

Letter from Rev. T. J. Whitcomb

BUFFALO, Monday, June 4, 1855

BR. AUSTIN:—This is my birth-day. If a merciful Providence should continue my existence in this pleasant world ten years longer, I shall be old enough to be in truth one of the Fathers in our Israel. As it is, I am happy to inform you that I am in good health and spirits, and that my confidence in the universal goodness of God is increasing day by day; and that notwithstanding dark clouds seem to hang over some parts of our Zion, yet, on the whole, we are progressing: or in other words, Light, and Truth, and Love are, and all things are tending toward bright and glorious issues at last.

When I left Newport, Herkimer co., N.Y. some three years since, where I resided six years, I intended to have posted up you and my friends, in regard to the movements of the great and blessed cause in which we are mutually engaged. But a multiplicity of cares and duties prevented.

During the five years and nine months that I officiated at Newport, I found myself and family surrounded with many substantial and truly excellent friends—friends that were devoted to the cause. We had a fine Sabbath-School, respectable congregations, and prompt attention to all the other means put in requisition to carry forward the cause of righteousness and truth.

I officiated, also, for four years of the time I resided at Newport, every alternate Sabbath at Gravesville, six miles north of Newport, where we had many excellent friends; and lectured in the mean time, in various places in the vicinity. In Gravesville, I found most devoted and faithful friends in William and John Graves, both of whom have gone home to their renewed duties in heaven. There were also many other excellent friends, who yet remain to hold up the hands and cheer the hearts of my successors.

In addition to these duties, I preached stately at Middleville some two years—where I am happy to state I found the most liberal and faithful of friends, in George Thomas, Peter Countryman, and others, the two named of which would not suffer me to remove to this region, until I had received from them the reward agreed upon for my services. May God bless them and keep them, and their amiable families, from all evil!

During the last year of my sojourn in that pleasant section of the Empire State, I officiated also at Little Falls, where there were *some* good friends, and *some*, I regret to say, who neglected to do their duty, not only to me, but have neglected others who labored faithfully in that place. May our Heavenly Father have mercy on them, and give them repentance unto good works.

I ought by no means to neglect to notice in this imperfect sketch, Mr. Gray, of Grayville, who is a devoted friend of our cause, and who not only rendered me substantial tokens of his sincerity, by seeing that I was compensated in full for my

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arduous labors in his neighborhood; but boxed up one of his superior bedsteads, and directed it to Buffalo for my family. I sincerely hope that no reader of this hasty sketch will accuse me of making invidious distinctions, in thus noticing some prominent friends of the great cause of God and humanity and truth! It is no more than their just due.

While I resided at Newport, I was called upon frequently to administer the consolations of the Gospel to mourners, and to officiate at the hymenial altar. I attended in that place and vicinity, ninety seven funerals, and married sixty-seven couple[s], in six years, in some of the best families in that pleasant section of our great and growing State.

Among the most devoted friends of the restitution at Newport, Gravesville and Middleville, was E. P. Voorhees, Dan Post, Richard Herndeen, Cady Lowe, Abraham Coffin, N. Boin, Eli Fortune, and last, but by no means least, that I have time to notice, was B. Benjamin, commonly called Father Benjamin—with the Boins and Coffins and Keiths, who were numerous and kindly disposed. While at Middleville, there are or old, faithful friends, D. Ford, Esq., Farmer, and Messrs. Ward, Mason and others.

At Gravesville were the Taylors and others, some of whom, with those named, have gone home to the Great Master of Assemblies in Heaven.—In closing this part of my imperfect history, I take pleasure in noticing that we had some most valued and ever to be remembered friends amongst those who do not consider themselves as included within the pale of our Zion.

Painful as it was, I severed my connection with those valued friends, and removed to Erie co., N.Y., and thus imposed upon myself more arduous duties, cares and trials, at Springville and vicinity, where, as yet, they do not fully appreciate their own wants, nor the wants of a Herald of Salvation, although there are many excellent friends in all that region of country.

Last autumn I removed my family to Buffalo, and took one of my daughters and her two children to board (Mrs. Hoyt, who is a widow), and sent myself to Binghamton, and officiated for a specified time; but was interrupted by the dangerous sickness of Mrs. Hoyt. In consequence of the peculiar state of matters with our Society at B., and the pressure of the times, I could not feel encouraged to continue my efforts with them, after the opening of the Spring season.

At Springville, Boston and Colden, however, I am pleased to notice that they have sustained the ministrations of the Gospel, by employing our esteemed Br. J B. Sax, the past year, and will, I trust and hope, continue to do so. But alas! there is a lukewarmness and remissness amongst a large number of our professed friends, in Western New York, that if not criminal towards God and themselves, is truly heart-sickening, and discouraging to all faithfull [sic] laborers in the vineyard of "our Great Master." Brethren, suffer a word from your friend and brother, and

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servant in the Gospel of Reconciliation; and let me say, that you are not only depriving yourselves of that "hidden manna," the bread of heaven, which is life to the soul, but also of the purest and only true source of substantial and lasting enjoyment, which mortals can enjoy while here on earth; and doing yourselves and families great injustice.

In conclusion, may all to whom this epistle is addressed, or by whom it may be read, or who are in any wise interested therein, remember that it proceeds from one who feels conscious that he has labored faithfully in the cause of "Reconciliation," for almost thirty years—many times without "purse or scrip," and still is able and willing cheerfully to do so, and sends you salutations of love and peace, and assures you, that although he does not as formerly, meet you face to face, yet often in spirit, enjoys sweet communion with you, when retired from the haunts of men, or in the "silent grove," and the "still small voice," that speaks to the soul, and is willing to wait all the "days of your appointed time," until our change comes, when and where we shall *all* meet with the vast brotherhood of our race, to part no more forever.

T. [Thomas] J. WHITCOMB

P.S.—I am officiating each Sabbath, in the vicinity of Buffalo, and shall do so until I obtain a good location with some Society where I can be useful, and that is willing to support one who is able and willing to labor for the cause of Truth and Love. In the mean time, I wish all papers, letters, and communications intended for me, addressed to the care of E. B. Vedder, Esq., Buffalo, N.Y.

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Saturday June 23, 1855

Transcribed on 18 Apr 2007 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY