

Chaplin Charles Dixon

Died Feb. 6, 1920, Age 89

Enlisted Sept. 18, 1861

8th Regt. Conn. Vol. Inf.

Appointed Chaplin June 10, 1863

16th Regt. Conn. Vol.

Captured at the siege of Plymouth, N.C. April 20, 1864

Before his death on February 6, 1920, Chaplin Charles Dixon, his eyesight gone and his health failing, dictated this letter to his granddaughter in Winsted, Conn. He says:

“My experience as a chaplain during the Civil War in 1861-63 when a member of the Sixteenth Regiment Conn. Volunteers”

“I was captured during the battle at Plymouth, North Carolina and taken to Andersonville, where we arrived on the following Saturday. The non-commissioned officers and privates were placed in the horrid prison house at that place, many of whom never came out alive.

The commissioned officers were placed in an unfinished Methodist church, where I held my first religious services in Andersonville, preaching in the morning.

In the afternoon we were taken to Macon, Ga., where we found eighteen hundred (1800) prisoners, and I the only chaplain.”

“I preached the following Sunday at Macon, where the Confederate authorities found considerable fault with me because I prayed for the President of the United States.

The next week, Chaplain White, of a Rhode Island Regt. Was brought to Macon as a prisoner, and was to preach the following Sunday and I was to make the opening prayer.

When the time for service arrived, the commander of the prison went upon the platform for the purpose of preventing prayers for the President of the United States. We asked him if that was to be considered as an order? He replied ‘Yes, praying for the President of the United States will not be allowed here.’

We informed him, he had no authority to issue such an order and told him we acknowledged a higher power than him, that we received our commission from Heaven, and we should obey God rather than man.

After singing a hymn, the commander left the platform and I proceeded to offer prayer. Having prayed many subjects that were upon my mind, which I felt compelled to pray for at that time, I prayed earnestly for the President of the Federal Government, and said:

‘O Lord, thou has commissioned us to pray for kings and governments, for all that are in authority, yea, for men everywhere. Bless thy servant, the President of the United States. Thou that guided faithful Abraham in the days of old, bless him with thy grace and thy protection. Bless all his counselors and advisors. Bless the army and the navy. Bless both houses of Congress. Be with our noble boys on the field of battle. Enable them to strike a blow that will be felt throughout all the Confederacy and restore peace and confidence through this whole land, and to thee be the glory and the power forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.’

“A colonel, from one of the western regiments met me after the service, and putting his arms around me said, ‘Chaplain, I want to embrace you, and give three cheers.’

The commander of the prison remarked, ‘They think God is on their side, but it won’t make much difference. It was a damn smart prayer anyhow!’

After that I was honored with the title of ‘The Little Chaplain who prayed for President Lincoln.’”

The original letter accompanies this copy.