

The Historical Society of the Bible Fellowship Church November, 2011

Who would have thought? A freakish snow storm made our 2011 Historical Society meeting a memorable one. Discussions of cancellation gave way to optimism. In the end, I think we all arrived and returned safely in spite of it all. I personally can say the drive home was slow and miserable to say the least but I returned safely.

For those who braved the threat of weather, the trip was well worth the effort. Richard Gehman's presentations gave us insight into the development of Christianity in Germany and how it played out in his family. We enjoyed hearing the story of the Rudy Gehman family and its ministry in the Bible Fellowship Church.

Normally, I would send each of you who are members a copy of the papers presented. Because the papers were a bit longer than usual and illustrated well with pictures, we are making them available on line. If you go to our website, www.BFCHistory.org, you will find links to both papers in their entirety. You can read them and see the pictures which were included. You will also see a link to a list of Dr. Gehman's books which you will find very worthwhile.

If you would like a hard copy of these papers, please write to me and I will mail them to you.

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I want to remind you that if you have not renewed your membership for 2011-12, you should do so now. I am including a registration form that will enable you sign up.

When you visit our website, notice that I have included a link to more of our 1960's thinking papers. Several papers on world outreach were prepared for discussion in 1967. You have another opportunity to hear what our leaders were thinking about at that time. The links you see are on the left side of the opening page.

I have included four sermons from Rudy H. Gehman. Since he was the subject of much of our society meeting, I thought you might enjoy reading some of his sermons. They are reproduced pretty much as they appear. Brother Gehman was very methodical in recording his sermons. Each is numbered and I have shown both the place and date of the preaching. The sermons were chosen somewhat at random though I chose each from a different decade.

I am including as well a couple of shorter articles on two of our preachers that are not well known. The story on J. E. Fidler began with an inquiry. I used the notes I prepared for that inquiry and did more digging to put together this account. M. D. Haws served as a preacher and came to his work as a Civil War veteran which was not always appreciated by our pacifist church. LeRoy Wilcox put the facts together. Jill Davidson and I added some additional research and editorial comments.

I welcome any of your stories, question, comments and thoughts. They make a great addition.

Don't forget to renew your membership.

Dick Taylor

Sermons by Rudy H. Gehman

Jersey City, New Jersey – July 28, 1928 [Saturday] [No. 116]

The Seven Clauses of the New Covenant. Heb. 8:10-12

I. I will put my law into their minds.

In Old Testament times the law was put into the ark of the covenant. A set of laws is no good if stored away in a des[?] or rule book. God means that the law will be known and remembered.

II. "and write them in their hearts."

The old was written on tables of stone the new is written on the heart. To be kept. It is not to be kept concealed as in the ark, but revealed thru the life.

III. "I will be to them a God."

Not many Gods. A God is one who will protect, bless guide in times of trouble and danger. Story of how a family was saved from atheism in Gospel Herald. How God dealt with Israel and the church.

IV. "They shall be to to me a people."



R H Gehman

A believing people. People who will obey, serve, love, and adore. Israel murmured, but then they shall not. They shall worship, love His presence, and love His appearing.

V. "all shall know me."

This shall be during the Millennium.

VI. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness."

Story by D. L. Moody of boy who earned the farm back which his father had squandered thru drink and took his mother to church. If we confess He will forgive.

VII. "I will remember their sins and iniquities no more."

Because the blood has been applied. A railroad agent looks for the ticket, not the race, training, etc. The blood is our ticket for heaven.

The story of the blood, like bitter medicine cures. A Jew fasted 27 hour yet was not saved, it takes the blood.



Gospel Heralds - H H Hartman, C W Reed, R H Gehman at Jersey City

Chester, Pennsylvania – March 30, 1934 [Friday] [No. 259]

The Power of the Resurrection – Acts 1:3

Into. Some people deny the actual death of our Lord, others deny His physical resurrection and say He arose in gas form. But the Bible record is clear let us believe and receive His blessings.

I. Many infallible proofs.

The Roman guards lied, said the body was stolen, but who had it? Why did the women come to embalm it, the disciples were scattered, the great stone, the seal. Neither enemies nor friend had the body. The angels messengers repeated their words. His own appearances from time to time are convincing proofs. The marks of thorns, nail prints and side. So real was the body they could handle it "flesh and bone." He ate broiled fish and honeycomb. His body could pass thru closed doors. He ascended to heaven defying the laws of gravitation.

II. He spoke of His abiding presence.

"Lo I am with you all ways (all the days) even unto the end of the age." Matt. 28:20 Not the years, but the days, every day and every sort of day, cloudy and sunny trouble and blessing, a presence that never should be withdrawn. Praise the Lord. How touching His walk to Emmaus. He would have gone further, the breaking of bread,

the Scriptures made their hearts burn. In his word we shall always find our Lord near us. The test of every experience and of every spirit is the Word of Jesus Christ.

III. He spoke tenderly and lovingly.

“Go and tell my disciples and Peter.” So still He singles out the timid, the discouraged and the fallen.

“Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou”? What mourner can doubt His sympathy? Or what heart refuse to accept Him as Savior.

Think thou of His words to Peter. Lovest thou me, feed my lambs. These the words to the backslider. So no backslider need fear to come to the Saviour.

Thomas required evidence of His resurrection and the Lord gave it him. So no doubting one need fear to bring his doubts to Jesus.

IV. He spoke about the kingdom.

This is seen in the text as well as in Acts 1:6-8. There is a kingdom coming and while it waits we are to witness with power which He gives thru the Holy Spirit. All that was said about a kingdom will be fulfilled and all that was said about our resurrection, death and His coming again will come to pass. A little girl passed thru a graveyard going home was asked are you not afraid. No she said it is the near way home. So is death. Wellington defeated was a message brought to England’s shore for the battle of Waterloo. Fog obscured the rest of the message which read Wellington defeat the enemy. Christ defeated the foe by death and resurrection.

Graterford, Pennsylvania, September 15, 1945 [Sunday] [No. 543]

Is He altogether lovely?

If not why not?

Songs of Sol. 5:16, 6:1

Intro. Context. Jesus is the beloved one and best friend. Is He that to you? If not, why not?

I. Because you are not saved? You live in sin, perhaps bound by chains of sin, some sinful habit. They are hard to get rid of. III. F; 16:6

The power of the Gospel can set you free. See cost of World War No. 2 and power of atomic bomb. F; 16:6

II. Because of lack of communion with Him in prayer. See F:16:6 Tract “The Supreme need of our Day.

“Why I haven’t seen you all day,” said a young man to his lover friend She had been busy. Too busy. God longs for fellowship with His creatures and says Give me

thine heart.” Prov. 23:26 Not give me thy gold or service, because servant He can hire but not lovers. “The gift without the giver is bare.” A girl said, Take it away do not send any more, no books, no flowers no vases, no pictures, I want you mother. Her mother left her to go on trips, she was an invalid. Read what Mrs. Ralph C. Norton said. Same tract.

God spares no pains to bring his child to Himself. He may permit loss, bereavement, sickness that we may feel our need of Him and draw close to His heart. He grants special privileges to those who draw near to Him. Read Amos 3:7, Ps. 25:14, John 15:15.

Enoch, “He walked with God.”

Abraham, “The friend of God.”

Daniel, “A man greatly beloved.”

John, “The disciple whom Jesus loved. John had not placed himself near to receive this communication; he received it because according to the habit of his life, He kept near Him.

Mary of Bethany, “chose the better part.”

Is He not altogether lovely to you, if not why not?

III. Because of questionable things.

Some things we know are wrong and some we know are right, but some are questionable.

One thing is certain. Christians are to “live unto himself, but unto Him Who died for him and rose again. 11Cor. 5:15. He bought us, we belong to Him & must not seek to please ourselves but Him. Rom. 15:1-3

(a) Is it of the word” those people, pursuits, places and pleasures from which God is left out. If so it is out. 1 John 2:15-17.

(b) Will it dull my spirituality? Make me less prayerful, less to read His word, less earnest in the work of the Lord, less joyous as a Christian. If so it is ?

(c) Can I ask God’s blessing upon it? Seek God’s presence in it, do it for His glory. If not, it stands condemned. Col. 3:23

(d) What good is there in it? What is the harm in it reveals a doubtful thing. It may be lawful but not expedient. We need wings not weights as Christians.

(e) Will it be a stumbling block to weak Christians? Rom. 14:19-21

(f) Would I like to be doing this thing or going to that place if Jesus could come?

Lancaster, Pennsylvania, October 29, 1960 [Sunday] [No. 727]

Barriers Eliminated

Eph. 2:11-18

Intro. “created (not made over or improved. A new man) in Christ unto good works”

There is more than merely passing grades & getting diplomas. There is more than making a living where you work, you are interested in the success of the company. So there is more than believing or accepting Christ. "Let your light so shine etc. The drives of your nature are different because Christ is in control. The Spirit now leads, pray thru us & shows forth His resurrection life. The love of Christ constrains and impels and the power of Christ rests upon the believer.

I. Barrier between Jew and Gentile

"Remember" v. 11 cp v.2 A worker in a city mission saved from a life of sin carried a gold-plated safety pin. Had found it rusty, bent in a gutter, it reminded him of how useless he had been, covered it with gold to show what Christ had done for him. It daily reminded him of his former life and daily he thanked God for the change wrought. The Ephesians were viewed with contempt by Jews. Gentiles despised the rite because it was only an outward sign. But promises had been made to Abraham and descendant. They expected the Messiah. Gentiles had no such hope. "Ye worship ye know not what" John 4:22, "It is not meet to take the children's bread etc. Mark 7:27.

In the temple a barrier separated the court of the Gentiles from the temple proper. Gentiles were strangers from the covenants of promise. They had legends & philosophies which did not satisfy doubt riddled belief in other Gods. Paul wrote to the Romans see 1:18-25. So we read, "Without Christ Aliens, Strangers, Having no hope, Without God and enmity (far off) v. 15, .6 Again it reminds us that this the condition of all men. A barrier between lost men and God. "But" v. 13 Cp "But" v. 4.

II. Barrier removed thru Christ

Before you can add different kinds of fractions you must find a common denominator, to add two thirds and three fourth change the fraction to twelfths. 12 is a common denominator. In much the same way God changes diverse human nature thru the cross. "He is our peace v. 14, He makes peace 2:15 preaches peace 2:17. Once a person has become a new creature in Christ, the wall between Jew and Gentile as well as between man and God are gone.

Gentiles did not become Jews and gathered into their fold nor did Jews become Gentiles. The church is a new group, a body in which Jew and Gentile came together on common ground.

A Frenchman and a German met on a ship for long voyage and could not understand each other's language but found that both could speak English & there were no barriers to exchange ideas. The English language was the common denominator. So Jew and Gentile come together in Christ and the veil in the temple was rent when Christ died and the barrier removed between God and man.

Jews were near but also needed the Gospel v. 17

Verse 18 notice the trinity.

Notice One new man 2:15, one access 2:18, one household 2:19 and one building 20-22.

Conclusion

In Christ (false Christs Matt. 24:24) we too get together as Christians We may have different opinions but all love the Christ and are devoted to Him. We live and work together, not as an armed truce waiting to fight but kept back by force, but in Spiriti and movtive aim and purpose are united. We don't built empires or kingdoms for ourselves, we built for Him, He is Lord and king we are subjects and fit in someplace in the building. God is building each one of our lives so all we need to do to get together is talk to the contractor. Who is Christ. (barrier between "colored and white")

Joshua Elmer Fidler

By Richard Taylor

J. E. Fidler, with his wife and daughter, began a journey to Turkey on April 18, 1900. They were following God's call to Hadjin where he would serve as superintendent of an orphanage for the Armenian Orphanage and Mission Board. One of his co-workers was Rose Lambert who like Fidler went to serve God. Three years later, the Fidlers made a return journey under a cloud of misunderstanding.

Joshua Elmer Fidler was born in North Heidelberg Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania on January 26, 1868. Joshua, or J. E., as he was known later, was born to John and Sarah (Gruber) Fidler. His father, John, had served in company A of the 167th Pennsylvania Infantry during the Civil War. His unit had joined in the pursuit of the Confederate Soldiers on July 15, 1863, after the Battle of Gettysburg. Following this assignment, the regiment was discharged in August, 1863, and John returned to his home in Berks County to make a living as a farm laborer. In 1864, John and Sarah became parents to the first of five sons. Joshua was their third son and middle child.

At age 12, in 1880, Joshua was working for Adam and Clara Stump who were also residents of North Heidelberg. By 1887, he was working as a molder in the city of Reading making his residence at 345 North 8th Street. In February, 1888, he was received as a probationer at the Annual Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ in Coopersburg, Pennsylvania.

At some point, between 1886 and February, 1888, we can draw the conclusion that Joshua responded to the call of God. Huffman's brief biography records that Fidler was converted at 18 years of age which would indicate that 1886 was the year of his



Joshua E Fidler ca. 1891

salvation. We do not have his own testimony so at the very least we know that within two years of his conversion he sensed God's call to ministry. We might also note how Reading, where he was living, seemed to be a launching place at this time for people who went into ministry. The Rote sisters, O. S. Hillegass, and Fidler are just some of those who were in Reading in the mid 1880s who later entered full time ministry. We might speculate that this phenomenon may be linked to the dynamic ministry of W. B. Musselman who, in the next decade of the 1890s, was involved in the formation of the Gospel Worker Society, which would, interestingly enough, eventually draw Fidler.

February, 1888, was significant to Joshua personally since during that month he was married to Sallie Musselman, daughter of Jonas and Lucy and sister of William. They applied for their marriage license on January 1, 1888 and were married in February. Joshua was but 20 years old. Sallie was 18. The joy of this wedding was soon followed by sorrow as Sallie died a short two months later on April 22. The young minister was a widower at age 20.

In July of 1888, Joshua wrote a letter of testimony about two months after the death of his wife. It is a pretty remarkable testimony for a man who had been a follower of Jesus for two years and who had two months earlier lost a new bride to death.

From Norristown, Pa.

Dear Editor: --

I feel to write a few lines for the Banner. Thanks be to God! for all His blessing bestowed upon us. Some of our brothers and sisters are discouraged, but I am encouraged to go on and look upwards. So many people look upward until a time of testing comes, then their walk and thoughts are all below. I am determined to go on and right through. There can be nothing more displeasing to God than when people say they trust everything to God, and then when a little something goes wrong or is the matter with them, a little headache or something else, then they forget God and run for some physician; they are ready to "take flesh for their arm." The Prophet Jeremiah says: "Cursed is the man that trust in man, and maketh flesh his arm." (Jer. 17, 5.)

Some say: "When I get sick I go to the physician, but give God the glory." I consider that a great mistake. If you give God the honour, why don't you trust Him in the first place? When the doctor cannot help, then you pray. Why not trust God in the first place? God never ruins a body like people will. If you trust in God; then say so; but if you want to take man for your help, then don't say that your whole trust is in God. I don't want to condemn you if you want to get a physician if you have not Faith. Get the doctor as quick as you can, because it is your only help, since you do not believe God.

Then again; some say they must do their duty. I would like to know which is our duty, whether to believe in God, or go for a physician. James says: If any afflicted etc., (James 5.15-15[sic]) I believe the word of God means just what it says. If you would like to read something about faith-healing, you can do so by looking up the following Passages Ps. 103:2-3; Ex. 15:26; Gen. 20:17; 2 Chron. 16:12. Etc.

I was healed by faith, and that instantly, I would like to tell you how but it would take to[o] much space. I also know of many cases that were healed by the prayer of faith.

There are some Christians that believe in faith-healing until someone dies, then they fail to trust God. They forget that it is appointed unto man once to die. They are like Peter was before he got the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Before our Savior died he had a great deal to say, but when he was dead, he was ready to go a fishing. So are some people, they believe in faith-healing till one dies, then they are ready to go to their doctoring trade again. Brethren in the ministry; let us lift up the blood stained BANNER high, and preach justification, sanctification and also faith-healing, for it all belongs to it. I would yet ask all the brethren and sisters to pray for their young brother.

J. E. Fidler.

Joshua was assigned to Norristown and Graterford in 1888. In 1889, Royersford was added to his charges. Under his leadership, the work in Royersford took shape. He is recorded as the first pastor there. Robert Smock wrote that Royersford “was founded as a mission appointment from the Skippack / Norristown Circuit with Joshua Fidler assigned to be founding pastor. To the best of my knowledge, Pastor Fidler was the leader of a series of protracted meetings in the Moyer home on Main Street in Royersford.” (<http://www.bfchistory.org/royfd.htm>)

During this year, on June 6, 1889, Joshua married Elizabeth Haldeman Rittenhouse, daughter of Joseph and Anna, who lived in Hatfield.

In July, 1889, J. E. wrote again to the Gospel Banner with some exegetical comments.

We Wrestle Not Against Flesh and Blood.

Dear Editor:-- I just feel to express a few of my thoughts this morning. I am happy in the Lord, and in expressing the same I thought the best place to do so would be through the Banner, so that more of God's beloved people could read it. I feel encouraged to go on and fight for Him with more power from above. That is what we need in the battle. I believe many people go out to fight the devil and have not the power of God and so accomplish nothing and if anything is done it is merely a heap of flesh, without the power of God. If we want to fight, we must be equipped like Paul says in Ephesians 6:11. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” But so many people misunderstand the word of God, especially the 6th of Ephesians. Their old unsanctified ministers stand



Fidler's brief case

behind God's blessed word and preach and say we have to wrestle with flesh and blood etc., but my Bible does not teach me that. According to that we would have to wrestle with flesh and blood a little yet, but we must crucify our members. I am glad for a religion in which we can live free and fight the devil with the word of God and with the power of the Holy Ghost. If we are entirely crucified to the world and to everything we can say with our beloved Bro. Paul: "I live, yet not I, it is Christ that liveth in me," and then we care little what the world may think of us, we look to the end, to receive a reward which is not of corruptible "silver or gold" but which is far more precious. If we have any amount of gold or silver it might be stolen, but the sweet peace I realize, neither the devil nor any one else is able to steal. It makes my life sweet and my life is hid with Christ in God. It belongs to God Who gave it.

Now let us take another look back to the 6th of Ephesians. I read there in verse 12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Now if that is what we have to fight against, I for my part would not be bothered with flesh and blood, we have enough so, but praise His holy name, we can overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

Eld. J. E. Fidler.

In 1890, Joshua was appointed to the Quakertown / Hatfield circuit. For the next 9 years, he accepted assignments throughout the denomination.

The Fidler family began to grow. Naomi was born in 1890. She died on April 14, 1911 at 21 years of age of typhoid. Anna's birth followed in on September 23, 1893. John was born in 1897 during their stay at Spring City. Laura Bertha, who went by her middle name Bertha, was born in Glen Gardner, New Jersey, on April 7, 1897, during their ministry with the Gospel Workers. Rosa Ruth was born during their time in Turkey on August 11, 1902. A son, Adoniram Elmer, was born in Canada, on October 6, 1906. He died of accidental drowning at age 17 on July 6, 1924. Another daughter, Elsie Isabell, was born on May 23, 1911, but only lived for three days to die on May 26. Another daughter was born to them on October 19, 1912, who was named Ethel Elizabeth. The Fidler's experienced the deaths of at least three of their children. Perhaps hardest was losing their oldest in April, 1911, and their youngest a mere 6 weeks later in May, 1911.

By 1899, Fidler's ministry had grown. He had served in several churches and had been on the cutting edge as a church planter. He was in 1899 working in the newly formed Gospel Workers Society. At the Annual Conference, he had been selected for several years in a row serve as the vice-presiding elder, which certainly reflected the confidence that the other men had in his leadership. He had been serving on the Foreign Mission Board, another position of responsibility and one of the growing ministries of the church at that time.

The minutes of the 1899 Annual shows that Joshua had received a new call to serve as superintendent of a ministry to orphans in Hadjin, Turkey. In 1898, Rose Lambert had gone to serve there and had been designated for support by the Pennsylvania Conference.

About 2 years later, the Fidlers followed Lambert's lead to join the ministry in Armenia. "Whereas, Bro. J. E. Fidler is under appointment for Armenia, therefore Resolved, That we accept his resignation from his conference offices" (1899 Extra Session, December 1, 1899). In 1900, the minutes report, "Elder J. E. Fidler and wife and daughter Bertha, under appointment of the Armenian Relief Committee, sailed New York, April 18, 1900, for Antwerp, then by rail to Marseilles, where, after a delay of 15 days, they sailed for Mersina, arriving May 31. A two-days' journey brought them to Sis, and two days more to Hadjin, June 4."

The Armenian Relief Committee began in 1896 in New York as a confederation of organizations committed to helping victims of violence in Armenia. The organization was centered at the Bible House in New York City. In addition to collecting and forwarding money, the organization encouraged the formation of local committees who would share in the work.

The records indicate that the Fidlers left for Turkey with their youngest child, Bertha. What they do not indicate is that their daughters were left in the care of H. S. Hallman, a prominent member of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ who were at the time living in Berlin, Waterloo County, Ontario, Canada. At the time, Hallman was serving as the editor and publisher of the Gospel Banner as well as giving leadership to the Ontario Conference Mission Board. There is no explanation of the direct tie between the Hallman family and the Fidler family or why the Fidlers had enough intimacy and confidence to leave their children with them in Canada. The 1901 Census of Canada shows that Naomi and Anna were living with Henry and Maria Hallman and their 8 children. At this point, who was caring for John is not known.

For two years, the official records are silent. Then, in January, 1903, the Foreign Mission Board met and reported that a problem of some sort had surfaced. There were "misunderstandings." At that meeting, they determined: "Resolved, That the Secretary write a letter to Rose Lambert stating that we don't know where the Fidler's are to blame, that we don't lay the blame for division on Sis. Lambert but on Sis. Gerber, and that we rather transfer the Fidler's to South America." What the misunderstanding was about or how it started is not part of the record. The letters began to fly.

Rose Lambert had many ties to the Pennsylvania Conference. Her father, George, had begun his ministry there before agreeing to move west to supply other conferences with pastors. Her mother was the daughter of William Gehman making a strong family connection. Roy Hertzog wrote, "In the summer of 1899, at Camp Meeting at Quakertown, two under appointment to Armenia (Sisters Marianne Gerber and Rose Lambert from Missionary Society "Light and Hope" from Berne, Indiana) and a native Armenian, spent several days in ministry at the Camp Meeting. Their ministry was much appreciated and as a result Rose Lambert was adopted "as our missionary in Armenia." She became the first missionary who was not sent out through the C&MA" (<http://www.bfchistory.org/misshert.htm>). Whatever her role in the dispute that followed might have been, Rose's prominent place would have made it very awkward to place blame in her or her actions. It ought to be noted that Rose never makes mention of the Fidlers and their ministry in her book on her time in Armenia.

By March, J. E. Fidler had written to share the minutes of the local board in charge of the orphanage and included the constitution and by-laws that were being followed. The Foreign Mission Board recorded, "A letter from Sis. Rose Lambert was

read concerning the difficulties on the field. She lays the blame on Sis. Fidler influencing Bro. Fidler, and says Sis. Gerber is innocent on the line she was accused. She gives a real definite explanation.” The March meeting concluded with the following: “Resolved, That if Bro. and Sis. Fidler are not willing to be transferred directly to South America without first coming home on a furlough that we the Foreign Mission Board do not make ourselves responsible to use them in any respect in the future, Resolved, that the Secretary send this resolution to Bro Fidler and also tell him if they want to continue in the work they better stay in Turkey, etc.”

At the May meeting, the Foreign Mission Board was fully engaged in the problem. At their meeting on May 20, 1903, their response was laid out.

Letters were read from J. E. Fidler, Rose Lambert, H. S. Hallman, and J. A. Sprunger, and a reply to H. S. Hallman by H. B. Musselman, where upon the following Resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, - That our Foreign Mission Board is very much pleased with the letter written by Eld. J. A. Sprunger to J. E. Fidler, dated March 27, 1903

Whereas, Our Foreign Mission Board has received a letter from Eld. H. S. Hallman concerning the return of the children of J. E. Fidler, in case they leave Turkey, and

Whereas, They have left Hadjin, Turkey, Apr. 21 and are en route to America, therefore

Resolved: That our Foreign Mission Board perfectly agrees with Bro. Hallman’s proposition to return them and advise Bro. H. S. Hallman to correspond with J. E. Fidler at 406 West Marshall St., Norristown, Montgomery Co., Pa.

Whereas, the Armenian Orphanage and Mission Board had decided that Bro. and Sis. Fidler take their children along and later thought it advisable to leave them here whereupon Bro. H. S. Hallman offered to take them during their stay in Turkey, there

Resolved, that we esteem it as an act of charity of Bro. Hallman, and will offer to pay the car fare for the return of the children in case the Armenian Board should not pay the same.

Resolved, That the Secretary caution the pastors in charge to be careful and not use Bro. Fidler until they receive further information and inform their members about him as they deem advisable for the best of the work...

Resolved, That the Board recommends no to use Bro. Fidler until there is a perfect understanding between the Board and Bro. Fidler and refers the case to the next Annual Conference.

Resolved, That we appreciate the letter of explanation written by Bro. H. B. Musselman to Bro. H. S. Hallman concerning Bro. Hallman’s reply to the Official letter sent to him from our Board.

The bottom line is that the Fidler’s were returning to America and more letters were being circulated. Fidler was put in ministry limbo and the problem, whatever it was, had not been resolved.

On June 17, Fidler met with the Board at the home of Allen Gehman in Macungie. L. B. Taylor joined Fidler at the meeting to support him as an advocate. The

meeting recommended: "Whereas, Bro Fidler returned against the advice and order of this Foreign Mission Board, after being told that we could not make ourselves responsible to use him either at home or abroad in case he take matters in his own hands against the wishes of the Board, therefore Resolved, That we recommend him to the next Annual Conference."

On July 21, the Board met again. The problem remained. They met again trying to bring blessed peace and harmony. They recorded the details of their interaction.

The Board was called by the Chairman especially to consider more fully Bro Fidler's case in the presence of L. B. Taylor his representative, and Eld. H. S. Hallman. Bro. Fidler was asked to withdraw whereupon C. H. Brunner was elected temporary chairman for this session, as Bro. Fidler claims Bro. H. B. Musselman dealt too harshly with him and, expressed himself so to Bro. H. S. Hallman.

The case was discussed between the Board, L. B. Taylor and H. S. Hallman. Afterwards it was reviewed in Bro. Fidler's presence with the following results

Whereas, Bro. J. E. Fidler has expressed himself to people outside of our denomination and also to Bro. H. S. Hallman, Editor of our Church Paper, that he was dissatisfied with the proceedings of the F. M. B. in relation to his explanation concerning his return, and further that he was treated with too great severity by the Board and especially the Chairman, H. B. Musselman, P. E., therefore he was called upon to meet the Board at this special meeting where it was Resolved, That we as a F. M. Board met, with J. E. Fidler, H. S. Hallman, and L. B. Taylor, present, and after a lengthy discussion unanimously agree that we believe the measures of the Board have been proper and fully exonerate the chairman, H. B. Musselman, and all others of the Board from all blame.

Bro. J. E. Fidler then confessed his wrong in censuring the Board and its chairman H. B. Musselman and was freely forgiven.

Paid the fare of Bro. Fidler's children to Pa. to Bro. Hallman \$13.00.

It would appear that the matter was closed. It would also appear that it was not resolved and relationships were not restored. It seems that the unwritten resolution was that J. E. Fidler was through in Pennsylvania. In September, the Board agreed to pay the fare to send the Fidlers and their household goods to Berlin, Canada. Whatever had been his crime, they did not remove him from ministry. But, he could not continue in Pennsylvania.

In 1904, J. E. Fidler was called to pastor the Gormley Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church in Ontario. Had H. S. Hallman, who was from the area encouraged him to consider moving to Canada? Noah Detwiler, the occasional evangelist who worked with the Fidler and the Gospel Workers at their meetings, had pastored the church and may have added some encouragement. From 1904 until 1907, when the Gormley Church experienced a doctrinal split, Fidler served there. He continued to serve in other churches in the Canadian Conference.

The Fidlers spent the rest of their lives in ministry to various churches in Ontario, Canada. Three of their children were born there. Elizabeth died on May 17, 1933. Joshua survived her by 3 years dying on November 29, 1936.

A sense of sorrow gathers around the story of Joshua Elmer Fidler. He was clearly a leader with ability and promise. His conference responsibilities, entrepreneurial drive to start churches, and his preaching marked him as a man who could and would have served well. He went to Turkey to serve the Lord. And then came the misunderstanding.

When it was over, he was done in Pennsylvania and he was “banished” to Canada. Was the breakdown in the relationship with his co-workers and his home church the result of petty disagreements or clashing personalities? Were substantial issues involved? Until more details surface, it appears to this writer that no significant charges were made against the Fidlers. That would make it another sad case of broken communication and misunderstandings which sometimes can destroy the work of the Lord and wound one of the Lord’s warriors.



**Tombstone - Dickson Hill Cemetery,
Ontario, Canada**

MARKS DRUMHELLER HAWS

1838 – 1915

LeRoy Wilcox with collaboration by Richard Taylor

Marks Haws was born on June 9, 1838 at Lobachsville, Pike Township, Berks County to Peter and Susan (Drumheller) Haas. He was the youngest son and the sixth child of seven. Peter was born on September 22, 1801 and died on September 12, 1884. His father, Frederick, was born around 1765 as was his mother, Catherine.

Marks is listed in the 1850 Census as living in New Hanover, Montgomery County, with Rev. Conrad Miller and his wife, Hannah. In the 1860 Census he was living with his maternal grandmother, Susan Drumheller, in Earl Township, Berks County, employed as a day laborer. His parents, Peter and Susan, were living in the same area, probably next door. The census taker spelled the surname as “Hahs”.

Marks served in the Civil War with the 32nd PA Regiment in Company A, which was raised at Reading. This was also known as the 3rd PA Reserves. His surname was listed as ‘Haws’. According to family oral history, his commanding officer wanted him to anglicize his name, thus the change. The men gathered in Philadelphia on May 30, 1861 and traveled by train to Easton.



There they trained at Camp Washington just west of Easton, in an area now part of Wilson Boro. After training was completed the 32nd was ordered to Washington, D.C. and later assigned to Gen. George Meade's brigade of PA Reserves. The 3rd Reserves saw early action at Dranesville and were heavily involved throughout the Peninsula Campaign in 1862. They also saw action at Fredericksburg. In April and May of 1864 Marks and his unit marched to southern VA on the Kanawha Campaign to destroy the salt works located there. The return march covered hundreds of miles and was made without rations, which placed great hardships on the men.

Marks' term of service ended on June 17, 1864 but Marks transferred to the 54th PA Infantry on July 4, 1864. The 54th was formed of men from several of the Pennsylvania Reserves which had been decimated after many engagements. In March of 1865 he was enlisted in the 3rd U.S. Veteran Volunteers, which was composed of veterans limited by health issues. On August 1, 1865 he was promoted to the rank of corporal. On March 16, 1866 he was mustered out at Madison, Wisconsin.

After the war he married Esther (Hettie) A. Parker of Oley Township in Berks County, on



Hettie Haws

November 7, 1868. The marriage was performed in Kutztown by Rev. A. L. Leupold. Esther, born on March 24, 1851, was the daughter of Aaron and Hettie (Gambler) Parker. Eight children were born to them but two, Joseph and William, died very young. In the 1880 Census Marks is listed as living in Reading at 918 Hamden Street and employed as a carpenter.

The minutes of the 1882 Conference list Marks as a delegate. On February 13 he was accepted on probation as a local preacher. In 1883 and 1884 he was sent to the Terre Hill church and was also assigned to collect money to help build a church in Reading. On February 3, 1885, at the morning session of Annual Conference, it was "Resolved that Marks D. Haws, Having passed his probation, be ordained." The Stationing Committee determined that he should remain at Terre Hill. In 1887 he was assigned to the circuit of Upper Milford (Zionsville), Hereford and



Marks D Haws

Skippack. In 1890 he was assigned to the circuit of Bethlehem, South Bethlehem (then a separate borough) and Plainfield (Township).

The 1890 Census of Northampton County records him as living at 604 Main Street in Bethlehem (Although the 1890 Census in Washington, D.C was destroyed by a fire, Northampton County had its own census). His wife is listed as Hettie and seven children are recorded from ages three to 21.

The Veteran's Census of 1890 lists Marks as living in Bethlehem but gives no indication of war related injury or sickness. He was listed three times during his time of service as being on sick leave: in August of 1862 at Alexandria, VA, October 1862 at Smoketown, MD and in July 1864, after the long march from Virginia, when he was listed with "piles and dyspepsia." The records seem to indicate that he applied for an invalid pension in September 1908. When he died in 1915 the records seem to indicate that he was receiving a monthly pension of \$35.

His standing with the denomination faltered in 1895. The minutes state, "Whereas charges were brought against Elder M.D. Haws concerning his financial standing. Therefore this committee having investigated the matter and not finding him a man according to I Timothy 3:4,5, therefore this committee requests the Stationing Committee not to give him a charge for the present." This is puzzling as the scripture cited talks about managing one's family, not finances, unless the family was overspending, forcing him into debt. Whatever the reason, Marks was forced to leave the ministry and was found in the 1900 Census as living in East Cocalico Township and employed as a painter. In the 1910 Census he is listed at the same address but now listed as having his own income, which seems to indicate he was now receiving his invalid pension. His wife was listed as being employed as a seamstress. Their widowed daughter, Annie, who had been wed to Martin Adams, was living there with her four children.

Marks died on May 14, 1915 at Reamstown and was buried at the Salem Union Cemetery. His wife, Esther, died in Reading on November 30, 1940 and is buried beside him.

Marks appears to have served faithfully and without problems in his churches yet unfortunately was one of those pastors who fell by the wayside.

I welcome your comments, questions, feedback, memories and anything else that might be appropriate for a publication of this sort.

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