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I. Literary.

SHOULD WE ASSERT IN OUR CREED THAT ALL INFANTS DYING IN INFANCY ARE ELECT?

BY PROF. THOMAS C. JOHNSON, D. D., LL. D.

First. The question is not whether the members and ordained rulers of our church *believe* that all infants dying in infancy are saved.

As a matter of fact, there is a general belief of this sort. Some of our people doubt it. Some of them do not believe that the infants of heathen and of ungodly parents are amongst the elect, and so amongst the saved. But that there is a general belief of this sort can hardly be doubted. If this belief, however, were universal, the bare existence of the belief could not give our church the warrant to put the belief into the creed. Something more than the universality of a belief is required to entitle that belief to expression in the church's creed. A few instances will show this. During the second and third centuries the doctrine of baptismal regeneration became an almost universal belief in the church. It crept into the creed. Who of you doubt that it was wrong to put it there? During these and the succeeding centuries the doctrines of the special priesthood and sacrifice, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, became almost universal beliefs and were made parts of the creed. Who here doubts that this was wrong? In 1861 the belief that all Presbyterians, North, South, East and West, ought to support the national government at Washington, became the belief of the majority of old school Presbyterians, and accordingly the General Assembly sitting in Philadelphia in May of that year, passed the

A SKETCH OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN SOME NORTHERN PRISONS DURING THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES.

BY REV. G. W. FINLEY, D. D.

Captured July 3, 1863, and held as prisoner in a number of Federal prisons until May 14, 1865, the writer had somewhat exceptional opportunities to observe the religious side of life in those prisons. But, writing as he does from memory and after so many years have passed, he cannot go into much detail, and can only hope to present a few salient points of interest.

Some time in July, 1863, a number of officers were transferred from Fort Delaware to Johnson's Island, in Sandusky bay, Lake Erie, and confined in large two-story framed buildings, called "blocks," of which there were a dozen or more, divided into several rooms.

It was our lot to be assigned to Block 10, in which, so far as known, the first movement for any religious service in that prison originated.

A few days after our arrival, a stout, active and genial man was seen busy canvassing the occupants of Block 10, to find out who were members of any church, and how many of them would join him in establishing a prayer-meeting.

His name, as we soon learned, was Ben Griffin, captain of Texas cavalry, and a member of the Methodist Church. In some respects he was one of the most remarkable men we ever met. So illiterate as to be hardly able to read and write, he developed wonderful organizing and executive powers and extraordinary influence over men. Always cheerful and cordial, full of zeal for the welfare of his comrades, ever exhibiting, in transparent piety, the power and reality of the gospel he professed, with strong common sense and marvellous tact, he soon became the recognized leader in every good word and work.

At first only Captains G. B. Strickler, A. M. McConnel and the writer, with possibly one or two more, agreed to aid him and to pray in public if called upon.

To the quiet and orderly worshippers in our home churches, that first gathering in the lower room of Block 10 would have seemed so beset with difficulties as to discourage, if not forbid, further efforts to hold prayer-meetings there. For when Captain Griffin, with his little band, met and announced the desire to hold a short religious service, the occupants of that room—about one hundred and twenty-five—were amusing themselves laughing, singing, talking, playing games, etc., etc., and showed so little interest as to keep this up during the service. Captain Griffin, at that time, made no appeal or effort to secure order, but quietly conducted the meeting and announced another for a few days later. He persisted in this course until, before long, not only did others join him, among whom I recall a Captain or Lieutenant Repass, who afterwards became a distinguished minister in the Lutheran Church, but a large proportion of the men in Block 10 would quietly attend the meetings. Captain Griffin soon succeeded in establishing similar meetings in other blocks, and organized Bible classes, mainly taught by himself, which were well attended. In the latter his knowledge of the Bible, good sense, tact and power to control men were conspicuous. For, although he had in them university and college-bred men, some of whom were inclined to be sceptical, he never permitted any of them, by trivial or cavilling questions, to divert him from the single aim to bring out the meaning of the portions of the Bible they were studying. Besides these prayer-meetings and Bible classes he was instrumental in getting many, if not most, of the rooms to agree to hold every night what we may call "family prayers," the far-reaching effect of which eternity alone can reveal.

Among the prisoners there were several ministers, Methodist and Baptist, of whom the more prominent were the Rev. — Grandin, chaplain of a Virginia regiment, and Colonel — Lewis, commanding a Missouri regiment. Others, while not so well equipped, were yet earnest and zealous. Captain Griffin soon arranged with them to hold regular preaching services in the different blocks on Sabbaths and frequently during the week.

At different times there was considerable interest awakened at these services, and some who had yielded to the strong temptations of army life, renewed their vows, while numbers of the impenitent professed conversion.

Sometimes the chaplains of the post, or visiting ministers (Northern) would come into the stockade and offer to preach to the prisoners. But, we regret to say, they so often seized the opportunity to berate us for our great sin (?) in rebelling (?) against "the best government the world ever saw," that, generally, we were obliged to decline to listen to them.

After remaining on Johnson's Island about nine months, the writer, with several hundred others, was sent to Point Lookout, at the mouth of the Potomac river, leaving behind him the dear friends, Griffin, Strickler, McConnell, and others, with whom he had been so long pleasantly and profitably associated. Some one of them can, and we hope will, give for this MAGAZINE an account of what occurred on the island until the end came in 1865

At Point Lookout there was afforded but little opportunity for any public worship. For a short time our party occupied some of the wards in the Hammond General Hospital, and some efforts were made to get permission to hold a prayer-meeting in them. This request, as we were informed, was referred to the chaplain of the post, and by him refused, on the ground that we could attend the services in *his* chapel. Some of us did so a few times, but were subjected by the preacher to such gross attacks upon our motives and conduct as Confederate soldiers, that in self-respect we had to cease to attend such services.

A few months afterwards we were sent to Fort Delaware. There we found Dr. I. W. R. Handy, pastor of Presbyterian Church of Portsmouth, Va., in the midst of a season of deep religious interest. While visiting, under Federal permission, relatives and friends in Delaware, he had been arrested and sent to the fort as a prisoner, without any definite or formal charge or trial. It may seem a strange providence that sent that good man away from his church, his family and friends, and subjected him to all the trials and sufferings of prison life for fifteen months.

But he and others lived to see the good hand of the Lord in it all. For, under God, the most fruitful of all his work as a minister was probably while at Fort Delaware. Of this remarkable work he was spared to give in his book, *United States Bonds*, a full and interesting account.

Beginning in the fort, and afterwards transferred to the

officers' barracks, by preaching, teaching, superintending prayer-meetings with such skill and courtesy as to harmonize the different denominations and secure their hearty co-operation, with the assistance of such earnest Christians and ministers as Captains Samford and Harris, and others, preachers and laymen, he was instrumental in leading many to confess Christ, who have since served him, some of them conspicuously in the pulpit and in other callings. Doubtless many an officer, a prisoner at Fort Delaware, has often thanked God, as we have done, for the inestimable blessing and privilege of association with Dr. Handy, and for the influence he, under God, exerted upon his subsequent career.

Some of his services are still vivid before our minds, notably one at which, in the open yard of the prison, he welcomed and baptized quite a number of professed converts, and observed with them and many others the Lord's Supper.

His method with inquirers, besides his public services, was to instruct them carefully, and then associating with himself representatives of other denominations to examine them as to their faith and knowledge, and, with the concurrence of his associates, receive them publicly as members of the church at large, and then to give a certificate of the facts, and also of the expressed choice of the church with which the convert would unite when he reached his home.

Several months of these delightful and blessed religious privileges were enjoyed, when, about August, 1864, six hundred of us were sent to Charleston harbor and confined in a stockade on Morris Island, under the fire of the Confederate guns.

There, exposed to much suffering and guarded principally by negroes, we had no opportunity for public religious services. After some weeks we were moved to Fort Pulaski, at the mouth of Savannah river, and confined in the casemates of that fort.

If our memory does not fail us, Captain Harris, the only minister among us, one of Dr. Handy's zealous co-laborers, endeavored to hold worship.

We were so crowded in those casemates that the health of guards and prisoners began to suffer.

So our party was divided, and about two hundred and fifty of us sent to Hilton Head Island, in Port Royal harbor, about midway between Savannah and Charleston. There we were kept

for a while in tents, and afterwards shut up in barracks with a guard, generally a negro, always, night and day, pacing among us, while others marched all around us on the outside.

Placed avowedly under retaliatory treatment, the horrors and sufferings of that long and dreary winter have never been fully told.

Soon after we entered those barracks, a number of the officers in our room waited on the writer with the request that he would conduct some religious service, as they did not wish to live like heathen. Captain Harris had been left at Fort Pulaski, and there was no minister with us. This deputation, speaking for their comrades, was composed of both professors and non-professors.

In our room there were about one hundred, of whom twenty-five or thirty were professed Christians. But only one of them, Capt. G. W. Lewis, Company I, Thirty-first Regiment, Georgia Volunteers, was willing to pray in public. With his aid we began and conducted regularly, on Sunday and Wednesday nights, prayer-meetings all through that dreadful time of starvation and cold.

Very soon the officers began to regard and treat the writer as their chaplain, and gave him most respectful attention and unflinching kindness. Above our room was a hospital for both Federal and Confederate soldiers, under a surgeon, a good old Pennsylvania Presbyterian, whose name we regret to have lost, who was always as kind to us as he was allowed to be.

Often he would call on the *quasi* chaplain to go with him to see and pray with the sick, and when any died, he would arrange for a few of us to follow their bodies and hold a brief service at their graves.

It was a time that indeed tried men's souls, but the Lord's promises were fulfilled to many of us.

Encouraged in our efforts by saint and sinner alike, among such men as Captain Lewis, I. McD. Carrington, W. P. Carter, Fowler, Knox, Allen, Col. Van H. Manning, and Lieutenants S. Horace Hawes, J. E. Cobb, E. Lee Bell, Z. W. Ewing, and others, we found that the Lord used us to comfort some of his people and to lead others to accept the Saviour.

This experience went far to aid the writer to decide his call to the ministry. For then it was that he determined, if God

spared him to see the end of the war, he would devote himself to that blessed work.

And now, after so many years in that ministry, he doubts whether he ever had any richer or sweeter experience in it than when, at Hilton Head, with the noble band around him, he hourly faced death from starvation, cold and the insolent negro sentinels, and pointed himself and his comrades to the all-sufficient grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Some time in February or March, 1865, those of us who were left alive were sent back to Fort Delaware, but so broken in health and almost blind was the writer, that he could take but little part in the services still kept up by the Y. M. C. A. of the prison, which Dr. Handy had helped to organize before he was released.

Amid the gathering gloom of the closing days of our beloved Confederacy, with much suffering of mind and body, we had to wait until the end came, and God sent us back to our wasted land and stricken people, to take up the work for which, in the experience above given, he had been preparing us.

Truly does he "bring the blind by a way that they knew not."

Fishersville, Va.