

## Memorial Sermon.

Having Reference to the Death of the Late Mrs. Charles Spurden, which occurred at Fredericton, N. B., Dec. 29th, 1897. Preached in the Fredericton Baptist Church Sunday Morning, Jan. 2nd, 1898, by the Pastor, Rev. J. D. Freeman.

"Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in its season," Job 5: 26.

On the 20th day of February, 1817, a little blue eyed baby girl was born into the world to gladden the hearts of Robert Giles Marten and his wife Eliza. It was through the mists and fogs of the great city of old London that those eyes, which retained their blue undimmed for more than eighty years, first saw the light of earth. George the Fourth was then upon the throne of England, and Europe was still resounding with the echoes of Waterloo. This child, to whom her parents gave the name Emma Maria, was the second born of a family of eight. One of her favorite play grounds in early years was the garden of the historic Tower of London, and we do not wonder that throughout a long life she cherished a feeling of affectionate loyalty to the British crown. Robert and Eliza Marten were people of earnest piety and withal of solid culture and refinement. In her own home, therefore, the daughter breathed a Christian atmosphere and learned to appreciate whatsoever things are lovely and true. While Emma was still a child her parents removed to the Camberwell district of London, and there, at the age of thirteen years, she made public profession of faith in Christ and was baptized by Rev. Edward Steen, D.D., into the fellowship of the Baptist church. To the end of life she cherished the memory of "the dear Camberwell days." She retained a vivid recollection of the ministrations of her pastor, Dr. Steen, especially valuing the great help she had received from his Bible class. At Camberwell life rippled smoothly and pleasantly along until Emma grew from girlhood into womanhood. Her spiritual development during these days was steady and symmetrical. Her intellectual powers were also in careful training. She possessed a receptive and retentive mind and was gifted with the power of expression in an unusual degree. Shortly after completing her course at boarding school she published a little book entitled, "Faithful sketches," a story of school life, which was well received. As a testimony to her literary qualifications it may be mentioned that she was selected to serve for a time as governess in the family of Isaac Taylor, a distinguished scholar and author.

While at Camberwell, Miss Marten formed the acquaintance and friendship of a young man named Charles Spurden. The Spurden's were not Baptists by tradition but Episcopalians. Charles Spurden, when sixteen years of age, had been confirmed at Westminster by the Bishop of London. A few years later, however, he awoke to the fact that the ordinances of the church, even when administered by such an eminent ecclesiastic as the Lord Bishop of London, were powerless in themselves to communicate the saving grace of God to the human soul. He had been taught to believe that his soul was regenerated in infancy by baptism and that he had been sealed unto salvation by the laying on of the Bishop's hands; but the facts of his consciousness bore convincing testimony to the falsity of that teaching. He had the proof within himself that the doctrine was delusive. Though he tried to live in strict compliance with the rules of the church, he was dismayed to find that his heart was still in an unregenerate state and that he must reckon himself as a lost sinner before God. Turning then, as an earnest seeker, to the Word of God he soon discovered the simple way of salvation by grace through faith. He yielded himself unreservedly to the saving mercy of Jesus Christ and entered at once into the peace of the justified. His next step was into the fellowship of the Camberwell Baptist church, and quickly following that came his determination to consecrate his life to the spread of the truth which he had found so precious in his own experience.

Young Mr. Spurden was now swayed by a two-fold ambition. One ambition was, if God so willed it, to spend his life teaching and preaching in one of the colonies of the British Empire; the other was to marry Miss Emma Marten. Both of these desires were destined to fulfillment. In 1842 Mr. Spurden was appointed to the principality of the Baptist Seminary in this city. A congenial life work now opened out before him. He hastened to make an offer of marriage to the woman of his choice, and was made happy in knowing that she returned his affection and was willing to blend her interests with his. Shortly after his appointment Mr. Spurden bade his affianced good-by for a season, while he should look over his new field of labor and prepare the way for her coming. He remained here upwards of a year and then returned to England for his bride. They were married on the 25th day of July, 1843, and immediately set sail for Canada. In February, '44, they transferred their membership by letter from Camberwell to the Fredericton church. Here they lived and loved and labored, Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Spurden for more than thirty years and Mrs. Spurden for more than half a century. What a blessing they proved to this church and the cause of Christ in this province! Dr. Spurden was one of the builders of our denomination, and as often happens in

the case of men who render distinguished public service, he owed no small part of his usefulness to the little, quiet, gentle woman who was the joy and light of his home. But not only indirectly, through her husband, was Mrs. Spurden's influence felt. She presented a clearly defined, strongly marked individuality. God made her to be something more than the dim reflection or faint echo of her husband, however great he might be.

She was a woman of brains and culture and character and quiet power. Her judgment was singularly sound and she was ever a valued adviser. Her enthusiasm was not of the sort that flares, but it glowed with steady flame. She was abundant in labors. She trained her children wisely. She mothered the church. For many years her class was a chief attraction in the Sunday School. She organized the Women's Missionary Aid Society and was its president for 25 years. She served for many years as secretary of the women's branch of the Bible Society, and by her intelligent sympathy with the work kept the interest alive. For a time she taught French in the Seminary. The poor and the sick were her constant care; she was frugal that she might be liberal, and many a dollar of her money found its way into the homes of the needy, even the strolling Italian organ-grinder carried away a pleasant memory of the sweet faced lady who gave him smiles as well as pennies and cherished as a "a memorial of her" a gospel tract in his native language.

Dr. Spurden died in 1876, honored and beloved by all who knew him. Mrs. Spurden has continued for 10 of these 21 years in widowhood; but her widowed years did not prove gloomy years. "Her's was a spirit steeped in sunshine; down to the last moment when the finger of the death angel closed her eyes and made the silence golden, she was serene, happy, hopeful. And now, having lived eighty years and ten months, she has come to her grave." In a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in its season."

I am very certain that all who have known Mrs. Spurden will agree with me that the sweet promise of the text never found truer fulfillment than in her experience. In this connection I wish to dwell upon three most comforting and inspiring thoughts.

I. Our sister presented to this church and community an illustrious example of a soul ripened by time. The text implies that Time is a factor in bringing the soul to maturity. It takes time for the tasselled corn to gather its hoard of golden grain; it takes time for the vine to bring its purple clusters to perfection, and it takes time to round and ripen Christian character. It is not a mushroom growth, not a gourd which growth up in a night. It is the slow product of patient years. The most heavenly virtues do not belong to life's May days. Spring has a freshness and fragrance all its own; it has its buds and blossoms, but the ripened wheat that feeds the world is found on autumn fields. As October "crowns the year," so does old age when fashioned into comeliness and loaded with the fruits of righteousness crown the life. And her's was a comely and fruitful old age. We may say of her,

"Softly, oh softly, the years have swept by thee,  
Touching thee lightly with tenderest care;  
Sorrow and care did they often bring nigh thee,  
Yet did they leave thee but beauty to wear."

Though Mrs. Spurden outlived her activity a little while, she did not outlive her usefulness. She was a blessing to this church unto the last. She was never a greater blessing than in her latest years. Her powers were so toned to delicacy and sweetness, she carried about with her such serenity of temper, such elevation and purity of thought, that her very presence was a benediction. Her going in and out among us, her feathery movements, her words of sympathy were like the odours of rare perfumes. She was a king's daughter dressed in brodered work and gold of Ophir. It was an inspiration simply to see her sleeping in her chair, with the peace of heaven pictured on her face. My friends, it is of greater importance that some of these fine old saints should live on, than that some of us younger and coarser ones should labour. Because of the ripening sunshine that lay upon her spirit, life tasted sweet to Mrs. Spurden unto the end. She could say with Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra:

"Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life for which the first was made:  
Our times are in His hand -  
Who saith, 'A whole I planned'  
Youth shows but half; trust God, see all, nor be afraid!"

Youth ended, I shall try  
My gain or loss thereby;  
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is Gold:  
And I shall weigh the same,  
Give life its praise or blame -  
Young, all lay in dispute: I shall know, being old."

The closing days of our sister's life were particularly touching and beautiful. Memory failed her toward the last, for everything except the indelible impressions of youth. But if her thoughts wandered in a haze, it was always a golden haze. The girdle of her mind was loosened just a little, but it only enabled us to look the deeper down into her soul and to see that it was gentleness, purity, goodness clear through. The jewel-case was slightly sprung at the last, but we who looked

thanked God for the clearer view it gave us of the gleaming pearl within.

Yes, time wrought in her a gracious work and left us in the memory of her ripeness, a priceless heritage.

II. The second thought I wish to touch upon is this, that such ripeness in old age is the result of wise planting in youth and patient culture through the years. This beauty and maturity did not come by chance. It was not accidental. It was as far from being an accident as the poles are asunder. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." "He that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." "Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart." Alas! Alas! It is not always light at evening time. Instead of laying broad bars of golden light upon the soul, age often flings naught but the deep dark shadow of eternal night. Instead of shocks of ripened grain, age may bind nothing but a handful of withered and decaying weeds. For ripeness old age may bring rottenness, whose doom is to be cast into Hell, the garbage heap of the universe. Our sister came to the end of life a ripened sheaf of grain, because in youth she planted in her heart the good seed of truth, grace came early into possession of the soil. Learn the lesson, girls! Lay it well to heart! The finest types of Christian character are formed in those converted young. If you would grow into beauty, you must open your heart to Jesus now, there is no time to lose. Each day the weeds of evil are striking their roots deeper in your heart. If you would reap wheat, sow it now!

The life just ended presents a fine example for young Christians. Emma Marten made her soul her care, Jesus had clothed her in white raiment; she was careful to keep it unspotted from the world. He committed to her a white stone with a new name inscribed upon it; she would keep it where it would not tarnish. He showed her a pattern after which she was to fashion her life; she wrought with fear and trembling lest she spoil the grand design, she resolutely put everything out of her life that was calculated to stain her. Though fond of pleasure, she indulged in nothing that was questionable in influence or tendency, possessing a keen relish for imaginative literature, she denied herself whatever would sully her soul. She sought first God's kingdom and righteousness and all things kindly and good were bountifully added unto her.

III. And now our last thought of this beautiful life is the sweetest thought of all. This sheaf of ripened grain has been gathered in. The harvest time has come and the Husbandman who waited long for the fruit of his field has gathered the wheat into his garner. "Like as a shock of corn cometh in its season." "Cometh in," a more literal rendering would be "cometh up." The oriental threshing-floors were elevated and the picture is that of golden sheaves carried to a threshing floor on high. She has been gathered in and up, the grain has been threshed. It took but a gentle stroke of the flail of disease to strike away the husk of flesh and liberate the soul for the garner in the skies.

And this is the consummation, she who was born a little blue-eyed baby, nearly eighty-one years ago, in the dingy capital of the British Empire, has been re-born into the New Jerusalem, the capital and mother city of the Empire of God. She who as a little child played in the garden of London Tower, now walks in the gardens of Paradise. Instead of the muddy Thames, she now beholds the river of water of Life, clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the city to which she has gone, no mists obscure her sight, the light does not come struggling to her now through fogs or clouds. The air is ever clear, the skies are ever blue and the Lord God giveth her light forever more, and can we doubt but that already in some apartment of the many mansioned city, she has found that servant of God, whom she loved long since on earth and lost a while, and that they stand together now, before the Throne, praising Him who redeemed them by His blood?

My friends, there is much about this beautiful life that I must leave unsaid. But it will not go unuttered. If you and I to-day will but keep quiet and bend a listening ear, we shall hear the whole sweet story for she, "Being dead yet speaketh."

## A Plastic World.

BY PROF. S. C. MICHELL.

Great men are intensely individual and differ from one another in most respects; but all of them seem to agree in looking at the world as plastic. To the eye of the child, as it opens upon life, society and government seem as fixed and unalterable as the forms of nature. This spell continues, unbroken it seems, with most of us as we advance into the continent of life. Now the point of departure of men of the first order appears to be in their accepting society, art and literature as effects, and as effects that are simply transitional to nobler types. For them the world presents not a finally wrought out system; but it is so much raw material out of which they

can mould ideas them the soul sh... principle. They na! come, but th... the stability of t... upon; by men e... foremost. Hence... the great God... thought, as a... volcanic force ru... forms of life in... value attaching... creative force... draw the image... versal law, Word... organize an em... light.

The revealing... Kant's chief cla... it was generally... mind is like th... objects imprint... clearly showed... and - the outer... mind, like the s... is good only so... cause, substance... ngly, is not a m... nal image, but... sense-perception... "What we see is... seen to be not p... expressive.

Likewise the t... ceptions that a... happiness is the... be too low for... science. On the... be conformity t... Neither of these... nature of man, t... ingredients in t... now held by som... opposing camps... theories in a larg... to have full play... find the sought... complex being... acteristic life... nor is he "pure s... life is that acti... sensibility are... most subtle ch... Accordingly, m... since virtue just... out by man's act... It is singular... Heraclitus, gra... science, when h... flux." How ut... think of the lat... are not surpris... the stability of... works in that... every student of... all else, was sub... Cicero could h... own mother ton... In studying r... Light passes in... into chemical a... netism, and thus... unceasingly. A... dures save ener... it."

The spiral line... found to be the... once saw on Lun... Niagara, this str... huge rock:

Obedience on... mand of a univer... It seems to me t... constitutes the... did not hesitate... new lines of deve... art was condem... been laid down... became rigid and... truth and beauty... them. Their cul... born from within... and life-like, bec... tion. Their phil... one has remark... their laws on sto... life fluid.

Whenever the... an algebraic form... pretation on relig...