

Mary Gideon (- 5 Aug 1853)

Gideon. At noon on Friday the 5th instant in the 62d year of her age, Mrs. Mary Gideon, wife of Jacob Gideon. Her funeral will take place this (Saturday) afternoon at 5 o'clock from her late residence on 7th street opposite the Post Office. The friends of the family are invited to attend without further notice.

The National Intelligencer

Death of Mrs. Gideon

From the Philadelphia Observer (Letter to one of the Editors)

Washington, Monday, August 8, 1853

When I saw the announcement a few days since that our beloved brother Gilbert was no more, my heart was deeply stricken, and in spirit I cried out, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth for the faithful fall from among the children of men." Truly, a standard bearer has fallen, and we his brethren are most solemnly admonished.



I then had no thought that I should be called so soon to mourn the loss of another even more tenderly beloved, though at that time Mrs. Mary Gideon, wife of our Elder, Jacob Gideon, Esq., was lying seriously and as many thought, dangerously ill. I could not think so, nor was my confidence shaken until last Thursday evening when a change occurred that roused my most painful apprehensions. She died at noon on Friday.

She was identified with the Fourth Church, was one of the little band that organized it in 1828, and always had a large place in the confidence and affections of all up to the hour of her departure. We have sustained a loss indeed! The mourners go about the streets.

Our deceased sister was no common woman. She possessed those qualities of mind and heart that pre-eminently fitted her for the first place among "the women that labored with me in the gospel." Her loss will be deeply felt in our church, widely in our city, and in the regions beyond. Those young men, candidates for the ministry in Illinois and Iowa, will read this notice with tearful eye, and that pastor in Illinois, and that pastor in Wisconsin, and that pastor in Missouri will be in sorrow that she who loved them and labored for them is no more.

"Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

The funeral services were conducted by Rev. Messrs. J.N. Danforth, Mason Noble, Byron Sunderland, and myself. Brothers Danforth and Noble were my predecessors in this pastorate. The cases are rare in which all the pastors of a church are together sympathizing in a common bereavement as each in her life-time enjoyed her respect, confidence, and affection. Her last words spoken to me were, "My precious pastor," Blessed, thrice blessed woman! Thy name will be ever as an ointment poured forth!

A large concourse of mourning friends gathered around her coffin. Of these, I must make particular mention of one, the President of these United States. His pew is immediately in front of Mr. Gideon's. When a Senator, he always sat with Mr. and Mrs. Gideon. Thus he came to know, and to know was to love her.

The President was in the Navy Yard on Saturday, and when the booming of the cannon had ceased was about to embark on a short excursion in a United States steamer. At this moment he was incidentally informed of the death. He expressed regret that he had not heard of it before and said he

would have postponed the excursion, but now it was too late. He, however, communicated his wishes for an early return. He was gratified and came at the appointed hour as one of the congregation, without invitation, other than that which all received. His heart, in common with us all, was penetrated by the afflictive dispensations. He wept with those that wept. Comment is out of place.

"Brethren! Pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."

Rev. John C. Smith

The Evening Star, March 16, 1854

Congressional Cemetery

A splendid marble monument has been lately erected in the Congressional burial ground to the memory of Mrs. Gideon, the lamented consort of Jacob Gideon, Esq. It is a very beautiful specimen of workmanship, and is from the establishment of Mr. Gaddes, of Baltimore. The railing that enclosed it, which is very elegant and handsome, was furnished by Mr. Ralph Haskins of our city.

Kelly, Rev. Joseph Thomas, "**Rev. John C. Smith, D.D., and Other Pioneer Presbyterian Ministers of Washington**", *Columbia Historical Society, Vol. 24, p. 129-130*

Among the women were many helpers, prominent among them Mrs. Mary Gideon, fruitful in every good work, and Mrs. Shepherd, mother of Governor Shepherd, whose gracious life is one of the fragrant memories of my childhood and early ministry. There was no public school system in the District prior to the year 1849, and therefore it came into the mind and heart of Mrs. Jacob Gideon to supply the deficiency. In 1836 she instituted the female free school and this had its home in one of the lower rooms of the Fourth Church, and taught by the Misses Wannall of that church. By the interested and persistent work of Mrs. Gideon this school was maintained for thirteen years, but in 1849 the system of public schools having been introduced into the city, and there being no further use for this effort, it was discontinued. In this school a good primary education was given free, and many young girls had here the training which fitted them to take their happy and responsible places in life. The money for carrying on the school was received from voluntary gifts, and there were often opportune supplies from Mrs. Gideon and her friends to meet any deficiency.