

Notes on the Life of Catherine Symonds nee Gee

Mrs Catherine Symonds who entered into rest at Wattle Flat, near Yankalilla on May 8 1910, in her 81st year was the widow of the late John Symonds. Her maiden name was Gee. She was born in Lincolnshire. In conjunction with her husband and eldest son she arrived in South Australia in 1853. Her first home was at Edwardstown, and after several changes of abode the family finally settled in the Yankalilla district, where the deceased spent the remainder of her life

Mrs Symonds was converted at the age of 17 years. After marriage she with her husband united in fellowship with the Baptist Church. In latter years her lot was cast with the Methodist section of Christ's church , and with which she was a devout and respected adherent till the time of here death. Our departed sister was a regular in her attendance at the house of worship and liberal in her gifts and services to the cause of God. She was a supporter of the Temperance cause and from early years instilled in the minds of her family of eight children the evils of intemperance.

During the painful illness of ten months the deceased was visited by REV A. A. Smith, whose visits were greatly appreciated

The surviving members of her family comprise four sons and one daughter, forty-eight grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren. Mrs Symonds was a most devoted wife, a loving mother, and was highly esteemed by a large circle of friends. He husband predeceased her by twenty nine years, having entered into his rest in 1881.

The mortal remains of our deceased sister were interred in the Yankalilla Cemetery on May 10 1910, The funeral service being conducted by REV G. W Johnston.

G.W.Johnson



The REV A.A. Smith

says regarding Mrs Symonds, Of course I knew her well, and saw her often. She was one of Gods Good women, industrious resourceful, She was a typical pioneer. It was an unbounded delight to sit and listen to her talk about the early days-----how she trudged over the open country seeking cattle; how she, before starting would commit her wee bairns into the care and keeping of the All-father, and how wonderful and tenderly He guided her and hers through trial and difficulty of that period.

She was a brave, heroic soul and served her family in the fear of the Lord. She lived to see her children and her children's children, rise up around her and call her blessed. Her trust in God was unflinching. During her days of suffering I would say "Well, Mrs Symonds, what would you do if He was not with you" :Oh! Mr Smith," she would exclaim "I don't know what I should do without him:. To the very end she retained a keen interest in all of Gods work. No one visited her without being faithfully questioned as to their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Out of the little cash she saved she would hand me a sum saying, "Don't put my name, a donation from a friend towards the Church" To minister to her was a veritable benediction.

She has gone but her influence will live forever, and some of that influence will abide forever

"As some rare perfume in a vase of clay

Pervades it with sweetness not it's own"

We all have memories we cherish of the bewitching harmonies in music ,of the wonderfully beautiful in nature, of the exquisitely delightful human associations. But in my mind, only next to the direct influence of the good who being dead yet speak to us as they never could when they lived.

Truly—With the Morn those angel faces smile

Which we have loved long and lost awhile

Mrs Symonds senior was to my thinking, one of the choice spirits of the church. No one can tell the faith and perseverance these noble women exercised in the early days, when money was scarce and the growing needs of the family were great “But her children rise up to call her blessed “She lived to a ripe age. The three chief features of her life I noticed when ministering for three years in the Yankalilla circuit were faith, power in prayer and great liberality. She was always anxious about the growth of the church and the conversion of the people. Born in the days of church revival, where the power of God was manifest and constant in her native town, she carried that power through her days of weakness, ill health and continued prostration

She never lost an opportunity to speak a word for her master. All the young people who visited were advised to give themselves to God, and many prayers were offered by her for them. When some of her nephews and nieces were received into the church in my time she cried with great joy. She had great love for the Salvation Army, and entered into sympathy with it for its social work and rejoiced in the conversions that were made. She kept what she called her “Glory Box”. And, though enjoying a small weekly income, she always put aside every spare shilling for God’s work; you know best what to do with it. More than once the circuit fund was increased by it. Once I gave ten shillings to the support of Mr Lyons our evangelist, and when I told her of conversions through his work her face lit up with celestial light. I often wondered how she could afford what she did, and remonstrated with her for I knew she was poor ,but she would say “My dear, I do love to help God’s work”.

She spent long hours, like Dorcas of old, making patchwork quilts, and the “Glory Box” received much more from this source. My faith has often been increased when in doubting moments. I thought of this dear old lady nearly blind, living so much by herself and yet so patient and kind. So anxious about the Kingdom of God, yet shut out for years from the privileges which God’s people have in His Temple and the company of the faithful. I expect to find her very near the throne when I reach the New Jerusalem

CHAS.E.WILLIAMS
