, one porringer, all silver . . . (annuities here follow) . . . unto each of my two great-grandchildren James and Hephzibah Meadows a silver tankard, and to their sister Sarah Meadows my silver coffee-pott . . . unto my grandson Thomas Smythies of Colchester and to his heirs my Copsyhold house . . . lying in Wittnesham . . . with all the copyhold lands adjoining . . . also I give unto my son Peter Smythies and to his heirs my Copsyhold house lately inhabited by Charles Palmer, with all the copyhold Lands . . . lying in Wittnesham . . . also I give unto my grandchildren Mary Smythies, Dorothy Smythies, and Susan Smythies of Colchester each of them ten pounds . . . Lastly I give unto my dear friend Mr Robert Goodwin, Rector of Liston in the County of Essex, Twenty pounds and do . . . appoint him . . . executor. Dated 9 July