

WILLIAM SALTER'S LETTERS TO  
MARY ANN MACKINTIRE  
1845-1846

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BY PHILIP D. JORDAN

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[*Continued*]

This is the second of a series of edited excerpts from the letters of Dr. William Salter, a member of the famous Andover Band in Iowa and for over sixty years pastor of the Congregational Church at Burlington, Iowa. These letters were written during the years 1845-46, while Dr. Salter was preaching at Maquoketa and Burlington, to Miss Mary Ann Mackintire, his fiancée, of Charlestown, Massachusetts.

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Maquoketa, Iowa. October 4, 1845.

[Dear Mary:]

. . . . This week has been of chilly blustering weather, and a little cold with the sickness and death around me have perhaps too much perturbed me. Having heard that Mr. Smith, a missionary of the A. H. M. S. at Bellevue who came into this country in June was sick, I went to see him. I found him just recovering from ague and bilious fever. He thinks that he cannot have his health in this country and so is about returning home (Litchfield, Maine). I endeavored to encourage him and urged him to go home with me, promising to nurse him the best I could, but his head is set in getting by his mother's fireside. He thought of leaving this week. . . . I got some cold in riding, was overtaken by two showers, and should have rested this week, but have been called on to visit the sick and attend funerals. I am much better today. So much sickness is indeed very distressing. There are very few families in which some are not or have not been sick. The whole country shares in the calamity. I saw this afternoon a gentleman from Rock River who says there is much more sickness there than here. I hope the people may learn righteousness, but at present the sickness is so extensive that little else can be thought of than the care of the sick. I cannot but hope that as cold weather is setting in health will return. I feel that I cannot be too thankful for that kind Providence that has watched over and sustained me while sickness and death visited so many. How loud the admonition to work while it is day for night cometh when no man can work. . . .

You will be amazed when I tell you that the last of my written sermons is number 24, and two years in the vicinity! . . . I had letters this

evening from New York from my father and brother, and Sister Mary which speak of Mr. Shackford of Burlington who heard of our matters in Charlestown. He was on his way West. He was from Portsmouth, N. H., and is probably acquainted with some of your friends. He spoke of my good fortune in the highest terms. Mr. S. was sent to collect funds in aid of the church in Burlington. He raised \$450.00 in drive for the church. An excellent man.

The sickness of the country is hindering every kind of labor. Our bricks are just burned, but it is now so late that it is found we shall not be able to start our building this fall. I have engaged to have me a study built for about \$135—14 feet by 22—nine feet high room. It is uncertain about my leaving here and in case I should I think I could sell it without loss. I have a very pleasant location. If we remain here, I shall build a brick house in front of it next spring, and this may serve as a kitchen. . . .

Some of my friends want me to go East. But I have never allowed myself to think in earnest of the matter. My father in his last expresses the wish that in a year or two I would think of settling in the East. He has always wanted me to feel young, telling me that I should not be in my prime till I was past thirty, and that I ought not to have much before that age. You will not indulge the thought, my dear, that I came West from any [desire] for the privileges of cultivated society. I deem it as sacred a trust to guard well the temples which the fathers founded as to lay in regions beyond the foundations of society. The work in both places demands the best men. I desire to be the child of Providence. . . .

Ever yours, Wm. Salter.

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[Dubuque. October 13, 1845.]

How are you this early Monday morning, October 13, 1845, . . . ? Now I have my pen in the study corner of Mr. Holbrook's<sup>32</sup> sitting room. . . . I came here from home on Saturday, a very raw and chilly day, got some cold which was a poor preparation for preaching yesterday. Preached to a congregation of seventy-five in the Baptist meeting house. The Congregational Church is getting along very well with their house, will have it finished in December. Mr. Holbrook has had to [plan] its erection and attended to almost everything about it. Ladies in Park Street Church, Boston, and in Hartford Church are sending out boxes of articles to be sold at a fair this winter for the benefit of the house. The Ladies here have also a society to sew for the same object, of which Mrs. Holbrook has the superintendence. She, by the way, I may say, is a native of Farrington County, but has lived several years in Jackson-ville, Illinois. Is a good housekeeper. On my arrival here, I heard that Brother Turner has had a bilious attack. I am only now waiting for clear weather to go out and see him. The church here is small for so large a place, there being about 2,000 population here, only 50 mem-

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<sup>32</sup> Rev. John C. Holbrook, *Vid.* ANNALS OF IOWA, Third Series, Vols. I, p. 527; VII, pp. 594, 602-604.

bers. The Methodist church has now the most wealth and largest members of any Protestant society. . . .

Last week we had at Andrew the annual meeting of our country Bible Society during the session of court. You would have laughed to have seen me lodged in a log cabin with some twenty persons, some few on beds and many on the floor. But the good landlady gave me the best bed in company with an old gentleman from Delaware, formerly an Indian agent in Illinois. He had been at one time a prisoner among the Indians and expecting to be shot, but was rescued by a friendly tribe. Our Bible Society is small and but a few take any interest in it.

One of the old settlers has just been in to see me. He was here 18 years ago when nothing but grass and bush were here, where as he says, "are now four story brick buildings and back in the country is a four story mill." He is an old miner. If, he says, this place be so changed in thirteen years, what will it be in a century? . . .

Ever yours, Wm. Salter.

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Maquoketa, Iowa. October 16,  
1845.

Good evening, Mary:

. . . My last left me on the eve of going to Cascade. I was in hopes it had cleared up, but was disappointed and rode twelve miles in the rain. I was in a buggy and tolerably well protected so that I suffered nothing serious. I stopped at a good woman's on the road, a member of brother Turner's church who begged so hard to tarry over night (I stopped to warm), but I could not. I found Brother Turner better though weak. . . .

Wm. Salter.

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Davenport, Iowa. October  
24, 1845.

My dear Mary:

How do you like this pleasant Indian summer? It is just two years ago since I landed in Iowa. May I not say hitherto hath the Lord helped me. I am reminded of a walk I took two years ago this evening up the bank of the Mississippi at Burlington in company with Brother Turner. We got into a retired place and leaning against a prostrate tree, united in prayer to God, giving up ourselves to the direction of his Providence, and asking, Lord, what wilt thou have us to do? Verily, I have been led in a way that I knew not, may I not indulge the hope that it has been of the Lord.

Here am I this morning in the home of Brother Prescott, an excellent colporteur of the American Tract Society, who is laboring in this region. His wife is an active intelligent woman and useful Christian. Brother Hill and wife are also here. Mrs. Hill is a daughter of Deacon Hyde of Bath, Maine, an enthusiastic, cheerful, contented, affectionate spirit, thinks the world of Iowa and of her field in Clayton County. She says

she has no desire to go back to New England except to see her father and mother. . . . We have had a tolerably interesting association, but owing to the absence of Brother Adams, who has not yet returned, the ministers here, things have been more at loose ends than would otherwise be the case. The only two subjects of interest that have been discussed were those of a union with Presbyterianism, and Education. Brother Robbins had not prepared his paper on fellowship with slaveholders on account of sickness in his family and congregation and he was excused until the next meeting.

Last Monday night Brother Turner and wife arrived at Maquoketa. They tarried the night which I enjoyed very much with them. Mrs. T. was very happy at being introduced to your daguerreotype. . . . Monday we rode here, 40 miles, most of the way over burnt prairie, rather a dismal prospect. No town on the Mississippi is more handsomely situated than Davenport. It has a population of 900, but they are divided into all the different sects. The Congregational church is small, although it has some excellent members. The church [has] but little character in the community. It would seem strange to you to be in a place where Methodists and Campbellites, Romanists, were the leading sects. Rev. J. A. Reed, lately appointed missionary agent of Iowa, has just taken up his residence here. He was a native of New Windsor and a New Haven student, Conn. He has been for a number of years in the West, was formerly at Warsaw, Illinois, and last at Fairfield, Iowa. In relation to Burlington he says that last summer Brother Hutchinson's health being very poor, he was advised by Brothers Asa Turner and Lane to give up that field, and in that case, those brethren proposed that I should be sent for, and Brother Turner corresponded with Brother Badger on the subject, who recommended it. But, Brother Hutchinson's health being now very much better, so that he says he feels as well as ever he has, he has renewed his labors with a prospect of continuing them. Brother Reed, however, says that he thinks that though Brother Hutchinson may remain this winter, then he will not stay much longer. In this state of things I think that we ought to disburse our minds of all apprehension or concern on that subject. I feel very happy that I have never opened my mouth on this subject, so that any of my brethren could suppose that I was asking great things for myself. What a delightful consciousness is that of having the feeling of Psalms 131:1.<sup>33</sup> . . . . When I see how comparatively little the brethren on the river towns are doing, I cannot but think that in usefulness I may not be behind them and indeed that my own field provides well in comparison with theirs. . . . I am going as far as Dewitt today to spend the night with Brother Emerson. He has been suffering dreadfully from the ague and is now thin as a shadow. Some of the brethren are thinking they will have a joke with Brother Alden about his house if he comes single handed. The Association appointed the first Wednesday of December

<sup>33</sup> Psalms 131:1. Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

a day of fasting and prayer in view of the superview of Divine Influence. We adjourned to meet at Tipton the first Monday in May.

. . . . Mr. Hill is building a house, 26 by 38, which will cost him 300 dollars. A part of it is finished and they are living in it. I have taken the plan. . . . All the members of the Association report that their labors have been greatly interrupted by sickness. It is now ten o'clock, a boat has arrived on which Mr. and Mrs. Hill are going up the river, and Brother Emerson is getting ready for riding home. . . . I preached here last week of First Corinthians, 14 chapter, in doctrine: that the New Testament does not give us a definite and full form of church policy and that God requires wisdom and discretion at our hands in managing our church affairs, all things must be done in order, but wisdom is needed and profitable to direct in what order. Sermons were also preached on the nature and advantages of revivals by Brother Robins. Reasons why we should not be ashamed of the Gospel by Mr. Hitchcock of Moline, Illinois—with character and conduct and testimony of witnesses of God on the text: "Ye are my witnesses" by Brother Hill.

Ever yours, Wm. Salter.

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Maquoketa, Iowa. October 31, 1845.

My dearest Mary:

. . . . This has been like most other days in the West, a mixed day with me. There is no dull uniformity here. I arose about morning from my bed on the floor, having resigned my room last night to a gentleman and his wife from Prairie du Chien. I read from 2nd. Hebrews of Paul on Mars Hill. . . . After breakfast . . . I got into my study and notwithstanding that the children have been very noisy and a few interruptions . . . I read an interesting lesson in my Greek Harmony of the Gospels and wrote about the third of a sermon, when 4 o'clock called me to an adjourned meeting of my church, at which the resignation of one of my elders was accepted, the other was excommunicated from the church, and it was voted that we hereafter be governed according to the usages of the Congregational Church. This is the second excommunication from the Church, both of the offending members being somewhat prominent citizens in the neighborhood and being the only ones in the church who subscribed ten dollars towards my support. I have had a severe trial with these men. They have been great stumbling blocks to the advancement of religion. Both united with the church by letter from other churches. I trust and believe the Lord will overrule it for good. After this meeting came on supper and chopping a little wood. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

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Maquoketa, November 8, 1845.

*My Mary:*

I have just got home from a curious week's work. . . . I told you in my last that Dr. Reed was to spend the last Sabbath with me. He

preached to a house full. We now meet in a private house and as I looked upon the various substitutes for seats which the people occupied, I could not but think of Paul and his companions at Melite, who escaped from the wreck "some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ships." Monday morning I rode to the eastern part of the country with Brother Reed to explain the destitution or rather to make him acquainted with them. We visited a number of scattered families who were sorry that Mr. Smith had left them no church [?] in the wilderness and who were anxious to hear one sent among them to break the bread of life. Tuesday p. m. we rode into Bellevue where I had previously sent in an appointment for Brother Reed to preach. Who do you think was the first man I met? Brother Alden. Even so. I may have mentioned that I promised to go sometime or other on a journey to Wisconsin with him, and he had taken that time for the business. We found an awful state of stupor as to the interests of religion in that town. There was but a dozen to meeting. Brother Alden's plans [made] an entire change in my arrangement for the work, so that the next morning we crossed the river, rode to Galena, where we had a very pleasant call in the family of Mr. Kent.

. . . . That p. m. we rode to Hard Scrubble, W. T., and spent the night with Mrs. Curtis. She has two sons in the ministry at Adrian and Ann Arbor, Michigan. . . . We learned here that we were only eight miles from New Diggings, so the next morning we rode thither and found Brother Lewis on the eve of going to attend a funeral, whither we accompanied him. There were almost 50 or 60 graves in the burying ground. After this service, we had a very delightful talk. . . . [In the] p. m. we rode to Platteville within a few miles of the Platte Mounds and described in the *Home Missionary* for October. Last year I rode over them several times, or rather around them. They present a singular and wonderful appearance. We spent the night at D. J. W. Clark's who, as we wanted to see Magoun, hunted him up and brought in also Miss Johnson and two Miss Buels. We had a piano and good music which made the evening pass off very pleasantly. . . . I came home on the stage (a very black chilly day). . . .

Your own. Wm. Salter.

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Br. Salter's Study. November  
12, 1845.

[The following description of William Salter's study in Maquoketa is extracted from a note written to Miss Mackintire by Rev. E. Alden, Jr., a friend of Salter's and Miss Mackintire's. Rev Salter then resumes the letter.]

. . . . I must ask you to imagine a bedstead, light stand, trunks, book-case, stove, and a couple of chairs, crowded together into an unfinished apartment a trifle over 6 by 10 feet. You will readily suppose that Br. Salter and I are placed in close proximity. . . .

Yours sincerely,

E. Alden, Jr.

[Here Rev. Salter takes up the writing.]

Friday evening. November 14.

. . . . I don't know as I have told you that I have an air tight stove. It is a common new sheet iron one and heats and cools quickly, but fire-wood is cheap here. . . . The health of the country is much improved, although there are many cases of ague yet, generally due to exposure and carelessness. . . . I am ecclesiastically connected with the Congregational Association of Northern Iowa, as you will see by the *Congregational Almanac*, so that it is perfectly proper to call me a Congregationalist, and I very much prefer that connection to belonging to either the Old or the New School Presbytery in Iowa. . . . In Iowa the Old School body have been very unfortunate in having as their leaders two very bigoted and sectarian ministers who are very jealous of the spread of Congregationalism, and who even misrepresent our character, and it is to be feared take pains so to do. . . .

You know fully about my pecuniary circumstances. I have nothing but a salary of 200 dollars a year. I have a library which cost me \$150, and a *horse*. And when my study is built and paid for, I shall have that and perhaps \$100 on hand. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

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Maquoketa. November 28, 1845.

[Dear Mary:]

. . . . Oh, if we had such settlers as New England first had, we might hope that this wilderness world would bud and blossom. But alas, the wicked and the worldly and the backsliders are the main settlers of this country, and what can be expected unless God remarkably interposes but much desolation? Not only must ministers and teachers but pious merchants, farmers and mechanics must come here with the main intent of doing good. And those that take care of the Lord's cause, He will take care of. I preached a Thanksgiving sermon this week to a very small congregation, a written sermon however. Most of the people were in their fields husking their corn. I have a written sermon for tomorrow morning, though it was written six months ago. I have been very much disappointed in not having my study finished. This is indeed the *West*. Only think it is not yet covered. I think I have learned this much, however, to wit—to go to work about building my house the first thing in the spring and to see that it is in a fair way before June. In consequence of a man getting intoxicated while burning a lime kiln, his lime proved a failure and our schoolhouse is in status quo, the bricks being on the ground instead of in the wall. When I have many things to vex my patience, I bear up the best way I can. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

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Maquoketa, Iowa. December 3, 1845.

My dear Mary:

This day has been observed in my church here as one of humiliation

and fasting by recommendation of our Association in view of the low state of religion. I preached a written sermon . . . from Luke 5:35,<sup>34</sup> adapted to this longitude and as you may very well suppose in no wise suited to Eastern Churches. . . . Monday and Tuesday afternoon I devoted to visiting. Shall I introduce the people to you? Here is Mrs. Macloy in a small disagreeable house by the side of a millpond just recovering from an attack of inflammation upon the lungs. She is a good woman, has experienced a reverse of fortune and passed through the furnace. She was of the Bellows family at Walpole, N. H. Mr. M. failed several years ago, "he took to drink," and though he has made several temporary reformatations, and now only once in a while uses the poison, his character is much injured. He was excommunicated from the church last spring. He does business in a slovenly way, so that his family suffer. Mrs. M. returned this fall from a visit to New Hampshire. She seemed much pleased with my visit and urged me to call as often as I could. She has three daughters (young girls) who are in desperate need of our Academy. I next called on Mrs. Marshall, a widow in a very uncomfortable cabin. She has four little children. Is of an extremely covetous disposition, so that though she has means enough to make herself comfortable, yet it seems that she would rather want than part with her money. Going  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile down a "hollow," I came to another poverty-stricken cabin and on knocking and pulling the string I entered the habitation of a Virginian who for forty years has been moving west with the West. I found the old lady in one corner, suffering from ague and from a severe cough. She has seemed to be declining for some time, though she has lived all her days in ignorance, she professes a hope in the mercy of God, that she may find beyond the grave a more comfortable world than this. On another bed were two young men, one afflicted with the ague, and the other with an inflammation of the kidney. I gave what instruction I could, and rode on a mile to visit another family where sickness and death had been this fall. At one time the whole family had the ague. Mr. Haines had been a Christian in the East (New Hampshire) but has backslided in this country. He hopes however that his affliction has been sanctified to him, and now expresses self-determination to serve the Lord. Another family in which I visited is a young woman who for many years has been confined most of the time to her bed from . . . a state of ague. . . . You may ask if I like pastoral visiting. I may reply that I like it as a matter of duty, and as enabling me to keep a conscience void of offense toward God and men. And after performing it, I come back to my books with a keen relief and I trust with some thankfulness in my heart that God has ordered my birth and education in so much more favorable circumstances than are those of the mass of men. I am lead to feel a deeper interest in the improvement of the social conditions of the poor. I am sure this is one of the great problems. . . .

<sup>34</sup> Luke 5:35. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Friday evening.

I have just returned from fulfilling an appointment at an embryo village called because of contention there. Had a small room of 30 people who gave good attention. I had "freedom" in extemporaneous discourse, presenting some of the reasons for our being Christians (1 Peter 3:18).<sup>35</sup> I was urged to come again, but thought it not best to leave an appointment. The place is two miles east on the river Maquoketa, and sometimes called Bridgeport, from there being a bridge there. In the neighborhood is a Mr. Chandler who was one of the Canada rebels who was sentenced to be hung. At the intercession of a daughter his sentence was commuted to banishment to Van Diemen's land whence he made his escape some three years ago. I came down by moonlight. I ride horseback. I hope to buy a buggy next fall. The roads have been beautiful this fall, and in riding I have often thought how much I should enjoy your company. . . . They are putting shingles upon my study today. It is very cold work. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

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Maquoketa. December 19, 1845.

[Dear Mary:]

. . . . It has been exceedingly cold for four weeks and having made my calculations for being in my study a month ago, I am poorly accommodated as I now am. I am expecting, however, to have my study plastered the first mild day, intending to have only one . . . coat put on this winter, and I shall soon be better off. I shall ride tomorrow to Mr. Young's (10 miles) and after preaching on Sabbath at Andrew and Dr. Cotton's and visiting a little, expect to spend Christmas with Brother Holbrook (at which time his church hold a fair) when I hope to meet Brother Turner and wife. I shall be home again last of next week. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

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Sanctum Sanctorum  
Maquoketa, Iowa. December  
27, 1845.

[Dear Mary:]

. . . . I must tell you a short history of a regular Western week's life. Last Saturday afternoon and evening I rode to Br. Young's, I had some business with him as one of the Committee of the Andrew Church to circulate a subscription for my support. He was from Union Co. Penn., where the antislavery fever there runs high. . . . So we talked till midnight on the great subject. [On] Sabbath I had but a small congregation at Andrew and Deacon Cotton's. The whole community is filled up with families who are Universalists or ignorant persons who

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<sup>35</sup> 1 Peter 3:18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

have never been brought up to respect the Sabbath, or attend public worship. . . . Monday and Tuesday I visited a number of families six or eight miles west of Deacon Cotton's. Found one old settler whose history is quite a romantic one. Dixon by name, a native of Virginia, lived in St. Louis or thereabouts during the last war. He has traveled five or six times from Illinois to the Silkink [?]<sup>36</sup> settlement on the Upper Red River which empties into Hudson Bay, driving cattle a great portion of the way. He has traveled on the high ridge which divides the streams flowing into the Mississippi from those flowing into the Missouri. He is an intelligent, gentlemanly man. Tuesday evening I preached to a cabin full in which I spent the night, where [I] found a Mr. Bradley of family from Boston this last summer. . . . Wednesday I rode into Dubuque, walking occasionally however (to tell the truth) of getting my feet warm. I purchased some bedding, and had a pleasant evening at the Ladies' Fair. What, however, I enjoyed most of all was a good talk with Jane. Br. Turner stopped to preach on the road and could not come in until Thursday. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

Maquoketa, Iowa. January  
1, 1846.

A happy New Year, my dear Mary. Only think of it, this is 1846. I trust you are well and have a heart to praise the name of the Lord. If so, let us unite in that inimitable doxology, "praise God from whom all blessings flow." . . . I never could write poetry and it is several years since I made a rhymn, but as I am in the West and this is New Year's the following just popped in my head:

Five moons apart, my chosen friend;  
And Love the other five will end,  
Then let us meet no more to part,  
And hand with hand, and heart with heart,  
We'll join ourselves as long as life  
To be your husband and my wife.  
What think you, dear, of this proposal?  
Please let me know in rhymn or prosal.

After a severely cold December the weather has moderated a little and today has been an old-fashioned rainstorm. The rain comes pit-pat upon my roof. The wind is rising and with every heavy gust my house shakes a little. It was so late in the season I could not get the underpinning laid, so that the house stands on stone only at the corners. . . . With my thick boots<sup>37</sup> I tramped down to Mr. Shaw's to supper (about

<sup>36</sup> Dixon and McKnight drove cattle from Pittsburgh, Van Buren County, Iowa, to the Selkirk settlements, afterwards called Pembina, the first town on the Red River of the North after it crosses into Canada. The Dixon and McKnight trail, 1822, is shown in a map owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Historical, Memorial, and Art Department of Iowa has a copy of that portion of the map relating to the trail in Iowa.

<sup>37</sup> On November 12, 1844, he purchased the following items: overcoat \$5; shut-in, air-tight stove \$5; fur cap \$3; a pair of boots \$2.37½; and on December 3 a pair of leggings costing \$1.00. A leghorn hat, purchased June 23, 1845, cost \$2.50.

¼ mile) and back again. The road has become very muddy. I borrowed a lantern to light my self back again to bed. . . . My study is delightfully situated on high ground overlooking the embryo village, two thirds of a mile north is the Maquoketa and its timber.<sup>38</sup> South stretches off the boundless prairies, west is a beautiful farming country, there being beautiful groves at a mile distance in that direction. East on the other side of the road is the five acres belonging to the Academy, on the highest point of land in which is the site for the institution, being the highest point of land in the neighborhood, and still farther east, a little north, is No. 7 Union street. The road in front of the house is the stage road from Dubuque to Davenport. My study door is some 80 feet from the road. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

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[Maquoketa.] Saturday afternoon  
January 10, 1846.

My dearest one:

How do you this beautiful, clear, comfortably cold weather? . . . Well, my dear, this has been a busy week with me. Last Sabbath I had a congregation of over fifty at Andrew. On Monday I visited and preached seven miles west of Deacon Cotton's, [and] in the evening Br. Turner came, and I was very glad to see him. He is sitting by me. We have just returned from preaching. He gave a good written sermon on the character of Balaam. Tuesday of this week I visited several schools, and returned here in the evening. Wednesday was pretty much devoted to reading up newspapers etc. In the evening we had an interesting Temperance meeting, a good written address from our school-master, and good singing, that is, good for this country. Some twenty signed the pledge and among these one who had been at times in the habit of drinking excessively. Thursday and Friday I expected Br. Turner here but as he did not come, I had to preach those evenings and visit some during the day. Yesterday afternoon we had a church meeting and seven united with us by letter. I had hoped there would have been some interest among the people at this time, but they are generally stupid though the attendance in meeting has been pretty good and there is a better state of feeling in the church than there has been for some time. There will be no difficulty in getting locks on our doors. I have one on this, but the cabins of the people are often without them.

I shall want to hear Father's lectures on economy, but from your last letter, for I have been so fortunate (here I left off to have a talk with Br. T[urner] about our house, the privations of the missionary etc.) as to have received yours of 20th. Dec. [on] the 7th. inst., I know not

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<sup>38</sup> Rev. Salter built his study on the two acres of land he owned. Mr. Shaw had given him an acre and he had purchased an adjoining acre for \$25. The house cost \$125.00, and its underpinning \$25. He paid \$63.50 for digging and welling the well, and \$18.21 for lining it with 5025 bricks. The cedar fence posts cost \$55, and he paid Mr. Shaw fifty cents to set out two maple trees. His taxes for 1846-7 were \$6.25, and he figured the total cost to be \$318.46.

but I must talk to him on the same subject, for a house that cost 1,000 dollars will make many eyes stare in so new a country, and 500 dollars of furniture will give some the impression that we are very proud. This reminds me of the inquiry of a man who got me some wood and was in to see me this week. As he looked at my small library, [he said], "Why, you keep a great bookstore, don't you?" To a reasonable extent we must not expose ourselves to the prejudices of the people. As you say, we want comforts. Extravagance is bad taste and it is bad policy. And yet for the Far West I am comparatively well off in having a few families who having themselves been used to comfortable circumstances elsewhere, will not be surprised or prejudiced against us. And this place, I think, is destined to improve so rapidly that we shall have many good families in the neighborhood. There are nine families living in what is called [the] town. The country around is settled in every direction by a rapidly increasing population. A valuable mill privilege on the South Fork of Maquoketa,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from town, is now being improved. I think that in case of building as you propose, if we should want to sell immediately we might find difficulty in obtaining a purchase, but in a few years we should probably be able to sell to some advantage. In this state of things, as you might very well suppose, I feel some delicacy about going ahead. . . . You will think it strange that I have not had time this week to read Milton, but I will do so tonight.

There are over 3,000 people in this county. It is universally admitted to be the next best county after Linn in northern Iowa for agricultural purposes. Andrew contains some fourteen families. . . . I have to visit a great deal more than I like. I would much rather be in my study, but the work, though humble, is great. Unless we can outwit, outtalk, and outpush Methodists, sectarianists, and deists, Congregationalists can't live, much less flourish here. Why, a man told Br. Turner that he never heard of a Congregationalist church before. He really thought Br. Turner was starting some new sect, and when Br. Turner told him there were Congregational churches in New England over 200 years old, he looked up, in utter amazement. . . . I ride to Andrew horseback and preached in the uncomfortable log court-house. . . .

[Yours, Wm. Salter]

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Maquoketa, Iowa. January 23, 1846.

My dear Mary:

. . . Last Saturday at Andrew I found a letter from Burlington, giving a sad account of things there. I wish I could read it to you. . . . Br. Hutchinson's health has failed again, so that he has not preached since the middle of last month. The letter says, "Mr. H[utchinson] has signified his wish not to be considered any longer as our minister, nor can we indulge the hope that he will ever preach again." How hard to have a minister out in this wilderness laid aside. Br. H. is very much beloved by his brethren here. How disturbing it must

be to Mrs. H. I am not acquainted with her, but report gives her a high character. My letter is from Mr. Albert Shackford,<sup>39</sup> formerly from Portsmouth, N. H. He has a sister in Cambridge (Mrs. Stacey, I believe) who used to be a fine girl. He says, "truth is trodden in the dust and orthodoxy is a reproach in Burlington." His brother (C. C. Shackford) who was formerly settled near Boston and at whose installation Mr. Theodore Parker preached his famous sermon which was of the first development of modern Unitarianism, preached to a "moral and spiritual reform society," which, however, vulgarly goes under the name of the "India Rubber and Free and Easy Church." He is popular and has a large congregation from the very men who ought to be under orthodox preaching. Br. Hutchinson's congregation is represented as scattered and his "little church discouraged." The letter invites me to "come to Burlington, and see its condition, and ascertain if there I could not be more widely useful than anywhere else in Iowa." . . . I have sought wisdom from above. I am sure I have no desire to go to Burlington unless it is plainly the Lord's will. . . . Yet the Lord knoweth what is best. I have committed the matter to Him, and trust I shall never ask any other question than, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" I had engaged to preach for Br. Turner the third Sabbath in February, so that I cannot leave here until the 18th of that month, when I propose to go in the stage to Burlington, as I have written Mr. Shackford. I shall probably spend two Sabbaths there, leaving to return here the 2nd. of March. . . . I should say that I desired Mr. Shackford to write me if that time would be agreeable to the Church for me to visit them, and I shall probably hear by the 2nd of February. . . . Burlington is, I know, a hard place. My energies will be far more taxed than they have been—but in those things I rejoice that the power of Christ may abound in me. But it is strange that just at this time as I have at last got fixed for study, and as I am on the eve of arranging to build, this invitation should come. . . . You will want me to be where the Lord would have me. If the Lord makes the way plain, I shall go cheerfully and gladly. We should find much more society there, and if I can be adapted to the state of things there and reach the folks that we must reach in order to effect much, it will be a grand field of usefulness, but the Church must be united, and they must want me for their pastor (as I told Mr. Badger in New York last summer). . . .

We have beautiful winter weather this month. No snow of any account, not enough for sleighing. Happiness depends upon the mind, not upon circumstances. People here are very poor, but as happy as any I ever met with. Many have their own joys. A crop of the finest of the wheat makes them as happy as a successful year's business pleases the Milk street merchants. . . . I have written this week a sermon, "Sin

<sup>39</sup> The complete story of this correspondence, together with the letters, may be found in my article, "Notes on the Salter-Shackford Correspondence" in ANNALS OF IOWA, Third Series, Vol. XVIII, No. 6, pp. 412-419.

and Its Consequences," Romans 5:12,<sup>40</sup> and laid it away. . . . We have no Sabbath school in the winter. Deacon Cotton was superintendent at Andrew, and Mr. Fletcher [?] here in the summer. Good men, but not competent. I have but few good teachers.

Saturday night. Jan. 24.

. . . . My dear come and hear me tomorrow. Take a seat on that *hard* bench. We have no pews in this country. In the p. m. I will tell you of the evils of covetousness in making a man (1) discontented (2) envious (3) of a grasping disposition (4) leading him to fraud and crime (5) or perhaps engendering a miserable disposition (6) in being fatal to the existence of religion as (a) it prevents conscience (b) is forbidden in the church (c) is excluded from Heaven—the application, I don't know what it will be, for I have yet to write that. I believe my sermons are on no particular model—I aim at variety of style, and have not been crowded to be anything else than "*Preacher*" Salter, as is the universal title of the clergy in this country. By the way, that word lets you into the knowledge of a minister's business here. He must *preach*. If he can't do that, this is no place for him. Br. Holbrook has sent me an invitation to his dedication next Thursday. I shall probably go if the weather is good, in which case I will write you from Dubuque on Friday. . . .

Your affectionate,  
Wm. Salter.

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Maquoketa, Iowa. Feb. 17, 1846.

My very dear Mary:

The Antislavery folks have sent me their missionary paper and as it is part of my religion to read all sides and then think for myself, I will give you a thought. . . .

Wednesday p. m.

I returned Monday after an interesting time at Cascade where I exceedingly enjoyed a visit with Br. [Edwin B.] T[urner] and had a congregation of 100 on the Sabbath. I preached six times, some seemed to be affected. Br. T. has some difficulty in his church from the prejudices from an Associate Reformed Presbyterian who objects to the singing by the choir, and to the principle of total abstinence and to all new manners. Br. T. has done a great work in Cascade, gathered a church in the midst of much opposition and out of the most unprofitable material. . . . You will be pleased to hear that we have very comfortable weather now. The roads are in good order and I am expecting a tolerably pleasant, though long and lonely, ride to Burlington. . . .

Monday morning, February 23. Bloomington, Iowa.

. . . . Shall I tell you about my journey? I left home as I had arranged on Thursday. The weather became cold and before noon a

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<sup>40</sup> Romans 5:12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

regular Yankee snowstorm from the northeast came down upon me. I wrapped myself as well as could be in blankets of buffalo (being in an open wagon) and reached Br. Adams at Davenport before night. I then found Br. Emerson of DeWitt and enjoyed a very pleasant evening. Davenport is a favorite place of many of my brethren of the East of our college. The next day I came in on an open sleigh to this place where I expected to have met the Burlington stage, but it did not come through, not being able to get over the Iowa River, it is supposed, in consequence of the running ice. So I am here. I am happy the Lord ordered it so, as Brs. Robbins and Alden went to Burlington to see Br. Hutchinson last week and were there to supply yesterday. It is also supposed that Br. Reed is there. The Congregational church has a new house here, built mainly by themselves at a cost of \$800. I had a congregation of about 100 yesterday who gave good attention.<sup>41</sup> I was requested to preach again this evening.<sup>42</sup> The Burlington stage is expected up today. If it comes, I shall leave in it tomorrow at 3 a. m. Br. Hutchinson is said to be failing very fast. Br. Robbins has a pleasant church here, a number of good families in it, but there is unhappily an Old School Church here dividing those who ought to be one.

Your rhymns, my dear, are very good,  
 And if I could, I surely would  
 Reply to you in rhyme again  
 And bless you for your curious strain.  
 But ah this dull and wintry day,  
 Are slow to help a rhymster's lays.  
 The snow and ice and frozen ground  
 Afford a dreary prospect round;  
 Oh soar, my muse, to nobler things!  
 And lend me, hope, thy blessed wings!  
 Whilst I may see next June at hand  
 And Mary; Mary's heart, Mary's hand  
 Fast bound with mine, in holy love,  
 With raptuous joy like that above.  
 Then hearts, ye lingering months away  
 And brings that bright and blessed day.

The village of Maquoketa is south from my house. Houses are scattered on the prairies. . . . Our log schoolhouse is near Mr. Shaw's on the other side of the road. Now don't think of such a village as you ever saw, but only of a few poor houses near one another. . . .

This place is 60 miles from Burlington. If I get there this week, unless strongly urged, I shall return next week and be home March 5. . . .

Ever yours,  
 Wm. Salter.

<sup>41</sup> Deuteronomy 28 :1. And it shall come to pass if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.

Romans 5 :12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

<sup>42</sup> Psalms 90 :9. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told.

Burlington, Iowa. February  
28, 1846.

My very dear Mary:

. . . . This has been a sad week, but chastening and subducing are the lessons of life. I mailed a letter to you at Bloomington the first of the week. On Tuesday at ½ [past] 2 a. m., I took the stage for this place, and had a most cheerless and cold ride.<sup>43</sup> Just after leaving Bloomington, we crossed Muscatine Island, a distance of 12 miles without a house. I made out to live with the aid of a Buffalo [robe] and with getting out, running, until we stopped at a cabin to warm. We went right in before day, the folks were abed. On reaching the Iowa River, we found it had closed the night before. It seemed problematical about the safety of crossing, but the driver unhitched his horses, led them, one at a time, others drew the wagon over. Sixteen miles from here our forward axle broke. . . . We arrived about 7 p. m. I found Mr. Hutchinson much farther gone than I had anticipated. He is very much emaciated, nothing but skin and bones. I found Mrs. Reed, Robbins, and Alden with him who had assisted him in arranging his temporal affairs. His physicians and friends and himself think him in the lowest stage of consumption. But there are some singular symptoms in his case. He has labored hard to satisfy the demands of his people and worn himself out in their service. . . . O what a change in him from 1843 when we came to Iowa. He was apparently in robust health and had the most flattering prospect of usefulness. Now he is a skeleton on the verge of the grave. . . . Since I have been here my time has been mainly engaged in taking care of Br. H. His equanimity and cheerfulness are truly wonderful and interesting. Mrs. H. is very much beloved and esteemed here and exerts a commanding influence even over those ladies who belong to the India Rubber Church. They have waited upon her with the most unwearied assiduity [Mrs. Hutchinson's child having been prematurely born.] Her purpose is, I understand, in case of Br. H's removal by death to remain here and engage in teaching. I think she has been a teacher in the Auton [?] Seminary, Mass. She is a lady of dignified manners and winning address.

I am again reminded by these things of the uncertainty of all that may be before us. . . . .

Br. Reed and the other brothers left for their homes on Wednesday. Br. Ripley of Bentonsport preached here a short time ago with great acceptance to the people. I am enjoying the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Starr,<sup>44</sup> formerly of New York, where I was acquainted with him though more intimately with the rest of his father's family (Mr. Charles Starr). Mrs. Starr was from Farmington, Ct., and is a very pleasant lady.

<sup>43</sup> The stage fare from Bloomington was \$5.75, and Rev. Salter records his expenses on the road as \$2.25.

<sup>44</sup> H. W. Starr.

I have not had opportunity to become acquainted here enough to tell you of the state of things. Mr. C. C. Shackford has got hold of that class of people who ought to be under the influence of evangelical preaching and I have no reason to think that I could win them from him. They have shown this attachment to him by offering him a salary of \$500 if he would remain with them, which they will raise among themselves, while Br. H. has never received but little over \$100 from the people here. The Old School Presbyterian church here is small and its minister exerting no influence about leaving. They raised, it is said, \$3,000 in the East last summer to build a church, not only where it is not needed, but where it is doing harm. Let Eastern Christians take care to whom they give funds for the West.

We have very cold weather this week, and the river has closed up. I shall dread going home on the stage. The Church wants I should stay two Sabbaths and longer, but unless there be special reason, I shall leave a week from next Monday. Br. Reed thinks I should do more good at Maquoketa than I could here in a long course of years; or any of the Brethren think it advisable that a strong man would be got here from the East. In this case, unless everything here should urge my removal, I shall not hesitate to dismiss the subject. . . . Br. Asa Turner's health is poorly. It is feared that he is in consumption. . . .

I have visited in a few families here and find them pleasant. Society here is comparatively formed and cultivated from what it is with us. . . . The Methodists are now holding a protracted meeting here with much noise and stir, but the interest is confined chiefly to their people. . . .

Wm. Salter.

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Burlington, Iowa. March  
7, 1846.

My dearest Mary:

I have barely time to mention that our dear Brother Hutchinson departed this life at 10 minutes after 3 this afternoon. I sat up with him the last half of last night. He was very weary, complained much of pain, but seemed this morning as he had for the two or three days before. About 12 o'clock an ulcer broke, it is supposed, in his lungs and he gradually sunk away in an unconscious state until he gently breathed his last. His funeral is appointed for Wednesday morning, and we shall send for Br. Robbins to preach the funeral sermon. . . . I count myself happy in having been able to minister in his last days to this departed brother. He was a consistent, faithful, and devoted laborer in the Gospel ministry, and has gone to his reward. He was regarded as first among his brethren who came to Iowa in 1843 and was called to occupy a most important post. Beyond a question he wore himself out in his efforts to build up the church here. Oh, that his labors may be a memorial . . . and bring down upon us the richest

blessings of Christ's Kingdom. . . . You will excuse me for not writing more now as I have many arrangements for Br. H's funeral to make.

I still walk in darkness as to my future prospects, but looking up I find all light. I cannot think I "take" with the people as a whole. I try to wish nothing but that the will of God be done. Whether I shall go home next week is now uncertain. The ice is going out of the river, and in case steamboats come up, I may go up in one. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

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Tuesday afternoon. March 10, 1846.  
Burlington, Iowa.

My very dear Mary:

I was obliged to write you a few very hasty lines last week in the midst of duties devolved upon me by Br. Hutchinson's death. I had a pleasant Sabbath, preached in the morning from Psalms 90:9,<sup>45</sup> and concluded with a brief reference to the late sad event. In the afternoon I preached from I Corinthians 15:3.<sup>46</sup> Let me take you to the place of meeting. Let us go down the street (Columbia) which runs to the river and a few doors from Water street, which is the river street [now Front street], we enter an old store and find ourselves in the Lord's house. The seats will accommodate a hundred persons. At one end in the corner is the desk. The singing is poor. The audience is attentive and apparently interested. There are a few educated hearers. Mr. Starr was of the class of 1824 in Tab.[or] College. His wife was brought up under Dr. Partin's [?] ministry in Farmington, Ct. . . .

I have been so much taken up with Br. Hutchinson that I have not become very much acquainted here yet. But I see many things that would make this a desirable place of residence and that offer some reason to hope that if God should call me hither, I might be useful in the ministry. The Church here had a meeting last night, and though I have no direct or formal information from it, I have been given to understand that the Church feels united in desiring my services. In what shape the matter may come up for decision, I know not. We have left the matter with the Lord, and I truly believe we desire nothing but to know his will. I remarked to one of the deacons yesterday that it would perhaps be better for the cause for them to get a minister from the East, but to this he would by no means consent. Some are asking, How long I shall want to be gone in the East this summer?

<sup>45</sup> See footnote 42.

<sup>46</sup> I Corinthians 15:3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

On Sunday, March 1, he preached from John 18:36: Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence; and from Romans 16:8: Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.

On Sunday, March 8, he preached from Psalms 90:9: For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told: and from I Corinthians 15:3: For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

And when I reply, "Three months," they think that won't do. . . . I can't think of anything less, but the cause may require some sacrifice on our part. Would you let me stay till July, and shall we return in September. I merely suggest these things now. There is a possibility that we may be called to meet them. The Church has suffered much from having Br. Hutchinson away a good deal and sick much of the time. They want a man that can and will hang on. They are about going on with the House of Worship. They have a tolerably eligible lot. The foundation was laid about three years ago. The House is to be 40 by 60 feet. Two men have engaged to go on with the building, putting up the walls and covering it, and this, it is said, will consume all the means of the Church. Should I remain here, I shall be in hopes to awaken interest enough in the community to have it finished this year. There is wealth enough here to do so, if we can only get hold of it. . . .

Br. Robbins arrived last night and is expected to preach the funeral sermon tomorrow. Mrs. Hutchinson is comfortable but very weak, and we feel will not be able to go out to the funeral. Her mind is composed and resigned. By a very kind Providence Mr. Hutchinson's sister reached here from Springfield, Illinois, the day before he died. It is hoped that Mrs. H. will remain here and engage in teaching. It is said that some of her friends in the East were unwilling to have her come to Iowa.

Boats arrive and depart and do business here on Sunday. The sight of the first boat that came up the river this season excited the wish to depart and hasten to youward. But I *must wait*.

. . . . C. C. Shackford is going East next month. His sympathies are not now with the Unitatianism at all. He is rather Swedenborjjanist. Thinks the whole Bible the word of God, and that every verse has a spiritual meaning. He is an erratic genius. He preaches without pay, having refunded the salary that they offered him.

Yours, Wm. Salter.

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Steamer Lynx on the Mississippi  
March 17, 1846.

My dear Mary:

I wrote you a week ago from Burlington. And now I am starting home that I may hear from you and decide this eventful question, whether I ought to break up my present relations and settle on the church in Burlington. The Lord has preciousy led me hitherto and though my visit has been a melancholy one in connection with the death of Br. Hutchinson, yet I have very much to be thankful for. Last Wednesday was indeed a sad day. The weather was disagreeable. O, the agony of Mrs. Hutchinson, as for the last time she gazed on the remains of her husband. Her afflictions are very severe. She came West contrary to the wishes of many of her friends, and now how desolate is the loneliness. She feels that she has nothing to live for. I can only commend her to the sympathies of a compassionate Saviour, and the mercies of a God of

all Peace. It is hoped that she will remain in Burlington, and open a school there next fall. She was unable to attend the funeral services at the church where Br. Robbins gave a hastily prepared discourse on the fact that this is not our rest from toil, trouble, and disappointment, and showing that the life of Br. H. was not exempt from the common lot. He had prepared a brief obituary notice of the departed which will appear in the *Hawk-Eye* this week. Brs. Gaylor, Burnham, and myself also took part in the services. After the assembly at the grave had retired, Br. Robbins and myself waited as the narrow house of one of our Brothers was filled up. At the thought that pressed upon me as I then stood—soon thus with me, the dust shall return to the earth as it was, the oak shall send its roots and pierce my mould, and my clay shall be a brother to the insensible rock and sluggish clod which the rude swain turns with his hoe and stands upon. . . .

I had a pleasant Sabbath. Preached two old sermons written in Andover.<sup>47</sup> After preaching in the afternoon there was a joint meeting and Society and a unanimous invitation extended to me to become the pastor of the Church. This invitation was handed to me yesterday. The call is about as regular as could be expected in this irregular country. They desired to give it to me before I left, and so did not wait to circulate a subscription for me and consequently nothing is said about salary. They think the A. H. M. S. will grant them \$300 and that they can raise \$100 or \$150. Think you we could live on such a salary?

. . . . I believe that somehow or other the Lord has given me unusual favor with the Society in Burlington. At any rate, they profess it and their hearts are set upon having me as their pastor. We had prayer meeting nearly every evening last week which were unusually well attended. There is some interest in a few minds on the subject of religion. . . . While there are many things which make a residence at Maquoketa desirable—its quiet retirement, its pleasant situation, the prospects of our getting a comfortable home there and an affectionate people all (and especially the fact that I have lived among them over two years and secured an influence in the country) attach me strongly to that spot. I am very sensible to what I shall lose by leaving there. But the importance of Burlington, the union of the Church there in calling me, the fact of its society and manners being more congenial to my early habits and the consideration that the emergencies of the cause there may serve to develop the father's [?] end has given me to their highest and most serviceable activity, lead me to think that the call is of the Lord—and if *you* and the A. H. M. S. and my brothers generally advise my removal, I shall accept the call. As this seems altogether

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<sup>47</sup> On Sunday, March 15, he preached from Galatians 2:15-16: And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them that were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek was compelled to be circumcised; and from John 6:66-68: From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

possible, I will presume to request you to write me next at Burlington, whither if I go, it will be in a few weeks. The Church there has suffered very much from the failure of Br. H's health. For a long time his efforts were of an irregular character, things have become very much scattered, and there is now no time to be lost. The cause in Burlington will require an unremitting study and protracted effort in order to make advancement. I can't tell you how sad I feel to think my removal there will make it desirable that my visit with you this summer be so much shorter than I had contemplated. . . . If I go to Burlington I am in hopes to obtain board in Mr. Starr's pleasant family. . . .<sup>48</sup>

After waiting all day yesterday for a boat, I went to bed at 10, but was turned out at 12 with a report of a boat being on hand. So I sent word to Br. Robbins, and made haste and reached the river just as the boat was under way. I detained it till Br. Robbins and family came along when we put up steam. The river is now very low, lower, our Captain says, than he has known it before for 18 years at this time. We expect to be at Bloomington at noon, and I hope to be at Davenport to-night where I shall take the stage for home tomorrow.<sup>49</sup>

The scenery on the Mississippi is interesting to a stranger, but soon becomes tedious and dull. Spring has as yet developed on some sunny slopes, and few blades of grass. Nature seems dead. Nothing but islands crowded with trees and great banks appear around us. Yet in silent majesty this stream rolls on. In a few centuries the wealth of the Indies will not surpass, the treasures that will be embarked on this river. Everything in the West goes by noise. This is a high pressure boat. I was amused to see the mulattoes rattle every plate they put on the breakfast table this morning. At one table some of the passengers are earnestly engaged in card playing. Here sits your friend *solus*. . . .

Yours most affectionately,

Wm. Salter.

[*To be continued*]

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<sup>48</sup> On March 16, he purchased from Mrs. Hutchinson a part of her husband's library for \$8.40.

<sup>49</sup> The fare on the Lynx from Burlington to Davenport was \$2.50.

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