

2 Johann Gottlob Arnold

Unveiling of the Plaque Angus Valley Cemetery.



5 December 2003

JOHANN GOTTLOB ARNOLD: Unveiling of plaque

Angas Valley Cemetery

5.12.2003

As we stand at this grave, the last resting place of the ancestor of many, if not all of you, we are reminded by this tombstone:

Here rests in God

JOHANN GOTTLOB ARNOLD

born the 14th April 1822 - died the 14th April 1892
Philippians 1,21: For to me, to live is Christ and
to die is gain.

May his ashes rest in peace!

We recall, in this moment of remembrance, a few salient features of his life in Australia. Gottlob arrived on December 8, 1848, on the ship 'Alfred' as the first of the Arnold brothers to emigrate. On October 21, 1851, he was married at Langmeil by Pastor A. L. C. Kavel to Johanna Sophia Mickel (also known as Hanschk). Their nine children grew up in the home that they occupied at Gnadenfrei, a home until 1887. During his three-year stay at Walla Walla the Lord called home his beloved wife, and for two years, as a widower, he lived with his son Gottfried at Angas Valley. Here he has found his last resting-place. And as we again read the inscription, we see how literally the words of the psalmist were fulfilled in his life: 'The length of our days is seventy years' - exactly the 'three score years and ten'!

We take to heart the words inscribed on this tombstone. If they were not Gottlob's own choice - and they may well have been his choice -, they were inscribed there by his family as recording his and their confident trust and hope: Philippians 1,21 - 'For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. In the original German wording of Luther's translation, with which Gottlob will have been most familiar, it is perhaps even more expressive, saying: 'Christ is my life, and dying is my gain'.

There is no doubt where Gottlob Arnold's hope and expectation for the future lay. He knew: 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's'. He knew: 'Your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory'. This is what the inscription on his tombstone would say to you, as his children's children, as the basis for your life in the present, and for your expectation for the future.

It may have been at his funeral - it will certainly will have been at funerals that he attended - that a treasured hymn, based on these words, was sung. We offer it as part of our memorial today:

For me to live is Jesus,
To die is gain for me;
Then whensoever He pleases
I meet death willingly.

For Christ, my Lord and brother,
I leave this world so dim,
And gladly seek that other
Where I shall be with Him.

My woes are nearly over,
Though long and dark the road;
My sin His merits cover,
And I have peace with God.

In my last hour, O grant me
To slumber soft and still,
No doubts to vex and haunt me,
Safe anchored on Thy will.

So let me, to Thee cleaving
Through all death's agony,
Then fall asleep believing,
And wake in heaven with Thee.

DEDICATION

BLEST and dedicate be this memorial plaque
• as a memorial to the goodness and mercy of the
Lord our God who protected Johann Gottlob
Arnold as he journeyed on the 'Alfred', and
blessed him and his wife Johanna Sophia as they
established their home in Gnadenfrei, and sus-
tained to the end of his days in Angas Valley,
and ^{has} given him his last resting-place here;

and esteem • as a tribute of love, by his descendants for the
faith and piety in which he lived his life on
earth, and with which he has given an example
to the generations that follow him.

IN THE NAME of the Father and of the Son and of
the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY GOD, Heavenly Father, you have blessed our
ancestral parents and us, their children's children,
with all good things that are needed for the welfare
of our body and soul. Help us to realise that we are
not worthy of the least of all your mercies and of all
your faithfulness. Be pleased, we pray, to accept
the thankfulness of our hearts and the prayer of our
lips on this family day of thanksgiving as we say in
humble gratitude:

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me,
bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and
forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your ini-
quity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life
from destruction, who crowns you with steadfast love and
mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live.
~~To you, O Lord, be all praise and glory, now and for ever.~~
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
Amen.