

Insight Into



January / February 2025

***“A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would
be a coward if I saw that God’s truth is attacked
and yet would remain silent.”***

John Calvin (1509-1564)

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General Information

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As a Reformed magazine, *Insight Into* seeks to promote the knowledge of the truth and to give biblical guidance to young people in their daily lives.

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MEDITATION

“Until Shiloh Come”

Rev. E. C. Adams

“Until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (Genesis 49:10b).

The above words were spoken by father Jacob on his death bed. He spoke by the Spirit of prophecy concerning his sons. He prophesied very grave and solemn things concerning Reuben, Simeon, and Levi on account of their sins. On the other hand, despite Judah’s sin, Jacob was given to speak of precious things: The Lord Jesus Christ would descend out of Judah’s family!

“Until Shiloh come”: In the context of the blessing of Judah, it is clear that Shiloh refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, who would come in the fullness of time. The majority of commentators — both Jewish and Christian — agree on this point. However, there are different thoughts about the meaning of the word “Shiloh.” When we consider the Hebrew root word from which “Shiloh” comes, then the title “Shiloh” can have the following meanings: In the first place, it can imply peace; in the second place, it can mean rest; in the third place, it can refer to prosperity and happiness.

“Until”: My young friends, by God’s sparing hand we may enter a newly begun year, the year of our Lord 2025. Hopefully you have entered this year with desires and expectations. We pray that the Lord will remember and uphold those of our young people who struggle with depression, who do not have the hope of “until,” who experience that everything seems so dark, hopeless, and impossible. In this text, there is hope for everyone, including you. Surely our youth desire to experience the meaning of the word “Shiloh”: to have peace without and within; to have rest in this world where there is so much turmoil and unrest; and to

be prosperous and happy.

“Until”: Then, my readers, may I ask you very personally: Where are you seeking peace, rest, prosperity, and happiness? These are things that each of us needs. You know very well — as God’s Word tells you and your conscience confirms — that these things will never be found by walking in the ways of a sinful world. Isaiah 48:22 says, *“There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.”* Great numbers are seeking their entire and lasting fulfillment in the timely things of this earth. The Lord does indeed give us many precious and good things which we may enjoy. Solomon has written in Ecclesiastes 3:13, *“And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.”* And yet Solomon has also written that all the temporal blessings which the Lord so richly and undeservedly gives cannot give the true and lasting peace, rest, and happiness that our human hearts desire (Ecclesiastes 12:8). Oh, young friends, you know that even in the middle of all our blessings, there can be a gnawing worm; there is a knowing that our blessings can be removed so quickly, a certainty that at the end everything will have to be left behind when we will be called upon to meet our Maker.

“Until Shiloh come”: In Shiloh, we can and shall be filled and satisfied by the Lord Jesus Christ and by His work experienced in the heart by true saving faith. Concerning peace, in Isaiah 9:6, Jesus is called, *“The Prince of Peace.”* After He had showed His fearful and anxious church His pierced hands and side, the resurrected Saviour said unto them, *“Peace be unto you”* (John 20:21). Concerning rest, has Jesus not given the precious invitation in Matthew 11:28, *“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”*? Concerning prosperity and happiness, we read in Deuteronomy 33:29, *“Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!”*

“Unto Shiloh come”: My young friends, may I ask you: What do you think about the above Scripture portions? Perhaps you say, “But that is not for me!” May I ask you: Where is that written in the Bible? I read in Proverbs 8:17, *“Those that seek Me early shall find Me.”* I hope there are many who ask, “How do I now obtain this peace, rest, and happiness?”

“Until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” *“Until Shiloh come”* signifies that before Shiloh comes and without Shiloh coming, there will not be a true and lasting rest. Our text also tells us that Shiloh

will work this wonderful work in the hearts of His church, for we read, *“And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be”* (Genesis 49:10). As King, Jesus gathers His chosen church by His Word and Spirit. Romans 10:17 states, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* These words tell us to faithfully use the appointed means of grace, also by going to God’s house. Our text implies the necessity of regularly praying, as we also read in Ezekiel 36:37, *“I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.”*

“Until.” Before we close, we must also speak of another *“until”* we read about in Matthew 13:30, *“Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn.”* It is a benefit for us to think about the day of our death, together with the coming of Jesus Christ upon the clouds of heaven. Old people must die, but young people can die. Last year, on September 19, we brought a cherished 14-year-old daughter and sister of the Picture Butte congregation to the grave.

We need the Spirit to work that holy unrest in us, an unrest that can only be settled by the coming of Shiloh in our hearts and lives. May we be brought to ask earnestly and often for the blessed *“until”* of which we read in Isaiah 32:15, *“Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high.”* We read of the blessed rest which Shiloh has merited and gives to His people in the midst of all their difficulties, trials, and temptations in Hebrews 4:9: *“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”*





The Power of the Head

Covering in Worship Services?

Rev. E. Hakvoort

In answer to a question concerning head coverings for women and girls during worship services, I was so happy to read: *We totally agree that a woman or girl should wear something on her head during a church service.* Sadly, this is not evident in our days! It is regularly heard that this is outdated and that surely there are more important things to worry about! But if we take this approach, then we ignore Scripture.

What does Paul mean in 1 Corinthians 11:5 when he says, “*Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven*”? And what does he mean in verse 10, where we read: “*For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels*”? Why is an uncovered head dishonourable for women and girls in worship? And what do the angels have to do with that? This is indeed the core of the Bible’s principle of head covering.

First, Paul points to the position of women in light of the order of creation. Adam was created first and then Eve. “*For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man*” (1 Corinthians 11:8). All people are born from a woman, but Eve was made from the man. The Lord took Adam’s rib and made a woman and brought her to him. He calls her “*Woman, because she was taken out of Man*” (Genesis 2:23). At the same time, a woman was created as a help meet; she was not to rule over the man, nor to be as a slave, but she was to be on equal footing with him. Man and woman were created to look each other in the eye and to be on the same page in essential things. A distinction was made between man and woman in the order of creation, though many try to gloss over this fact. Nowadays, there is often no longer any distinction between man and woman, as we can observe in the career-oriented drive of many women and in the way many dress.

Am I mistaken when I say that, sadly, this is not unnoticed in our circles either? Certainly, I hasten to say that men and women are equal, but are they the same? Paul points to the biblical order in verse 3 of 1 Corinthians 11: “*But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ;*

and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” Therefore, the woman must cover her head during the worship service, not because she is inferior to the man, but as a sign of submissiveness. If, therefore, the woman refuses to cover her head, she thereby denies the place the Lord has given her. This concept was not easy for many liberated women then and now. Paul uses a simple example to make that clear. The same order of creation also says *“if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him. But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her”* (1 Corinthians 11:14-15). Do you understand what he is saying?

If a woman does not wear a head covering during worship services, *“that is even all one as if she were shaven”* (1 Corinthians 11:5). If a woman has no head covering, it looks as if she has deliberately shaved off her hair. That is a dishonour and against the order of creation. Paul also says in verse 10 that the head covering is needed in worship *“because of the angels.”* These two things are not unrelated. If the woman has power on her head during worship, she confesses that the man is the head of the woman. But to whom does she profess this? To the angels! Thus, there is a close connection between the angels and the woman’s head covering. Our marginal notes state eloquently that the angels are present in the assembly of believers and are grieved by all the disorder in worship. That is why Paul admonishes the women and girls in Corinth that they should also not grieve the Holy Spirit with this.

Evidently, then, the angels are watching carefully to see whether all things are done in order and with edification! While doing so, they also see that the woman has power on her head and honours the God-given order of creation. Why are the angels present in worship? Because they are eager to see the Gospel: *“Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into”* (1 Peter 1:12). Likewise, the angels looked upon the ark for the mercy seat on which the blood of atonement was sprinkled every year. These servant spirits themselves do not need that blood, but they desire to see more and more of the miracle of salvation for lost sinners. And if God is a God of order in the acquisition and the application of salvation, must not all things also be done with order in church worship services where He declares this salvation? That is why the angels are also present during the worship services, even if only two or three are gathered in His name.

Therefore, the angels grieve over all disorder. But they rejoice over one sinner who repents, more than over 99 righteous people who do not think

they need repentance. Their deepest desire is to hear how God's people are saved by the blood of Christ and the work of God's Spirit. They listen with eagerness as the secret of salvation is shown to them who fear Him, according to His covenant (see Psalm 25:14). Can you do that too?

If we were to realize this more, would our church services look different? How do we come to the preaching of God's Word? Do we listen with pleasure? Or is it true that while the angels are eager to see the mystery of salvation, one hardly sings along, another is dozing, and a third sits indifferently in church? Would not the holy angels be sorrowful and angry? Once they are sent out to separate the goats from the sheep, they know how to make that distinction, partly because of what they have seen during worship services! Therefore, let us hold fast to the biblical principle of power on the head. This is by no means time bound. Paul says: "*For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels*" (1 Corinthians 11:10).

Is it not fair to say that where this practice was abandoned, slowly but surely other things were also called into question? And what is left in the end? A hollowed-out church service without essential content, where angels no longer have any business, and where people end up staying away. Finally, let our head coverings during worship not be minimal or an expression of the latest fashion. May the Lord grant that we may all realize we come before Him in God's house, and that the angels also keep a close eye on this. Let that determine how we are clothed in God's house, how we sit in God's house, how we listen to God's Word, and how we deal with what we hear after worship services. May the Lord give His rich blessing by His Word. Then we will pay close attention to matters such as head coverings as well, to the glory of His holy name.

"God looks not at the elegance of your prayers, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded, or rewarded by God, but that wherein the heart is sincerely and wholly engaged. The true mother would not have the child divided. God loves a broken and a contrite heart, so He loathes a divided heart. God neither loves halting nor halving."

~ Rev. Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

Friendship with GOD

Rev. P. van Ruitenburg

You might not think it is possible, but we read in the Bible about friendship with God! We ask ourselves: How can there be friendship between God and man? Can a human be friends with a spider or with an ant? That seems foolish, because in order to have friendship, you must be on the same level! So then isn't the difference between God and man too great to be able to speak of friendship? Created humans are so much lower than God that friendship seems impossible; God is the Highest Majesty in the heavens, and the earth is His footstool.

Friendship with God? Yes, it is possible. The God of the Bible is exalted, but He allowed His only begotten Son to become man, in order to stand beside us. By the way, it was clear much earlier that humans are created in God's image. And do we not read that Jesus became like His brethren in all things, except for sin? Can't He have perfect compassion for our weaknesses? God stands beside His children, and God is not too high to be friends with them! He descends low, He allows Himself to be found, and He speaks heart to heart through His Word and the Holy Spirit.

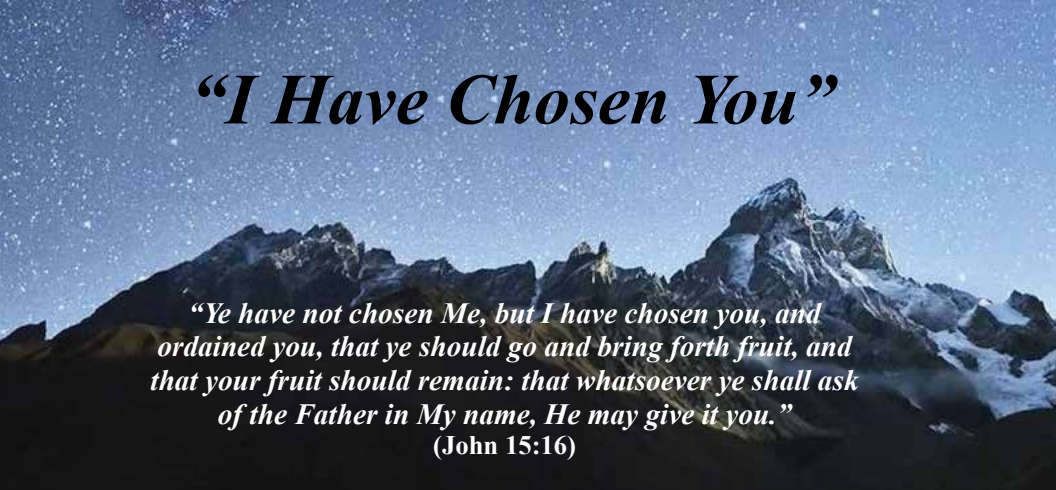
There is still time to experience friendship with God, to let His Spirit work in you (Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 38). And don't think that this friendship is one-sided. Jesus wants nothing more than to be a Friend of sinners, especially of those whose sins are forgiven. This friendship is as unbreakable and unrepentant as election. These soul friends can say anything to each other without fear of rejection. There is no friend like Jesus: so faithful, so gracious, so wise and honest. No wonder Jesus expressed His great desire to have the Lord's Supper with His friends. As holy and majestic as the Man on the white horse is, He offers tender friendship. Quiet time is necessary, among other things, to experience that friendship.

"And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" (Luke 24:17).

"For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26).

~ Translated from his book *Stil tot God*

“I Have Chosen You”



*“Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.”
(John 15:16)*

Rev. J. K. Popham (1847-1937)

The Intercessor, the Mediator, stands before God. And when a sinner comes on his bended knees, when his soul is prostrated at the throne of God's heavenly grace, and he says, “Lord, I am a prodigal, I am a poor unworthy creature; I have lost myself; I have ruined myself; and I am doing it always; I can only sin by my nature, but I come to Thee; wilt Thou have anything to do with such a person, such a sinner?”; then there is the Mediator. The Holy Ghost will never lead you to an absolute God; but He will lead you to God in Christ; and there you will see a Friend.

He was, when here, a Burden-bearer, a Sin-bearer. He bore the burden of sin, He bore the curse of the law, He bore the frowns of His Father, and He bore the weight of all His people's souls. He was a tried Stone in this. He bore all sorrow and grief; He had sorrow and grief for His most intimate acquaintances; He had the stripes that were due to us on His back.

And now He is in heaven, where He looks upon His people, and says, “Come unto Me, pray in My name, confess sin, pray in My name”; and when you pray in His name, He says, “I will do what ye shall ask. If ye shall ask anything - grace to subdue sin; grace to help you through; grace to keep you from falling foully; grace to preserve you in love and in holy desires; grace to keep you from deadness and from all those things which you dread - if you ask anything in My name, the Father will give it to you. And I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you” (see John 14:13; 16:26-27).

Enduring Riches

Rev. Thomas Watson (1620-1686)

There is a time coming shortly when even if we would have all the riches of India, they will do us no good. We must die and can carry nothing with us: *“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out”* (1 Timothy 6:7). Therefore, it follows, *“Having food and raiment let us be therewith content”* (1 Timothy 6:8).

Open a rich man’s grave and see what is there. You may find the miser’s bones, but not his riches. If we were to live here forever, or if we could carry our riches into another world, then, indeed, we might be discontented when we look upon our empty bags. But it is not so. We are only tenants-at-will, and we will take nothing with us when we leave. God may presently seal a warrant for our death, and when we die, we cannot carry our estate with us. Honour and riches descend not into the grave. Why then, are we troubled at our outward condition?

Oh, lay up a stock of grace and be rich in faith and good works, for these are the riches that will follow us. Regarding those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, the Bible says, *“They may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them”* (Revelation 14:13). No other coin but grace will be used as currency in heaven. Silver and gold will not go there. Therefore, labour to be *“rich toward God”* (Luke 12:21); and as for other things, be not solicitous, for we shall carry nothing with us.

“Human nature is like a drunkard trying to ride a horse. He gets on and falls off on the left side. He resolves not to make that mistake again, so he remounts, careful to avoid falling off on the left side, and promptly falls off on the right.”

~ Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Lovest Thou Me?

'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I His, or am I not?
If I love, why am I thus?
Why this dull and lifeless frame?
Hardly, sure, can they be worse,
Who have never heard His name!
Could my heart so hard remain,
Prayer a task and burden prove;
Every trifle give me pain,
If I knew a Saviour's love?
When I turn my eyes within,
All is dark, and vain, and wild;
Filled with unbelief and sin,
Can I deem myself a child?
If I pray, or hear, or read,
Sin is mixed with all I do;
You that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me: Is it thus with you?

Yet I mourn my stubborn will,
Find my sin a grief, and thrall;
Should I grieve for what I feel,
If I did not love at all?
Could I joy His saints to meet,
Choose the ways I once abhorred,
Find, at times, the promise sweet,
If I did not love the Lord?
Lord, decide the doubtful case!
Thou who art Thy people's sun;
Shine upon Thy work of grace,
If it be indeed begun.
Let me love Thee more and more,
If I love at all, I pray;
If I have not loved before,
Help me to begin today.

~ Rev. John Newton (1725-1807)

"Satan promises the best, but pays with the worst; he promises honour, and pays with disgrace; he promises pleasure, and pays with pain; he promises profit, and pays with loss; he promises life, and pays with death. But God pays as He promises; all His payments are made in pure gold." ~ Rev. Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

“Hath This Been in Your Days?”

*“Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land.
Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?”*

(Joel 1:2)

by Rev. H. de Leeuw

In our last meditation, we heard that the prophet Joel’s name proclaims “Jehovah is God” and that he received a message from God. He called the people to listen to this message, saying *“Hear this”* (Joel 1:2a).

Joel has received a message, and we can see in the second verse that he is directing his words to the older people of Israel, asking them to testify that the current judgments are severe. The judging hand is over Israel. In Joel 1:4, it is clear what this judgment is: *“That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.”* The crops were destroyed until nothing was left; various kinds of destructive little insects were sent to bring Israel into distress. In verse 6 you can read of their power. In verse 7 you can read the result of their destructiveness. Famine in Israel was a direct punishment. The Lord did not send this famine just to tease His people; He had a clear message. The message is in line with what we read in Leviticus 26, a chapter that reveals the judging hand of the Lord over Israel for disobedience. Now Joel asks the older people to testify whether the judgments have ever been so severe. *“Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?”* (Joel 1:2b).

The Lord has a special message! The message comes with a direct call to attention. In Joel 1:5, he says, *“Awake, ye drunkards,”* the Lord has destroyed the vineyards, which meant there was no new wine. Obviously, drunkenness and drinking were an issue in those days. The Lord intervened; God was speaking! These words have been written for our learning. In clear callings, the Lord is calling sinners to be awakened.

There is a judging hand today as well that is sending a message to us. With the many sudden deaths in our church communities over the past year(s), I have to say, *“Awake, careless one!”* Your time is coming; you do not own the breath in your nostrils. To die in your sin means to perish eternally. Embracing and following the world will end with perishing eternally with this world. Jehovah is God and He cries yet today, *“Awake”!*

A painting of a ship at sea during a storm. The ship is a three-masted vessel, possibly a schooner, with its sails partially set. It is navigating through dark, choppy waves. In the background, a coastline with hills and buildings is visible under a cloudy, overcast sky. The overall tone is dramatic and somber.

The Wise Pilot

Many years ago, at a small seaport in Massachusetts, a strong storm came up. As the northeast wind increased to a gale, those in the town began to fear for the safety of a ship that was on the water. The ship had been in and out of the bay since the beginning of the storm. The officers of the ship did not seem to know which way to go. They had refused the offer of a pilot, a man to navigate the ship.

On the morning of the Lord's Day, many old sailors stood on the highest point of land, looking anxiously at the ship. It seemed to be doomed. The ship was completely surrounded by land, except in the direction the wind was coming from, and there were extensive sandbanks between the ship and the shore. Unless it could make the harbour, it was sure to be destroyed.

Eventually, a group of men who knew the bay well set off in a small schooner. They were determined to bring the ship into port, if at all possible.

A tremendous sea was rolling in the bay. The schooner made quite a scene, first lifting up on the top of a dark wave, then plunging down into the trough of the sea, completely lost from view. Thus rising and sinking, it eventually reached the ship and offered a pilot. To their amazement, the offer was again refused.

Irritated by the refusal, the skipper turned his little schooner around and set off for the harbour. Suddenly, a gun was discharged from the labouring ship, and the signal for a pilot was run up the mast. The little schooner came up alongside the ship, and the pilot was soon on deck.

It quickly became clear why the ship was in such a quandary. Several days before, the officers had taken on board a pilot who was completely ignorant. The crew, aware of his incompetency, was almost in a state of mutiny. When the schooner had first hailed the ship, the captain was below,

and the first pilot had refused their offer. Upon hearing of the refusal for help, the captain had gone on deck and immediately reversed the pilot's answer by firing the signal gun. As a result, the new pilot came on board.

After making some inquiries about the working of the ship, the new pilot requested the captain and his trustiest man to take the wheel. He gave orders where the men were to be stationed and commanded the captain not to change the course of the ship except by his own order. He carried himself with the confidence of a man with knowledge and experience, and the sailors began to have hope.

All of the sails were now in use, and it was completely silent on board as the ship headed directly towards the foaming waves. The ship kept going until it was so close that it seemed as if it would be destroyed in the waves. "Shall I turn?" shouted the captain with intense excitement.

"Steady!" the pilot replied calmly. The sea was boiling like a cauldron just under the bow of the ship. In another moment, the same calm voice ordered, "About ship!" The ship turned from the waves and took a different direction.

"He knows what he is doing," said the captain to the man beside him.

By the way the water was moving, the sailors could see that the ship was now approaching two sunken rocks. It seemed to be sailing straight for them.

"Full and steady!" the pilot ordered with calm authority. He stood with his arms folded in the ship's bow, the water drenching him completely as it broke over the sides. The ship passed safely between the rocks.

The ship again changed direction, heading once more for the foaming waves. The waves came closer and closer, but still the pilot gave no order to turn, standing like a statue amid the storm. The ship laboured hard as the broken waves roared around. It seemed like it was about to collide, when the pilot finally said, "About ship!"

Again the ship changed direction, and soon it was in the harbour, casting anchor in safety. If one more hour had gone by, the wind would have been too strong, and the ship could not have been rescued. The ship's crew and more than one hundred passengers would have been lost.

When the ship finally cast anchor, the captain ran to the pilot and embraced him, with the sailors and passengers crowding around. Many were in tears, pressing forward to shake the pilot's hand and thank him for saving the ship.

There are a few lessons we can learn from this story.

First, the ship's crew had faith in their new pilot. Since he came to them from the harbour they wanted to enter, of course he knew the way.

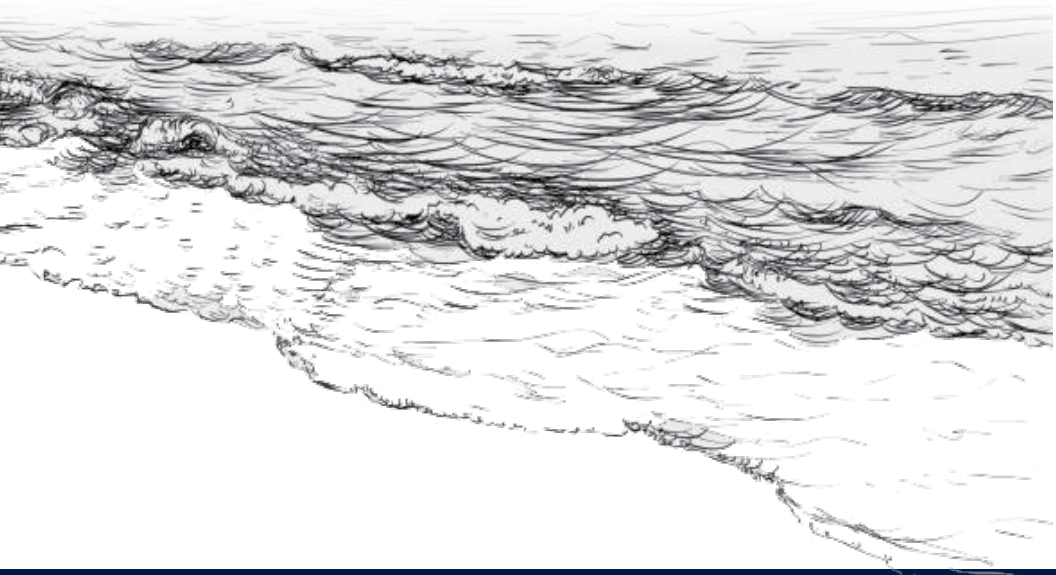
Second, their faith gave them confidence in the pilot. They gave up the ship to his direction. It was obedient confidence. They did not say, "He will save us," and then sit down and neglect his orders. They followed every direction he gave, and they did not disobey, even when it seemed as if they were heading into certain danger.

Third, it was an affectionate confidence. One person on board said, "Never did a human being look so lovely to me as that pilot when he first took his place and gave his orders. As he led us through one danger after another, he seemed more and more lovely; and by the time we were safely anchored, I felt that I could have died for him."

Such is faith in Christ. The sinner struggling in the storm of the law, guilty and despairing, is directed to Jesus, the heavenly Pilot, who came forth from heaven, which the sinner desires to enter. As the sinner approaches, he becomes convinced of Christ's ability and willingness to save. He casts his soul upon His merits, wisdom, and love; he gives up all other guides and rests entirely upon Jesus.

Reader, is Jesus your Pilot?

Adapted from The Little Gleaner





Jonah and the Fish

A simple widow lived in a house she rented from a rich gentleman. Every month, this man visited her to collect his rent. She lived all alone, and her only pleasure was perusing the Word of God and reading the sermons of those ministers who gave evidence in their writing that they were not strangers of the grace of God. The Word of God was her meat and drink, and she defended God's Word against those who dared to contradict it.

The landlord usually came in the morning hours of the day to collect the rent, but one day he was late and came at lunch time. "Come in," she said. "I am eating my lunch, but if you don't mind, sit in the room with me, and after lunch I will pay you." When she was finished eating, she took the Bible, as was her custom, opened it at the first chapter of Jonah, and began to read aloud.

After she had finished and said her prayer, the man said: "May I ask you a question?"

"Surely," she answered.

"You read about Jonah, that a great fish swallowed him. Do you really believe that? You know, perhaps," he went on, "that according to the findings of biologists, it is impossible that a fish could swallow a human being. Its throat simply is not big enough for that. So what you read cannot be true."

"Ah, poor man," she answered, "never doubt the truth of God's Word. If it had been written that Jonah had swallowed the big fish, I would believe it. Why? Because the Bible is the Word of God, and that Word cannot lie, because God is a God of truth. Besides, it says in the last book, the last chapter – I'll read it to you: *'If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book'* (Revelation 22:19)." The man stood up without contradicting her, asked for his money, and left. He was put to shame.

~ Taken from *Religious Stories For Young and Old* (Volume IV)

The Aged Sinner Saved

Free Presbyterian Publication

About the middle of the 17th century, the venerable Rev. John Flavel was settled at Dartmouth, where he preached with great acceptance and blessing. His manner was very affectionate and serious, and he excited powerful emotion in his hearers. On one occasion he preached from the text: *“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha”* (1 Corinthians 16:22) or cursed of God with a grievous curse. When he was about to pronounce the benediction, Rev. Flavel paused and said, “How shall I bless this whole assembly when every person in it who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ is Anathema Maranatha?” This solemn appeal to their consciences so affected a gentleman of rank who was present that he fell senseless on the floor. A lad of 15 years of age, a native of Dartmouth named Luke Short, was one of the congregation on that occasion.

Sometime afterward, Luke went to America and settled there, spending the remainder of his long life in the State of Massachusetts. When he was 100 years of age, he had bodily strength for farmwork and considerable mental activity also, but he was still careless about his immortal soul.

One day, as he sat resting in the fields, he reflected on his past life and called to mind the days of his youth, when he used to hear Rev. Flavel preach at Dartmouth. The latter’s affectionate, earnest, and solemn warnings came to mind — particularly the sermon on Anathema Maranatha. The blessing of God accompanied the old man’s retrospective meditations; he felt that he had never yet loved Christ and that the curse rested on him. Conviction was followed by repentance. The aged sinner found peace in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and trusting in the merit of His atoning death on Calvary’s Cross. He joined the Congregational Church at Middleboro, and to the end of his long life at the age of 116 years, he gave evidence of true piety. *“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth, it shall not return unto Me void but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”* (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Forgiveness and its Effects

Free Presbyterian Publication

At a fellowship meeting in Ross-shire, one of the men present gave this as a mark of saving grace: “If you have received forgiveness, you have never forgiven yourself.”

Rev. John Macdonald, the saintly minister of Redcastle, took up this point when closing the meeting. “I will put the remark of him who gave this mark in this form: ‘If you received forgiveness, it was steeped in Blood, and you have never forgiven yourself. And if you received forgiveness, steeped in Blood, and if you have never forgiven yourself, you value the forgiveness you have received much more than you do yourself who has received the forgiveness. Further, if you have received forgiveness steeped in Blood, and if you have never forgiven yourself, and if you value the forgiveness you have received much more than you do yourself who received the forgiveness, then you value the Lord Jesus Christ, the One for whose sake you received the forgiveness, more than you do even the forgiveness you received yourself.’”

“God’s children belong to a kingdom which is not of this world; they are strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and a part of their scriptural character is that they are “quiet in the land” (Psalm 35:20). How crucial, then, is it for me -- to be found watching with my lamp burning, diligently engaged in my proper calling! For the Lord has not called me to set governments right but to preach the gospel, to proclaim the glory of His name, and to endeavour to win souls! Happy is the servant, whom his Master finds doing so when He returns!”

~ Rev. John Newton (1725-1807)