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SOME EXPERIENCES OF BISHOP YOUNG

BY EDGAR LEGARE PENNINGTON

The entwining network of railroads and improved highways has practically obliterated all recollection of the handicaps of travel in Florida a few decades ago. It is hard to realize that the journey made in a few hours today required days-even weeks-in the years which followed the War Between the States. So accustomed are we to thinking of our centres of population as bustling, wide-awake cities that we seldom picture them as isolated and crude communities or wretched little fishing-towns. Yet such conditions prevailed ; and the second Episcopal Bishop of Florida, the Right Reverend John Freeman Young, has given us a vivid portrayal of his experiences at a time when the state was largely a frontier.

Bishop Young was born at Pittston, Maine, October 30th, 1820. He was the successor of Francis Huger Rutledge, the first Bishop of Florida, who died November 6th, 1866. Bishop Rutledge guided the destinies of the struggling diocese through the War, and saw the small contingent which represented the Protestant Episcopal Church much impoverished and reduced. The report from St. Luke's Church, Marianna, to the Council of 1866, affords a glimpse into the field that awaited the new Bishop :

The people are much scattered, impoverished and more or less dejected, but generally full of zeal for the Church. Their house of worship, a beautiful piece of Gothic architecture, was burned to the

ground by the United States Army which captured Marianna in the fall of 1864. The ruins constantly remind them of their former glory, and have at last called them to new life, for they have taken preliminary steps to rebuild.

John Freeman Young was consecrated Bishop on the feast of St. James the Apostle, July 25th, 1867. His consecrators were the venerable John Henry Hopkins (1792-1868), the Presiding Bishop of the Church and the man who had ignored all differences between the northern and southern elements in the first General Convention after the War; John Payne (1815-1874), first missionary Bishop to Africa; Alexander Gregg (1819-1893), first Bishop of Texas; William Henry Odenheimer (1817-1879), third Bishop of New Jersey; Richard Hooker Wilmer (1816-1900), second Bishop of Alabama, and the only Bishop consecrated by the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Confederate States of America; and George David Cummins (1822-1876), who afterwards left the communion and became a founder of the Reformed Episcopal Church. (Living Church Annual, Morehouse, 1936, pp. 484-487).

When Bishop Young entered upon his duties, the entire state belonged to his jurisdiction. Today there are two Episcopal dioceses. Levy, Alachua, Putnam, and Flagler, and all the counties lying north of them, constitute the Diocese of Florida; while Citrus, Marion, Lake, and Volusia, and the counties south make up the Diocese of South Florida. But it was not until twenty-five years after Bishop Young's consecration that any division was made. Hence he was confronted throughout his episcopate with great distances as well as by primitive means of transportation.

On February 24th, 1868, for example, he left his home in Callahassee, in order to take the steamer for Key West on its arrival from New Orleans at St. Marks. He says: "Feb. 28, we reached the anchorage of Tampa at noon, some five miles from town, and though the wind was high and the sea heavy, and though my fellow passengers remonstrated, I resolved to accompany the mail ashore in the ship's boat." On February 29th, he left Tampa in the morning; "but did not reach Key West till Sunday evening as the bell was ringing for Church. Monday, March 2, I was compelled to return by the steamer which carried me, the trips of the steamers being on a semi-monthly."

At Key West, he learned that "the frequent visitations of this place by yellow fever render the rector's labors at times very excessive. I was glad to learn that the dissensions from which this parish suffered during and immediately after the war, and which arose from political differences, have been of late gradually subsiding." (*Journal of 1868 Convention*, p. 36).

Travel by land presented its difficulties. On April 10th of the same year, he left Quincy for Marianna; "and arrived at night, having ridden in twelve hours fifty miles, over an exceedingly rough road, without a support of any kind for my back. . . . It was my purpose to proceed from Marianna to Milton across country, but learning that the streams were barely passable and rapidly rising from recent rains, I had to abandon my purpose and reach the West by way of the Gulf." So he proceeded to Apalachicola, only to find that the boat was gone. On April 24th, he had to leave Apalachicola by way of Columbus, Georgia, and Montgomery and Mobile, Alabama, so as to reach Pensacola; he did not arrive until the 2nd of May. (*Ibid.*)

Eager to find whatever community might need the ministrations of the Church, Bishop Young proceeded on a visit of exploration in 1869, "to the upper part of the Ancilla River, some fifteen miles from Monticello." There he found "an intelligent and wealthy community of between thirty and forty families of whites, within a radius of six or eight miles. They never have any religious service whatever nearer than Monticello. On the estates of this small district there are residing and laboring more than four thousand persons of color, who scarcely have any meetings for religious or other purposes among themselves, and no schools at all, so far as I could learn. The whites and blacks alike would most gladly welcome a clergyman to officiate for both, and superintend schools for the colored children, to the support of which the parents, as some leading men assured me, would contribute according to their humble means."

Some of the hardships of sea-travel are depicted in the following description. (February 26th, 1869):

"I left Key West, with a strong norther blowing, causing a heavy sea. Though quite unseaworthy, our vessel was loaded to the water's edge with a cargo of sugar. In crossing the bar she struck twice, and in so doing, broke the fastenings which secured the engine. At midnight it was found that the ship was leaking badly, and though the pumps were immediately set to work, six or eight hours elapsed before she was cleared of water. With a crippled engine, a head wind blowing a gale, and a heavy sea, we did not make Tampa harbour till nine o'clock Sunday night. I reached Tallahassee on the third of March, glad to tread upon firm ground, and with a grate-

ful sense of God's mercy in having guarded us from the danger of the sea." (Journal of 1869 Convention).

In his address to the thirtieth Council of the Diocese (1873), the Bishop stated that he was unable to attend the Council of the preceding year. He had been detained in Key West a month, awaiting an opportunity to reach the mainland. "On the 27th of January, I succeeded in getting away, and on the 31st reached home." Two days after Christmas, he told his hearers, "I started from Quincy to ride fifty-four miles in an open buggy to Marianna, it being the boldest day of the year, and so cold as to freeze at midday. It was, of course, painfully uncomfortable, but by stopping several times to warm at a roadside house, I escaped all ill effects, except rheumatism."

Orlando is a flourishing place to-day; and it contains the cathedral of the Diocese of South Florida. When Bishop Young visited Orange County in 1875, however, the Episcopal Church was scarcely known in the whole section.

On Mid-Lent Sunday, I held services in Orlando. The Saturday before, I reached the residence of Francis Eppes, Esq., * * * and right glad was I to be able to visit him --cut I off as he and his family had been for years from the privileges of the Church--in what he went to as an almost wilderness home. Before leaving for Orlando, Sunday morning, I baptized an infant grandchild of Mr. Eppes; immediately after which we set out for Orlando, some five miles distant. We carried a quantity of Prayer-books, to distribute amongst the people, who were mostly unacquainted with

our services. After the service for the morning, I preached and celebrated the Holy Communion. We then proceeded to Lake Maitland, by previous appointment, to visit a prominent Church family who had just before located there. I found the Church people in Orange County exceedingly scattered; no settlement being large enough to form a nucleus or available standpoint for Church work. The devoted and earnest missionary-Rev. Lyman Phelps-who had just then entered upon his duties in great feebleness of body, comprehended fully, I was glad to find, the nature of his work, and from the constant and considerable accessions to the population of that county during the past year, I hope there may be formed, ere long, the germs, of several parishes within its borders. (Journal of 32nd and 33rd Councils, p. 36).

About two weeks later the Bishop left Ocala for Gainesville. Let him speak for himself:

From the heaviness of the roads and some unexpected detentions on the way, including the fording of the head of Paine's Prairie after dark, which was then a large lake, I found myself, at ten o'clock at night, some seven miles from Gainesville as I supposed; and as I knew not where I was to stop or could find shelter or feed for my horse, I determined to camp by the roadside for the night. Everything was comfortable and pleasant till about four o'clock in the morning, when a peal of thunder overhead, and portentous clouds, admon-

ished me to protect myself as best I could from a coming storm. It did my best, and, with all haste; but for two hours, in a buggy without a top, I was pelted by a most merciless rain, and so completely drenched, that not until the middle of the afternoon was it, possible for me, with the help of a good fire, to get into a proper condition to go out of doors. I had to be excused, of course, to the congregation in the morning, but at night I preached and confirmed two." (Ibid.).

Travelling from the western part of the state eastward was by indirect route. A northern detour was necessary. Bishop Young, the same year, returned from Pensacola to Marianna "by way of Montgomery and Eufaula, Alabama. On reaching the latter place I took a buggy, for which I had made arrangements previously, and in two days accomplished the distance of one hundred miles from Eufaula to Marianna, with the mercury standing at nearly or quite a hundred in the shade. I had to provide myself with this conveyance on account of the withdrawal, for the summer, of the steamer on the Chattahoochee, upon which I depended to take me from Eufaula to Neal's Landing, twenty-five miles from Marianna, at which point a carriage was to meet me" (Ibid., p. 38).

He arrived in Marianna, held his service, and confirmed twelve. Then what did he dot

"Immediately after dinner I started for Ocheese, twenty-five miles distant, in order to take at midnight the steamer going down from Bainbridge to Apalachicola. The driver of the conveyance proved not to

know the road, passed the branch leading to Ocheese Landing, at about nine o'clock, as we afterwards learned, and kept on down the river till after one o'clock in the morning, over an unfrequented road, frequently obstructed by large trees blown down across it, with the night so intensely dark that no progress would have been practicable without the light of torches, which we renewed as often as was necessary. After entering upon the morning hours, I ordered a halt to camp until daylight; and in looking for a suitable place by the light of my torch, I discovered a gate, which proved to be the entrance to a residence, the only one that we had found any indications of since before dark, and soon learned that we had left Ocheese several miles behind. Renewing our supply of material for torches, we turned back and reached Ocheese just before daylight. There I waited till nearly noon for the steamer, which was some twelve hours behind her time, in consequence of a dense fog which rendered it unsafe for her to run." (Ibid.)

The 3rd of December, the Bishop embarked at Cedar Keys; but did not reach Key West till the 10th, having been a week in making the passage. "At Punta Rasa, where we were obliged to seek shelter from a terrible gale and furious sea, and where we lay for two days and nights, I found the gentleman in charge of the telegraph cable to be a Churchman, and his wife a communicant."

This visit in Key West, in December, 1875, is of considerable significance in the history of Anglican missions, since it initiated a movement which has

grown to considerable dimensions-the work of the Episcopal Church among the Cubans. The Episcopal Diocese of Cuba reported in 1935 no fewer than 25 clergymen, 39 parishes and missions, 16 preaching stations, and 3411 communicants. Since 1904 Cuba has had its own Episcopal Bishop. (Living Church Annual, Morehouse, 1936, p. 198). To the second Bishop of Florida, however, belongs the thanks for giving this activity its forward movement.

It was on this trip that Bishop Young's interest was keenly aroused in the Cuban natives. A large number had immigrated to Florida and there were prospects of more. "Soon after my arrival in Key West," he said in his address to the Council, "the Mayor of the city, Mr. Cespedes, and several other representative men of the Cubans now residing there, waited upon me and informed me of the very general desire on the part of their people, now numbering over five thousand, for the establishment of the services of the Church there in the Spanish language." (Journal of Diocese of Florida, 1875-6, p. 41). Accordingly, the Bishop proposed a public meeting of the Cubans, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, on the evening of December 20th. Thus he describes the occasion:

After duly organizing I addressed them for about an hour

Mr. Cespedes translated my remarks period by period, and, after I had concluded, addressed the audience at some length and was followed by Mr. Baez, who, as well as Mr. Cespedes, spoke earnestly and eloquently. After these addresses a resolution, embodying an expression of the desire of which I had been previously informed,

was unanimously passed, and largely signed by those present, and subsequently many who could not be present sought the privilege of adding their names. Before leaving Key West, I ordered two hundred Prayer-books in Spanish to be sent at once to Dr. Steele (rector of St. Paul's, Key West) ; appointed Mr. Baez, who has been for some time a regular attendant and communicant, of St. Paul's, lay reader, instructing him to commence services as soon as the Prayer-books should be received." (Ibid.).

As Bishop Young knew no Spanish-speaking priest whose services he could obtain, he wrote to the Rev. Mr. dePalma, of New York, and urged him to spend a month in Key West. DePalma promised to spend the following February there.

Mr. Baez evidently found his duties congenial, for on the Fifth Sunday in Lent, 1877, he was ordained deacon at St. Paul's Church. On the following Wednesday, Bishop Young held a visitation of the Cuban missions; the services were conducted throughout in Spanish, and the canticles were sung well. (Journal of Diocese of Florida, 1877, p. 51). A notable beginning had been made among a people, "who, with very few exceptions, never at all attended upon the worship of God, or observed His Holy Day, except as the day for card-playing, cock-fighting, theatricals, and such-like follies and sins." (Ibid.).

It was at this time that Bishop Young began preparations for a colored mission, for the benefit of a thousand unchurched negro Cubans resident in Key West. Mr. Baez promised to take hold, provided the assurance of support for himself and family

were forthcoming; and \$1,000 was recommended as a minimum stipend "in that very expensive town." Besides financial considerations, there was considerable drain on the deacon's time and strength. "Five thousand Cubans, who mostly look to him for all ministerial services which they require, to say nothing of the day school and Sunday-school he has to direct, his preparations for the pulpit and the prosecution of his theological studies in preparing for the priesthood"-truly Mr. Baez was a busy man!

In 1878, Bishop Young reported to the Council that Mr. Baez's Cuban work had held its own beyond expectation. There was a desire for a Church independent of the other parishes of Key West, though realization of that hope seemed quite distant. A mission had been organized among the negro Cubans of the city, and a lay reader by the name of Perez officiated regularly for their benefit.

The Reverend Doctor J. L. Steele, rector of St. Paul's, Key West, died on the 13th of October, 1878. Bishop Young, in commenting on his life, remarked that "it was mainly owing to his interest in the Cubans, and his well directed efforts in their behalf, that the work for their benefit was inaugurated." (Journal of Diocese of Florida, 1879, p. 27). Mr. Baez, who owed his preparation largely to Doctor Steele, (was ordained a priest the second Sunday in Lent, 1879. The new Cuban mission, of which he had charge, was known as St. John's; and that year, seventy-two families were reported and a total of three hundred souls. Still the Cubans were without a church of their own; they used St. Paul's after the conclusion of the regular morning service.

During the session of the General Convention of 1883, a petition from Matanzas, signed by 258 per-

sons, came into Bishop Young's hands. He proved responsive to the call, and from that time his Cuban activities extended to the island itself. The Foreign Committee of the Board of Missions, disappointed at the results of Episcopal work in Mexico, felt unwilling to grant any further fund for missions among the Spanish Americans, until Bishop Young could make a personal survey of the situation. So, on February 22nd, 1884, the Bishop "left home for a visitation of our missions on the Island of Cuba."

On February 28th, he officiated at Matanzas. After evening prayer and a sermon by the Reverend Mr. Baez (whom he proposed to assign to the Cuban field), Bishop Young confirmed a class of forty-nine. Other services were held at Matanzas; twenty more were confirmed, and the Bishop's talks were translated "by a competent person." On March 3rd, he arrived at Havana, where he officiated the same evening. Mr. Baez preached. Fifty-five were confirmed in that city, "nearly all of whom were adults, and one-half men."

"Wednesday, March 5th, I called on the Governor-General of Cuba, meeting with a most polite and cordial reception." (Journal of Diocese of Florida, 1884, p. 47).

On the 28th of April, 1885, the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Florida recommended that Mr. Jose Victorine de la Cova, of Havana, be received as a candidate for Holy Orders. But Bishop Young's report to the Foreign Missionary Committee aroused little enthusiasm; and he commented on the poor response with chagrin:

On reporting the results of my observations in Cuba, I was greatly surprised and

disappointed at the refusal of the Committee to entertain the subject at all, on the ground of want of jurisdiction. "It was a new field of missionary work," it was said, "and only the Board of Managers have the power of adopting such." All very true; but why was this not thought of at the meeting some time before, when I was given to understand, and others present received the same impression, that if I reported favorably of the prospect, after visiting Cuba, they would make an appropriation for carrying on the work?

Although a whole month would elapse before the meeting of the board of Managers, I resolved to wait in New York for the meeting of that Board, and in the meantime issued a special edition of the account of my visit to Cuba, which I sent to every Bishop and Clergyman of the United States, and to many of the Laity, who, as was supposed, might be interested in the work, being determined that if this important work should fail it should not be from want of the diffusion of full information through the, Church respecting it." (Journal of Diocese of Florida, 1885, pp. 43-44).

As a result of his appeal, Bishop Young received pledges amounting to some six or seven hundred dollars before the meeting of the Board of Managers. With this assurance, the Board made a temporary appropriation for Cuba for the four months' period from May to September, at the rate of \$3000 a year. During his stay in New York, the Bishop summoned the Joint Committee on the Spanish version of the Prayer-book and appropriate alterations were made.

Bishop Young reached Havana, February 24th, 1885, on his second visitation to the Cuban missions. Within two weeks, he confirmed 325, a considerable advance over the preceding year. "This result was reached without any increase of laborers, it being the fruit of the healthy and steady growth of interest in our truly Catholic and Apostolic Church." (Ibid., p. 48) This work was interrupted by the Bishop's death, a few months later; and the Board of Missions, already faced by a huge deficit, decided that other fields needed help more than Cuba. Yet the seeds had been planted, and subsequently Episcopal missionaries found that a beginning had been made. In fact, Bishop Young founded twelve missions there.

The eastern coast of Florida, south of St. Augustine, was little known in Bishop Young's lifetime; and it is thus that he sums up the situation in a territory which has since become the scene of tremendous development:

Next to Tampa * * * the portion of the diocese most demanding attention is the eastern coast, south of St. Augustine. Since my visit to the Indian and Halifax Rivers population has been gradually though slowly coming in, and it is important to establish the Church wherever a sufficient nucleus can be found. The two difficulties that have hitherto rendered impracticable any effort in that region have been, first, the fact that the settlers have been generally isolated and distant from each other, extending along a line of river margin for some hundreds of miles, and, secondly, the want of any established system of communication and travel between the different set-

lements, except such as could be provided by private arrangement and at great cost. The latter difficulty is now being a good deal relieved, and considerable communities, with better facilities for travel, will doubtless soon be formed at several points. (Journal of 32nd and 33rd Councils of Diocese of Florida, p. 43).

As the years went by, the Bishop found it increasingly difficult to endure the uncertainties and privations of rural work. But although his later reports tell of enforced rest cures and periods of recuperation, although he preached more seldom and felt relieved when his clerical host preached in his stead, he fought a brave fight to the end. As one of the pioneers of the Episcopal Church in Florida, he will be gratefully remembered; and his successor, the late Edwin Gardner Weed, has thus summed up his efforts :---

I feel I know him well, for his works speak, though he sleepeth. As I go over the diocese, and behold his works, I feel he has written his own epitaph in the hearts of the people. Laborious and wise; gifted and accomplished; faithful and devoted.

Wherever I have been with the convenience of railroads and steamboats, he went on foot, or by horse. When I take into account the labours which his extensive travels involved, it seems strange that his physical forces were not exhausted years ago. At Cocoa he went into the woods axe in hand, and prepared a site for the church. From Key West he passed over to Cuba, and established twelve congregations on

that wretched island. His missionary labours were enormous. But his labours were not confined to mission work. Throughout the diocese I have learned how his care extended to the minutest details. His taste is to be seen everywhere. I venture to say there is not a diocese in the American Church, with as many temple of worship constructed with the same reference to the true principles of architecture. He was not only a wise and educated master-builder however; his foresight was markedly shown in the selection of places for the erection of church buildings. When you consider what a wilderness Florida was when he was consecrated, and when you consider, also, how the Church has kept ahead of immigration, and how the population has followed and clustered round the places which he selected, as centres of worship, we must pay him the homage due the wise statesman. Not satisfied with planting and establishing the Church in the most remote districts, he did not rest till he had given the people a love of true Church music, and had instructed them in the proper rendering of the ritual." (Journal of 44th Council, 1887, p. 69).

Bishop Young passed away the 15th of November, 1885. Less than two years afterwards, the cornerstone of St. Andrew's Church in Jacksonville was laid—a church which was designed as a memorial to him. On that occasion, Bishop Weed spoke of the obstacles which his predecessor had surmounted. "One must go to New York in order to reach Key West and to Georgia to arrive at Pensacola," he said; "but wherever I have gone, over this vast state, Bishop Young has preceded me."