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Page 4 begins here:

DEATH OF REV. J. N. W. SPRINGER

This well-known minister, a superannuated member of the St. Louis conference, died at his residence in this city on Friday, 17th inst., at 2 o'clock p. m.

The funeral services were performed Sunday afternoon, when the officiating minister used, in substance, the following language:

I come to-day to comply with a request made by the deceased years ago, and repeated only a few days before his death, and I come to speak of one, whom I believe was invested with the highest dignity and greatest honors ever conferred on mortal man—the dignity and honor of sonship and heirship in the family of the living God. Is there, can there be greater dignity or honor than this? Having, in common with our fellow man, been redeemed by the blood of Christ, he exercised faith in that atoning sacrifice, by faith was justified, and by the spirit was adopted in the family, and became a son of God and an heir to all the benefits of the death and passion of the world's Redeemer and to an inheritance

"Which shall new luster boast,
When victor's wreaths and monarch's gems
Shall blend in common dust."

J. N. W. Springer belonged to a family of position, influence and renown—a religious family, rigidly Protestant, during more than two centuries past. So rigid and uniform was their adherence to the Protestant faith that very few exceptions were ever found; and to-day, although the family is very large and widely scattered, it is believed that nine-tenths of the whole are connected more or less intimately with the Methodist church.

The great-great-grandfather of the deceased was born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1658. While yet a youth he was sent to London to pursue the study of the law. While there he was, in 1678, kidnapped, carried to Jamestown, Virginia, and sold for his passage, as was the case about that time with many others. At the end of five years, for which he had been sold, he made his way northward and lighted upon a small colony of Swedes located in the bounds of what was afterwards and is now the state of Delaware. Finding the colony destitute of public religious services, he gathered the people, assumed the office, and did for them the work of a lay reader, which office, together with that of church secretary, he filled during forty five years, two years on his own motion and by consent of the people, afterwards by regular appointment from the church authorities. The great-grandfather of the deceased, also named Carl, or Charles, was born in Delaware in 1698, and succeeded his father in church position, serving thirty-five years.

His grandfather, Edward Springer, was born in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1735; his father, William Springer, was born in 1774, and in early life removed to Fayette Co., Ky., where our deceased friend was born March 2, 1809. There he passed his youth and the earlier days of his manhood. In life's young morning he made a profession of religion and connected himself with the church of his choice. In 1848 he came to this city, and in 1850 was, after due examination, licensed as a local preacher by the Quarterly conference of the Centenary church. Subse-

quently he was duly recommended as a suitable person to be received into the traveling connection; accordingly at an annual session of the St. Louis conference, held in Boonville, in 1851, he was received, and appointed to Hillsboro circuit, lying principally in Jefferson county, in this state, and there he labored from the fall of 1851 to the fall of 1852. When he went, there were on that circuit according to the statistical report for the year, 190 church members. When he left he reported 306—a net gain of 116. This was his first year, and he the only regular pastor on the work.

At the conference for 1852 he was continued on trial, as every preacher or licentiate in our church must serve two years probation before being ordained even to the minor office of the ministry, and then two more before he is invested with full ministerial powers; so his moral and ministerial character were approved at the end of the first year, and he continued on trial and appointed to Georgetown circuit, lying principally in Pettis county. When he went to that circuit there were 189 members; when he left it at the close of the conference year there were 376—a net gain of 187. Thus during the first and second years of his ministry, and he only a licentiate, he increased the membership in the bounds of his work by the addition of 303 members.

At the close of his second year, he was admitted into full connection, ordained to the office of a deacon, and appointed to the charge of California circuit, where he remained two years. It is impossible for me to say precisely what was his success on that work. At the end of the first year he reported a membership of 328, and at the end of the second year 374—a net gain of 46 during that second year, but how many he began with I can not satisfactorily determine.

At the conference of 1853 there was reported from the Boonville district, a Boonville circuit with 468 members, thenceafter that name disappeared from the records and was substituted by the California and Belle Air circuits which together reported in 1854, 549 members, or an increase of 81 over that of the Boonville circuit the year preceding. If only half of this increase belonged to the California circuit then our brother's labors during those two years resulted in the addition of 85 or 90 members; nor are there any reasons to believe that he was any more anxious for a numerical increase in

the church than he was for its purity, peace and spiritual prosperity.

At the conference of 1855 he was regularly elected and ordained to the office of an elder, invested with full ministerial powers, and appointed to North St. Louis and Bremen mission, from which he returned at the end of the year 56 members.

During the two years next succeeding he labored on the Union circuit, lying principally in Franklin county. He found there 166 members, and at the end of his first year returned 282—a net increase that year of 116; the next year he reported only 226, but my impression is that a change had been made in the boundaries of the circuit, and the decrease from the preceding year was owing to that fact. But if this were not the case, he still left the circuit with 60 members more than he found there. His next regular appointment was to Arcadia, which for the first time came into prominence as a separate charge at the conference of 1858. He reported from it at the end of the year 137 members. How many of that number were gathered as the result of his labors I have no means of ascertaining. At the close of that year or at the conference of 1859, he was reported superannuated, but in 1860 he was assigned to Allenton circuit, where there were 78 members. How many he reported at the close of his labors there, the records do not show, nor do the General Minutes show that after that time he was regularly appointed to any pastoral work. Yet many here present know that between that period, 1860, and 1866 he did much minis-

terial work.

In the fall of 1861, when his year at Allenton had expired, he was engaged at Manchester, where he labored till the fall of 1865; and there are those here present to-day that testify that a more diligent, faithful and devoted pastor they never had. At least such has been their testimony as given to me. After that his name was placed on the list of superannuates, where it remained to the present; yet in that relation he performed much valuable work for the church.

He was always ready and willing to labor to the full extent of his ability, yet his partial or total superannuation extended through full 15 years, during all of which he was more or less afflicted, and a great part of the time suffered most acutely. He was narrow-chested and constitutionally predisposed to disease of the lungs. In addition to this, he made the mistake so common with a large proportion of Methodist preachers, his zeal outran and overran his discretion, and he needlessly expended physical force and lung power. It was a habit—an unfortunate one—but it characterized him through all the more active periods of his ministerial life. He often expended as much strength in one sermon as would have sufficed for two, three or four, and to have expended that strength on so many, would have been much better for him, and far more pleasant and profitable to his hearers. It is not to be supposed that any degree of religious attainment nullifies or counteracts the laws of our physical being—a fact this that many preachers would do well of our late brother in gathering people into the church has been indicated already, and there are those here present who have heard him say more than once, that according to private memoranda, kept by himself, 3,000 persons were converted, directly or indirectly under his ministry, during the years of his active service. Allowing this to have been the case, and connect with it the multitudes known to have been received by him into the church by profession of faith in Christ, and there stands before us a man who, judged by actual and cognizable results, had few equals, and, perhaps, no superiors in the conference with which he was

to consider. Had our brother been more conservative of his physical strength, the probabilities are he would have lived longer, and been more extensively useful while he did live. And what, in this respect, is perhaps true of him, is equally true of many others.

I come now to a direct consideration of his success; and it is, as I think, by this should he be judged and his character estimated. Every man should be judged by what he is; and what he is will, as a general thing, be sooner or later manifested by what he does. On this assumption we are allowed to argue a posteriori from his conduct to his character. The success connected. How, think you, my brethren, the great Father of all estimates his professed ministers? By the stateliness of their appearance? the polish of their manners? the elegance and beauty of their language? the flashes of their wit or attractiveness, or their elocution? Is it, think you, by any or all these, or by any thing of the kind that the estimate is made? Is it not rather by the genuineness, depth, earnestness, fervor and consistency of their piety, their supreme love to God and universal love to man as a creature of God, the uprightness of their purposes and sanctity of their lives? their self-abnegation and entire consecration to Christ, fidelity to his cause and the sheaves gathered by them for the Master's garner? Estimated by a standard like this, who among us can claim to have excelled the deceased during the years of his active ministry? Seriously, I ask, who? But, wherein lay the secret of his success? Not in original mental endowments. He never claimed, nor did others claim for him, any thing above mediocrity in this respect. Not in his learning, for in the world's sense of the word, he was unlearned. Not in personal attraction, for, to say the most of it, this was not greater than we ordinarily meet, and certainly it was not in his elocutionary powers, for, like Mark Anthony, he never pretended to have "wit or words, or ut-

Page 5 begins here:

terance or power of speech to stir men's blood; he only spake right on." All who ever heard him know his style was neither pure nor elegant, and both his grammar and rhetoric were often sadly at fault. Wherein then is found the secret of his success? Ah! my brethren; here comes in a force science never discovered and the world has not known. The divine Master charged his apostles to tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high; and on another occasion, he is said to have opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. In this there is indicated the action of mind upon mind, and the communion of the spirit of the great Father with the spirit of his helpless and dependent creature—man—and the highest attainments of our holy religion are found in the minds complete harmony with the divine plans and the spirit in full sympathy with the divine nature. It is thus that the intellectual and purely spiritual power are adjusted to the laws of their being, and when so adjusted there is harmony, quietness of mind, and a sweet peace of heart, arising from an inward consciousness of the divine favor and congeniality therewith. The laws of our intellectual and purely spiritual natures are as fixed and invariable as those of our physical natures; and, when we are out of harmony with either the one or the other we must necessarily suffer, and the suffering proportioned to the degree of divergence and extent of inharmony. Violation of God's law is always followed by evil to the violator. In the intellectual and purely spiritual world the consequent may not, and usually does not follow the antecedent immediately; yet no time long or short can destroy the connection between the two, and the legitimate consequent is sure to come. Certain forms of blood poison may be very slow in their operation, yet will work out their results in the end. Just so with mental and moral poisons, their final results may be long delayed, but are sure to come at last.

If we live in strict obedience to the laws of hygiene, we have health; if in obedience to the laws of mind, we have development, expansion and progress; if in obedience to the laws of our purely spiritual natures, we have, under the redemptory scheme, peace with God, and our entire inner powers are subordinated to, and regulated by, the active principle of supreme love to him and universal love to his creature man.

Now let it be remembered that under the operation of the tri-fold character of the laws of our being, some healthful, strong, vigorous bodies have been found in connection with weak and uncultured minds; and some vigorous, giant-like minds have been found in connection with very bad hearts, while in many instances the most genial, tender, God-loving hearts have been connected with weak minds and frail bodies. Here is the key to the solution of the various phenomena we meet in the world around us. Men may love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and yet possess very little mental culture and very feeble bodies. This, to some extent, was, as I believe, the case of our deceased brother of whom I speak only as he appeared to me, and not as he may have been seen or estimated by others. As already intimated, he did not, as I believe, live in strict obedience to physical law, nor am I prepared to say that he gave all proper attention to mental culture—very few even among ministers, come up to the full measure of duty in this respect—but as to his heart, I believe to have been right with God, his intentions were upright, his motives pure, the spirit of obedience dominated in his inner powers and guided his life. He was true to his convictions of duty, though, as with other men, those convictions may not have been in every case correct. As a preacher, he tarried at the mercy seat—tarried with sighs and groans, with prayers and tears—until he felt he was endowed with power from on high, and then with a heart filled to overflowing with the love of Christ, and for the sinners for whom Christ died, he went to his work, and with the earnestness of a father and the

tenderness of a mother, in the language of the heart—more forcible than that of the lips—he pleaded with sinners as a man would plead for his life; and Almighty God accepted the offering and blessed his labors with wondrous success. Here was the whole secret and source of his power. It was of God and not of men. He depended upon God and found his help in every time of need. He trusted him and was not disappointed, nor will any be who trust him aright.

Had our brother been possessed of high intellectual culture, of fine oratorical powers, and still retained the same spirit, his influence would have been far more extensive. But this spirit without the culture can accomplish vastly more than the culture without the spirit.

Thus our brother lived, and quietly, but rather unexpectedly to his friends, and perhaps to himself as well, on last Friday, at 2 o'clock, p. m., he died.

We have from him nothing of what has been called dying testimony, but we have what is far better—a living testimony extending through a period of more than thirty years. It is not how a man dies so much as how he lives, that forms the ground of our hope and the source of our comfort. If he lives right we feel assured he will die right. Very well satisfied on that point. But if he live wrong, ten to one but he will die wrong. Ordinarily men die as they live. There may be exceptional cases, but they are few. So far I know or can judge, Brother Springer lived right; hence I am satisfied as to his safety in death. And now, so far as I am concerned, the remains will be turned over to the care of the brethren of the order with which he was connected, and to whom I may be permitted to say a word.

Gentlemen: I am not a member of your order—never have been—do not expect to be, yet I have no recollection of ever having spoken an unkind or disrespectful word in regard to it. Some of the most true and faithful friends I ever had have been members of it. My honored father was a bright and shining light among its members.

Of your private doings, as an order, I know nothing, nor do I seek to know any thing. But in past years I have seen so many instances where your members, with all the sympathy and tenderness of a brother, watched night after night at the bedside of a sick and dying brother, and administered to his wants. So many instances where the tear of sorrow has been wiped from the cheek of widowhood and the piteous wail of the orphan hushed by your attentions and benefactions; that I can not suppose such living, healing waters as these should flow from an impure fountain. There must be a good fountain whence such actions flow; yet truth and candor compels me to say, I have seen among your order what I have so often and so regretfully seen among churches—some who do not live up to the spirit of the vows they have taken. Pity it is so, but so it is; and I suppose it is with you as with the churches, “the wheat and tares must grow together.”

Again, I have sometimes seen in the performance of your solemn burial services what appeared to be no more than a round of cold formality. Allow me, therefore, to entreat that when your solemn and impressive prayers are read at the grave of this my brother, and your brother, your hearts go up to God the Father of all in the spirit of those prayers, and that your responses to the several petitions go up from the depths of your hearts in all humility and sincerity. You believe in God's authority, providence, truth and peace. His word you carry with you in your processions. Let that word be a “light to your path and a guide to your feet.” Submit heartily to the divine authority you acknowledge. Acquiesce in the providences you admit to be wise and just, and be guided by the book you practically declare to be true. Then all shall be well.