

EXTRACT OF A PRIVATE LETTER.

From R. Watkins.

"I received your short: but welcome epistle, and hope the Lord will enable me to attend to the advice given therein.

"Both me and Brother Knowles have attended, in some measure, to the opening of the scriptures, and bringing the streaming power down upon the people whom we visit. And, glory be to God, I have seen the good effects of it. But it appears here to be altogether a strange thing. A lady informed me that she never heard so much about the mystery of faith, and the opening of the scriptures as of late. The people begin to expect it now whenever we visit them. And I believe, many get their friends together for the very purpose of hearing us talk. But sometimes clouds and darkness overspread my mind, so that it is difficult to rise into faith.

"I am glad to hear of your prosperity in Tunstall circuit.—Give my love to all, and tell them to pray for me.

"I believe we shall do well in America, We have found many who were members of our society in Old England. They received us with joy.

"House-rent and wearing apparel are much dearer here than in England, but eatables are somewhat cheaper. I understand New York to be one of the dearest places in the United States; and very much thronged with foreigners coming in every week. I thank God, it has not cost me sixpence for lodging since I landed. This is of some importance in this city. I lodged the greatest part of the time at an English gentleman's house, of the name of Wilcox; and both he and his wife have manifested great kindness to me. I hope God will reward them in this world, and in the world to come.

"Fires are very alarming in New York. I have been informed that there has been no less than three hundred fires, in New York, in one year. We have the alarm of fire almost every night in the week, and sometimes two of a night. It sometimes burns 8, 10, 12, or 15 houses in a night. Sometimes the houses take fire accidentally; but very often (it is thought) they are set on fire for the sake of plunder, and sometimes (it is said) by the the tenants themselves: having their goods insured to the full value, if they have not good sale; or if they want money, they will set fire to, and burn all up, and go to the insurance office for the money. The penalty (on conviction) for such a crime is death.

"Another thing worthy of remark, is, they have a method of taking the houses off the foundations, whole, and moving them to another part of the city. This was something new to me.

"I think I never was in a place where there was so much opposition to the Truth. The unitarians are very strong, and the universalists have three or four churches. These are holding what they call debating meetings up and down the city every week. There is a party too, who call themselves free-thinkers. Also a lady who came over from Europe, about two years ago, has bought a church, and established an infidel society. If you preach a gospel sermon out of doors, you are likely to be troubled by some of these.

Yours in Christ,

RUTH WATKINS

New York,
November, 1829.

AMERICAN MISSION.
Journal of Ruth Watkins, 1829.

Sunday, August 16.. Spoke in the Bowery; a powerful time; the people received the word gladly, the tears flowed on every side.

Monday, 17. Assisted brother Knowles in holding an out-of-door meeting, Tuesday, 18; Preached in the Bowery; a solemn time, two gave in their names to meet in class.

Thursday 20. Attended a Camp Meeting, held about forty miles from New York. We went in a steam boat, till within a mile of the place.—In sailing on the North River, we had a magnificent view of the towering hills on each side, all dressed with forest oaks. On the ascending ground near the river were little wooden cottages scattered here and there; but I saw no symptom of any place of worship.—The steam boat in which we went, was hired by the society, and travelled every day during the meeting. Every passenger, (preachers excepted) had to purchase a ticket, price six shillings American coin—three English.—We landed about a mile from the Camp ground. The heat was very oppressive,

I cannot express my feelings when I arrived, and saw such a concourse of people assembled for Divine worship, in a solitary grove. There was, I believe, no less than a hundred and fifty waggons, gigs, carriages, &c. About forty tents in which they took refreshment and slept. It brought to my mind the Israelites dwelling in the wilderness. I preached in the afternoon with great liberty; tears flowed, and loud shouts were heard in every part of the Camp. After I concluded, some of the people came and welcomed me to America, and gave me many invitations to go to different parts. I hope in process of time, the Lord will open my way to go and visit them.

The first night I was afraid to take up my lodging on the ground, for fear of taking cold. On Friday I remained nearly all night on the ground (in the worship) The work had gone on rapidly through the day. The labourers seemed to take no notice of any thing, but went straight forward with their work. Any person was at liberty, to preach, pray, exhort, or sing, as they were moved.

At 8 o'clock (at night) the lovefeast commenced in the open air, and closed about ten; when a prayer meeting commenced for mourners.—The meeting appeared awfully grand:—the intervening trees hung with lamps—the people in different companies — while the strong cries of the mourners, with the loud hosannas of those that were brought into liberty, resounded through the solitary grove. It was indeed like heaven.

At 12 o'clock, (midnight,) the trumpet sounded for preaching. The preacher addressed us from "At midnight there was a cry made, &c." It was a solemn time,

About 2, I lay down on a little straw, but could not take much rest, for some of the people were praying, shouting and singing all night.

At seven on the Saturday, we left the ground— The meeting continued a week. On our return home, I preached in the steam boat. A good time.

Sunday, August 23. Spoke three times. At the evening service, the place was very much crowded; and the entrance and all across the street were lined with people who could not get in. On entering, I was informed that some of the great doctors were come to hear. But, bless the Lord, he took away the fear of man. I spoke with great liberty, and the convincing Spirit went through the audience.

This evening a certain woman who was passing by, enquired what was to be done; and on being informed that a female Methodist was preaching, she poured contempt on it; and said, "I never was at a Methodist meeting in my life. My father is a Methodist; in consequence of which I quarrelled with him, and left him." A friend pressed her to go in and hear for herself. She complied, and came out apparently deeply convinced of sin—"Oh! (said she) if these be Methodists, I'll never speak against them again!—I'll now go home, and live peaceably with my father."

Tuesday, 25, I spent in visiting. In one house they called their friends and neighbours together, and in a short time the place was crowded. I spoke to them, and had a good time. One young woman promised to meet in class; and a genteel man invited me to preach in his house. Praise the Lord,

Thursday. 26. Led class at Broom street. Many under convictions; 4 joined society.

Sunday, August 30. Spoke in the Bowery to a large assembly. Many wept, and groaned in spirit. In the evening at Manhatan Island. A powerful time.

Tuesday, September 8. Held a meeting a little out of town. Here I found some who had renounced the wealth, luxury, and vain parade of this world, for the sake of Christ—to the astonishment, as well as contempt of many.—They have sold their goods, and given to the poor and cause of God. I believe I never met with souls more devoted to God. They appear to offer body, spirit, and soul, and possessions to God—and cry night and day for the prosperity of Zion.

_ Wednesday, 9. The presence of God was wonderfully manifested in the class meeting.

Monday 14. Preached in the Bowery. The Lord's presence came down like a cloud, and rested in an unusual manner on the meeting. Believers were built up in their most holy faith—many were under conviction.

Sunday, September 20, I spoke in the Bowery in the morning. A soul-refreshing time. Spoke there again in the evening. A crowded place. I was there myself 20 minutes before the time, and met people flocking from the place, saying, "We cannot get in, it is so crowded. It was supposed there were five or six hundred in the room; and I understood hundreds went away, The room floor sunk. near a foot by reason of the weight. A person was sent to keep the people back, but in vain; they saw the danger, but dispensed with it, saying, "We will go in, if we can press through the crowd. An alarm of fire was raised to take the people's attention; but Satan did not succeed; there was no confusion, except the groans and shouts of the people. It was a time not soon to be forgotten.

Monday 21. Preached at Manhatan Island, in great indisposition of body.

Tuesday, September 22. Preached in the African church, to about two thousand people. On seeing the church crowded, their black faces shining, their eyes fixed, and themselves all attention, it almost overpowered me. I told them, I had heard of them, and prayed for them, but now mine eyes. saw them. Loud shouts of joy resounded through the place. I was stopped several times in the course of the sernon, by the shouts of the people. Being very unwell in body, I retired as soon as I could; but, the meeting continued till eleven o'clock; and I was ihformed many were brought to God. To him be all the glory.

Thursday, October 1. Since I wrote last I have been brought very low, by a disease, called here, the influenza, In my affliction the Lord gave me this promise, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and. floods upon the dry ground." Glory be to God, I had power to lay hold on the promise; and it has already commenced in New York, and I believe it will flow all through North America—yes, we shall see Jacob rise.

Sunday, Oct. 4. Spoke in the Bowery. Two came forward to be prayed for, but did not get liberty.

Monday 5. Spoke at Manhatan Island. A hard time. Lord help. Tuesday 6. Attended a prayer meeting. A solemn time. Sunday 11. Spoke at the Bowery, and Manhatan Island. The people were very attentive.

Tuesday 13. Spoke in Bridge street. Satan's agents strove to confuse me, but could not gain their point. I believe good was done. Praise the Lamb.

Wednesday October 14. Led my class. The Spirit of God streamed down upon us. Many were in distress that had been wounded under the preaching. Nine gave in their names. Some of them praised God that ever we were sent across the Atlantic.

In my daily visits I find many that are enquiring for him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote and spoke; and many thirsting for that holiness, without which no man shall see God.

Sunday, October 18. Spoke in the Bowery, morning and afternoon. The presence of God rested upon the camp. Abundance of tears were shed. And in the class after preaching, one young man informed us, that he had lived in the entire neglect of a place of worship, for years; but that

curiosity led him to the Bowery, and that the Lord had apprised him of his danger; and he was determined to lead a new life. Since then he and his wife have been made happy in God.

Monday 19. Preached at Manhaton Island. Tuesday 20. At the African church.

Wednesday 21. Led my class. And while singing, one man fell on his knees in distress, and the Lord blessed him with peace. Others were seeking but did not find liberty.

Sunday, November 1. Spoke at Bowery and Manhaton Island. Hard times,

Tuesday 3. In Ridge street. One man cried for mercy, and was blest with liberty.

Wednesday 4. Led my class. Many cried for mercy, and the Lord blest two with the pearl of great price; but some went away weary and heavy laden. Three joined.

Friday 6. Held a meeting in Clinton street. Some mourned on account of their sins, One had her troubled heart brought to a sweet repose.

Sunday 8. Spoke in the Bowery. There was a mighty moving among the dry bones, Some thought the very place shook with the power of God. Four joined the society.

Sunday, November 15. Preached at Manhaton Island, in the afternoon and evening. The congregations were very large. In the evening service the Lord slew them on every hand. Loud cries for mercy resounded on every side. One woman lay in an agony for at least two hours; and when I left the meeting she was no better. There were young and old, male and female in distress. But I do not know how many found liberty. Glory, glory be to God, My soul shall praise him.

Wednesday. 12. Led the class. The grace of God streamed down upon us. Our souls partook of that river, the streams of which make glad the city of God. Two joined society.

Thursday 19. Commenced a new class. Three gave in their names. One woman was lightened of her load.

Friday 20: Held a meeting in Clinton Street. One soul had power to believe with the heart unto righteousness.

Sunday November 22. Preached in the Bowery morning and afternoon. The place was crowded, and many could not get in. The Lord refreshed us with the streams of the river that maketh glad the city of God.

There appears to be numbers standing in the ways seeking and asking for the good old way. O Lord make them the partakers of thy pardoning love. Amen.

RUTH WATKINS.

LETTER FROM RUTH WATKINS.

"To the General Committee of the Primitive Methodist Connexion.

"DEAR BRETHREN

"I am persuaded you are desirous to hear from us in North America, of Zion's prosperity. And to you who are so interested in the salvation of souls and the glory of God, I am sure it will be pleasing, animating, and encouraging.

"With feelings of deep humility, and gratitude to the God of all grace, I have the pleasure of announcing the great things God is doing for us, in this place. We entered New York with fear, trembling, and tears. But, thanks be to God, our fears have grown less; the Lord has graciously interposed for us: we have already sixty in society, and the Lord is adding daily to the number; he is wounding and healing in almost every meeting. Our congregations are very large and attentive;

and some who were wickered to a proverb, are now become living epistles, read and known of all. —I am sure if our dear friends in England, who so liberally come forward to the aid of the American Mission, could but see what God has done; and is doing for us, they would thank God, and take courage. We are encouraged to say,

“Lo, the promise of a shower
Drops already from above;
But the Lord will shortly pour
All the Spirit of his love.”

“What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who shall be against us? We are looking and believing for a glorious in-gathering of souls this winter. Halleluia, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

“Brethren, pray for us, that the word of God may have free course and be glorified When it was announced from the pulpit that you were mindful of us, on the other side of the water, and that prayer and supplication was made without ceasing, tears of gratitude started in their eyes.

“We have commenced building a Church; what in England would be called a Chapel. But here all places of worship are called Churches; even a room used for worship is called a church.

Yours in the Lord,

RUTH WArTKINS

*New York,
November, 1829*

Our Societies are requested still to pray very diligently for this Mission; and also our Circuits are requested to be as diligent as they can in raising support, as we have now proof that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Reference

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1830/122ff