

AMERICAN MISSION.

Extract from the Journal of W. Summersides, 1830.

Sunday, June 6. In the morning preached in New York, and administered the sacrament. A precious time. In the afternoon, spoke at Brooklyn, in Long Island; a new place, and a good congregation. Brooklyn is a beautiful town; and it lies just on the opposite side of the river from New York; and it is computed to contain sixteen thousand inhabitants. In the island are many towns and villages, some of which have no preaching. In the evening I spoke at New York; and it was the best time I ever had since I came to the city. Praise the Lord: I have my sweets as well as bitters.

Monday evening, January 7, spoke at the North River, to a good congregation. On the preceding Sunday night a young man had been taken by the watchman, and put in prison for disturbing the congregation. On this account his comrades were much enraged, and determined to make a riot. Therefore in order to prevent disturbance, we informed the alderman of the watch, and he sent six watchmen to guard the place. So we could worship God under our own vine and fig-tree, none daring to make us afraid. We have great cause to bless God for protection of religious liberty.

Thursday 10, went out to visit some of the members, and fell in with brother Thomas Edwards, a young man come from England to join the mission. He brought me a letter from brother Hugh Bourne; the contents of which greatly revived my mind and encouraged my soul. I cannot express the joy I felt on hearing of the work of God going on in Old England, the land of my nativity, which ever will be held dear to me, though I consider myself in America for Christ's sake.

In Old England I have,

A father who to me is dear,
A mother who lies very near;
Three brothers and a sister too,
And yet for Christ I bid them all adieu.

Sunday June 13, preached thrice, and had a hard day. Tuesday, preached in the new chapel. Wednesday, went over the water to Long Island, and about four miles into the country; being advised by a physician so to do on account of my child's health, it having been generally unwell ever since we came to America.

I have no doubt but many have been deceived in regard to America, through the flattering representations that have been given them. I have no doubt but a man might bring up a family here better than in England, on account of the cheapness of provisions, if he kept well and got work. But there are great risks to run. Therefore I think men act unwisely who leave a certainty for an uncertainty, as many have done, who have emigrated into America. And worst of all, I am sorry to say, that many who have emigrated into America, pay little or no attention to their souls after they have got here; for they are either in pursuit of work, or making use of some plan to better the work they have got. So that they are in perpetual agitation of mind; and they neither prosper themselves nor are rendered useful to others. And many, both Primitive Methodists, Old Connexion Methodists, and New Connexion Methodists, have gone back into the world, and lost their religion. And many that were local preachers, class leaders, and lively, useful, zealous members in England, are nothing here. We have picked some of them up; and I believe we shall gather up many more. I consider this as being one very important end of our mission. May the Lord make us successful in it.

Wednesday, July 21, spoke at Spring street. A small congregation but a good time. Thursday, 22, spoke in the Mission church.

Friday, 23, was called upon to bury a woman, who had died suddenly, eight days after being delivered of a child. We sung a hymn in the house, before the corpse was lifted; and, in compliance with the request of her husband, I performed the ceremony of the church of England; and also gave an exhortation at the grave. It was a solemn time. The people seemed very serious.

After the funeral we returned to the house, and I baptized the child. What is remarkable, within the last month, in the same house, I have married, buried, and baptized. How true is the language of the poet—

“How vain are all things here below!
How false, and yet how fair!
Each pleasure hath its poison too.
And every sweet a snare!”

Saturday, July 24, met with Br. Tanser and Sister Ruth Watkins, for the purpose of making arrangements for the Sunday, and to solicit God to bless our labours. We had a glorious out-pouring of the Spirit; and our souls were abundantly refreshed. Such a meeting we have held every Saturday afternoon lately; and have felt it to be very useful.

Sunday July 25, preached thrice in the city, and had a good day; but felt the heat to be still very oppressive.

Monday, 26, went with Brother Tanser to Newark, in New Jersey, and was kindly entertained by Bro. Hopkins and his wife, at their own house. Went the same day to Bloomfield, and heard an Indian preach; and I exhorted after he had done.

Tuesday, 27, spoke at Newark, and held a prayer meeting after, It was a soul-reviving time.

Thursday 29, met with Nathaniel Watkins, brother to Ruth Watkins, who is sent over as a missionary.

Sunday, Aug. 1, preached twice at Brooklyn; and in the afternoon formed a class; consisting of five members.

After being at New York eleven weeks, I returned to Philadelphia, and met with an affectionate reception from Brother Morris, and many others of my brethren, who were waiting the arrival of the packet.

WILLIAM SUMMERSIDES

References

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1831/14