



WILLIAM SALTER AND MARY ANN (MACKINTIRE) SALTER
From a daguerrotype loaned by George B. Salter, Burlington,
made about the time of their marriage in 1846.

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

BY PHILIP D. JORDAN

INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday, June 11, 1845, William Salter, preacher, left Maquoketa, Territory of Iowa, for a visit to New York.¹ This was his first vacation since his arrival on the frontier two years previously. He had come, fresh from Andover Theological Seminary, imbued with high hopes for the success of his labors; he was returning disillusioned and disappointed. The subject of his ministry, Jesus Christ and Him Crucified, had not found a generous reception in the hearts of a "whole community . . . filled up with families who are Universalists or ignorant persons [and] who have never been brought up to respect the Sabbath or attend public worship."² A "torrent of abuse" had been the only reward for his faithfulness in administering to men who quarreled over land titles, drank prodigiously, and gambled on the Mississippi steamboats. For two years he had been forced to travel on foot and horseback through Jackson County, preaching wherever he could gather a few of the faithful or coerce a few of the unregenerates. He had lived in a log house and his study had been a portion of the main room partitioned off by a swaying curtain. The prospect of leaving unleavened Iowa to experience again the delight of paved streets with omnibuses running to schedule, to browse in the libraries of New York University and Union

¹ *Vid.* the indexes to the ANNALS OF IOWA for many references. The *Dictionary of American Biography* will also contain a sketch.

² This and subsequent direct quotations are taken from the letters here printed, and I therefore omit any further citations.

Theological Seminary, where he had attended classes, and to talk with educated people must have brought eager anticipation to this twenty-four year old Congregational pastor. He was anxious, too, for the sight of Mary Ann Mackintire, only daughter of Eliab Parker Mackintire, prominent Boston merchant. He hoped to make this girl his wife. If she would accept him, he desired to announce their engagement before he returned to Iowa.

From Galena, Illinois, he went by stage to Chicago, and then across the Lakes to Detroit where he arrived on June 21. On July 2 he was safe in his father's New York home and was warmly greeted by his brother Benjamin. For twenty-eight days Rev. Salter remained in the East, and when he left, about July 30, he carried both Mary Ann's promise to marry him and her daguerreotype. On August 16, the journey from New York was ended and again Preacher Salter, bachelor, was at his pastoral duties in Maquoketa.

II

William Salter's first sojourn in the West had extended from October 24, 1843, to June 11, 1845. In this period he saw Iowa for the first time, was ordained at Denmark, November 5, 1843, organized churches at Andrew and Maquoketa, and began the saddle period of his ministry. Then came his return to New York and Boston. His second period in the West was from August 16, 1845, to July 6, 1846, when he left to be married. He had now grown accustomed, in a measure, to the frontier, for Iowa was close on the line of settlement in the 1840's and he was preparing himself to say, "I shall aim to show that the West will be just what others make it, and that they which will work the hardest and do most for it shall have it. Prayer and pain will save the West and the country is worth it." There is something here of the dignity of the frontier, a something which no man could have uttered had he not first experienced it. William Salter, perhaps unknown to himself, was succumbing to the spirit of enterprise, strength, and determinism of Lubberland. From youth he had been taught that slavery was an abomination in the sight of both God and man. So well did he learn this lesson that he always was ready to attack that system wherever it showed itself. He

ran a station on the underground railroad and he preached of the evils of Negro servitude many times. In this second period of his life on the frontier he wrote with evident satisfaction, "There is one interesting thing about Iowa, to wit: that it is the only part of the country west of the Father of Waters which is *free . . .*" Here is the thesis for his volume, *Iowa—The First Free State of the Louisiana Purchase*, published sixty years later. He early learned that in the West a man's measure was taken on the basis of his personal worth rather than upon any academic or professional training. "People distinguish," he said, "between a black coat and a fine man." His parishioners wanted a preacher to visit them in their log cabins and sod houses and to talk "direct and plain." An ornate sermon was an unsuccessful one. A minister who was only a scholar was almost worse than none at all. Here lies one of the minor tragedies of Rev. Salter's ministerial career. He had been bred to books, and he loved them. He perhaps loved the quiet of his study even more than he loved his parish work. "I would much rather be in my study," he said, "but the work, [of visiting] though humble, is great." His duties as a clergyman frequently intruded upon his duties as a scholar. It is perhaps safe to say that, in one sense, he felt more at home in the role of historiographer than of preacher. This applies to his entire career.

He had much to confound him in the West where everything went by noise. Bilious fever and ague stole the few members of his congregation. As he sat beside the sick and dying he sometimes jotted down the cause and course of the disease, complaining of the lack of judicious medical treatment. Consumption is given again and again as the cause of death and "death by drink" is frequently recorded. Children and young people especially felt the hand of death on this Iowa frontier. In one list of eleven deaths, Rev. Salter records that six of them were of children under three years of age. When a general court was in session, the meeting house, when time for service came, remained empty. And he found it inadvisable to schedule a meeting at the same time as a land sale. His deacons were not always pillars of the church, and so the church excommunicated them. It is little wonder that he wrote, "In so new a country, where so many other interests absorb the minds of

men, the objects in which we are engaged are very much slighted."

Although William Salter was willing to go where Providence should send him, he, at times, wondered if Jackson County was the appointed place for him to round out his life. Perhaps Providence would, in its infinite wisdom, direct him to a more fruitful field. In 1843 when the members of the Iowa Band, after praying, had selected their fields of ministry, Rev. Horace Hutchinson, recently married, had chosen Burlington. Now, two years later, he was ill with consumption, and his congregation was falling away. How long Rev. Hutchinson could keep this parish, no one knew, but everyone saw that it would not be a great length before he would have to give in to the disease. Then Mr. Badger, of the American Home Missionary Society, learned of the sad state of affairs in Burlington and, when Rev. Salter went East in 1845, approached him with the idea of going to Burlington when the Congregational pulpit there should become vacant. Although Burlington was an important and growing town of about 2500 persons in 1845, possessed of more culture and social life than the majority of Iowa river towns in the forties, it was not an altogether attractive parish, and Rev. Salter wrote aptly when he said of the Congregational prospects, "The church is feeble. The house of worship unfinished. A deacon and leading man in the church is a political newspaper editor and has not much influence and is not highly esteemed as a Christian." By January, 1846, Rev. Hutchinson's health again failed and he gave up the thought of continuing his ministry in Burlington. Immediately Albert Shackford of the Burlington congregation wrote Rev. Salter inviting him to Burlington with a view to settling there. This was not a formal call, but only an invitation for Rev. Salter to come and acquaint himself with the situation. The news brought by Mr. Shackford's letter troubled the young preacher. He was building a small brick study where he could prepare his sermons free from the interruptions of lovable, yet noisy, children, and where he might store his letters safe from curious eyes. He felt hardship and privation to be part of his duty. Yet the thought of Burlington with its elements of southern society and its larger sphere of usefulness intrigued him. But he would not go unless he felt it to be the Lord's will

and unless the church would give him a unanimous call. On February 24, 1846, he, wrapped in a buffalo robe and seated in an open wagon, left Maquoketa for Burlington. Driving through a heavy snow, he reached Davenport that same evening. From Davenport a sleigh took him to Bloomington (now Muscatine) where he failed to meet the Burlington stage. There he stayed from Friday until the following Tuesday when the stage finally got through. On Wednesday morning, February 30, he arrived in Burlington to find Rev. Hutchinson dying. On Saturday, March 7, at ten minutes past three in the afternoon he died, and Burlington was left without a Congregational pastor. On March 16, Rev. Salter received a unanimous invitation to become Rev. Hutchinson's successor. However, nothing was said about salary, and Mr. Salter left on the steamer Lynx wondering if Burlington Congregationalists could raise \$150 for them to add to the \$300 which they hoped the American Home Missionary Society might pay. If he was able to write seriously, "The cause in Burlington will require an unremitting study and protracted effort in order to make advancement," he was also able to write humorously, "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*. . ."

In Maquoketa, on March 25, he decided to accept the call and go to Burlington. This decision disturbed many of his friends in Jackson County, even causing an excommunicated parishioner to urge his remaining. On Sunday afternoon, April 5, he preached his farewell sermon from I Corinthians 2:2, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." He preached in the morning from John 6:28-29 and in the evening from II Kings 2:2. In his farewell, he said in part:³

"I therefore take you to record this day that I am free from the blood of all men. If any of you die in your sins, it will not be because I have not warned you of the way of death,

³ Fortunately, I have found a fragment, apparently the conclusion, of this farewell sermon, and I include it here; unfortunately, the introduction and body of the sermon appear to be lost.

and urged you to choose life. I have endeavored to keep back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying to one and all repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord J[esus] C[hrist].

“And now behold I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Brethren, I do not leave you without a struggle. It has been in my heart to live and die with you. I could willingly have laboured with you in the work of the ministry that I might have built up here a goodly ch[urch] of Christ, and led you to Heaven. But in the Providence of God I am called to leave these quiet scenes, and this promising community, and my beloved friends, that I may enter upon more weighty responsibilities and engage in severer labors. But I can never forget you. I can never forget that here I have spent nearly two years and a half of my ministry, that here with you I set up the standard of Christ and Him Crucified, and that here with you I have toiled and wept and prayed. The trials I have passed through with you will I trust never cease to exert a chastening influence over my spirit. I have been with you in every good work. I have labored to secure the purity of the public morals. I have aimed to discourage and repress the pursuits of vanity and folly. I have endeavored to promote the Education of your youth. I have been with you in your days of darkness and stood by the beds of sickness and death. I have followed the remains of eleven persons to the narrow house on yonder hill, and administered to weeping friends the consolations of the Gospel. Two years ago this month we buried the first corpse in that graveyard, and already it has become a congregation of the dead. More than twenty now rest there in the sleep of death. How is that congregation increasing? Alas they wait for our coming. Children are there, waiting for their parents, and parents for their children. Brothers for Sisters, and Sisters for Brothers. My bones may not lay among them, though God only knows—yet from some spot of earth I must rise to meet them at the last day—O that we may meet in peace, to be forever with the Lord. But I forbear. I shall hope to meet you again on the Earth, to hear of your welfare and rejoice in your prosperity. Nothing will afford me greater

joy than to hear that you walk in the truth—that this ch[urch] is growing in numbers and graces, and that this community is enjoying in all its interests the smile of Heaven.

“Brethren Farewell—Remember the words that I have spoken to you. The subject of my ministry has been J[esus] C[hrist] and Him Crucified. Be of good comfort.”

On April 11 he was lodged in the home of J. G. Edwards in Burlington, being unable to live with H. W. Starr which he desired. He was not installed as pastor until December 30, 1846. May was spent in settling himself, writing sermons, visiting members of his congregation, and preparing for his wedding. The Mexican War was filling the minds of Burlington residents much to the annoyance of Rev. Salter who disapproved of the principles involved and so took frequent occasion to discourse on the evils of war and the benefits of peace. At the same time he was looking for a house suitable for a minister and his wife. In June he went up the Mississippi on the steamer Tempest to attend an associational meeting at Dubuque. While in Dubuque plans were discussed for the establishment of a college to be sponsored by the Congregational ministers and to be known as “Iowa College.” Davenport was settled upon as the proper location, even though the society there “is very uncongenial to a literary institution of the character we wish to establish.” Burlington was chosen as the next meeting place of the association, a decision due perhaps to Rev. Salter’s influence. When he returned, on the Fortune, he found the roof of his church nearly completed. As he rode through the country he noticed the grain turning golden, saw the bountiful crop of wheat, and the heavy-laden blackberry bushes. He traveled across the Illinois prairies to Galesburg, found that plans were being made for the establishment of a college (now Knox) there, and coming home broke a piece of harness, was two minutes late for the Shoccoquon ferry, and missing it, had to wait eighteen hours amid the mosquitoes before the Mississippi could be crossed. On July 6, the steamer Atlas carried him on the first leg on his trip to the East and his wedding. He was feeling unwell on the trip and in New York took down with that old enemy of the frontiersman, the fever and ague. His health permitted him, however, to leave his

father's home the last of July, and he was married in the Winthrop Church, on Union Street, in Charlestown, Massachusetts, on Tuesday, August 25, 1846, to the girl whose daguerreotype he had taken West with him in 1845.

III

Dr. Salter's early ministry in Iowa may be divided into four periods, each of which is in itself worthy of examination. The first is from 1843 to 1845, the second from 1845 to 1846 (the period just discussed), the third from 1845 to the Civil War, and the fourth comprises the Civil War period. Until recently no adequate or sufficient first-hand information has been available upon which to build an accurate, true account of these chronological periods. Now, however, I have access to original source material covering each. This material is being edited gradually with proper historical introductions and footnotes. For the period from 1845 to 1846 there is the following collection of letters, comprising the correspondence of Dr. Salter to Miss Mackintire. I have transcribed and edited them, removing, in the main, those sentiments which even today are personal and which contribute nothing historically. Omissions have been carefully indicated and, as usual, square brackets indicate material added by the editor. Footnotes perform their customary task of identifying persons, places, and events.

The source material for the first period (1843-1845) comprises a closely written diary of some 130 manuscript pages. This will eventually appear in the ANNALS OF IOWA. The third period overlapping the second by one year, as it does, unfortunately is not revealed by Dr. Salter himself, but indirectly in a long series of hundreds of letters written to Dr. Salter by his father-in-law, Eliab Parker Mackintire, of Boston and Charlestown. Dr. Salter, however, again contributes to the Civil War period in a joint diary and account book which lists, in detail, the author's work and adventures as a member of the Christian Commission. Supplementary to all these periods is a quantity of notes, observations, sermons, lectures, account and cost books. These all are holographic.

It is hoped that the editing and subsequent printing of the

pertinent portions of this collection will throw additional light upon the history of Iowa for the period covered, will alter the traditional notions concerning the lives, works, and other activities of the members of the Iowa Band, and will reveal Dr. Salter in a clearer focus than those who have previously written of his work have been able to obtain.

Lake Michigan. August 8, 1845.

My dear friend:

How are you this rainy, foggy day? . . . Few objects are calculated to affect our minds with exalted conceptions of the Great Supreme as vast bodies of water. . . .

Milwaukee, Wisconsin. August 9.

I am now, my dear M., comfortably settled in the study of Brother Chapin of this place, and I gladly resume my pen to converse with you. I intended to have written out my letter in the steamboat but was hindered by unexpected interruption. My last¹ told you of my progress as far as Detroit. You will be interested in hearing of my subsequent adventures. We have been favored with delightful weather. The lake has been very calm. The first evening after we left Detroit, I was requested to preach, and at the hour appointed a very attentive congregation to the number of eighty, assembled in the cabin,² and I spoke to them "Of Him in whose hands our breath is".³ The next evening we had an address by Rev. Mr. Kinney, of Whitewater, Wis., with devotional exercises on the subject of education. I found on board two other clergymen, one a Methodist from Ireland, and the other a Lutheran from Germany. With the latter I became much acquainted, and I must give some account of him. I noticed a man with unshaved face, and from that fact formed rather an unfavorable opinion of him, but I soon after found him with a Greek testament, and introduced conversation with him. I could not speak German, and he could not talk English, so we were likely to continue ignorant of one another, but as an interest in him had been awakened in me, I felt unwilling to give him up, so proposed to talk Latin. I held several hours talk in Latin with him, and learned the following, among other interesting facts. He was educated in Halle University, under the best instructors as Knapp and Gesenines [?]. Has been in the ministry of the Lutheran church twelve years, and came to America last year, and a few months since buried his wife. This affliction seems to have unsettled his mind, and to have led him to embrace some strange views in

¹ Apparently, this letter is not extant.

² Of the Steamer New Orleans.

³ The exact date was August 6, and he spoke from Daniel 5:23. But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy Lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.

religion—viz. Mark 16:17-18; John 14:12; James 5:14-15.⁴ These passages seem to have led him to think that the prayer of faith would have saved his wife. He told me in his own simple Latin that he prayed for his wife and called the physician, but of no avail—his prayers were not of faith, and his wife was taken away. Hence his conclusion that he has not faith. Now he is determined to seek after faith, to seek God until he finds him. He is coming into the New World to live away from men in solitude. I dwelt as well as I could to explain the true nature of faith, as being simple confidence in God, a belief that he will do what He says, (anything more than this being superstitious is a belief in something besides and beyond that which has a foundation, viz., the derivation of the word in the Lexicon) but the poor German's mind was fully made up and I could not convince him. We talked on many subjects, and I found him possessed of many high and generous sentiments. I need not assure you how much I enjoyed this adventure. My heart went forth spontaneously in sympathy with this stranger yet brother of the human race. I was very happy to confer a favor on him in getting a reduction made in the price of his paper. He took me warmly by the hand and his eye beamed with feelings of gratitude and good will. I found that many of our passengers were on their way to the copper country on Lake Superior, among them was a son of a professor Olmstead of New Haven who projects a tour from the west end of the lake to the waters of the Mississippi. He seems to be a young man of promise, and is enthusiastic in his devotion to geological studies. He presented me with a copy of the last edition of his father's school philosophy. You have heard of Mackinaw. You have looked at it on the map. I trust another year your eyes will see it. The shores of Michigan are generally low and sandy. This island possesses high rocky bluffs. At the south end is a little village and over it on the bluff is the U. S. garrison. The whitewashed walls and barracks, contrasting with the green of land and water, make a picturesque appearance. Here we saw a few Indians, and half-breeds who presented a degraded specimen of what intemperance and the vices of civilization will do for the savage. I ascended the bluffs, north was a corner of Lake Superior, southeast was Lake Huron, southwest was Lake Michigan. These immense lakes . . . will be covered with fleets. As the bays of New England are lined with the sails, so must these waters bear on their bosoms thousands of vessels and multitudes of interested men. (O my country, what a destiny is thine, and as I am linked with all the past as the men of the Mayflower and of Bunker Hill lived and toiled and died for me, and I enjoy the benefits of their labors, so the

⁴ Mark 16:17-18. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

John 14:12. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believed on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

James 5:14-15. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

millions of future time may be blessed through the humble efforts which God may enable me to put forth in laying now the foundation of many generations.) When I visited a garrison of troops, over the instruments of death, I cannot but mourn that the day has not yet come when nations will learn war no more, and I cannot but lift up the desires of my heart that the Prince of Peace may become the Prince of the Kings of the Earth. I arrived here last evening at seven o'clock, four days from Buffalo. I called at a bookstore and found a gentleman who was seven years ago with me in the University of New York. We were then preparing for the ministry. I was thinking of something else. We have not seen each other since. Both our plans in life have been changed, and we meet in a place which had then but just begun to have a name. I have a few old friends here. I had proposed to have gone West as far as Madison today, but it being a little uncertain about my being able to get through before Sabbath morning, I shall remain here until Monday when I leave for Galena where I hope to arrive on Wednesday afternoon. I am invited to preach three times tomorrow, twice in the Presbyterian and once in the Congregational church.⁵ Rev. Mr. Chapin, who has kindly invited me to his home, was in the class before me in the New York Theological Seminary. He is a lovely man, a finished scholar, and much beloved by his church. I happened to preach here two years ago and preached the only good sermon I ever wrote, as a consequence I have the reputation of being something of a preacher here. Hence I am called on to deliver myself tomorrow, and you may expect my reputation after tomorrow will be "done for" in Milwaukee. . . . You will believe me when I tell you that I do mean to study this winter and to prepare some sermons that I shall not be ashamed to preach and which you will not be sorry to have me, if the Lord will help me.

The Presbyterian and Congregational churches here are perfectly harmonious, about the only difference between them is that one is on this side and the other on the other side of the river. The geographical and other questions than those of "ism" decide to which church anyone will go. . . . Mr. White of the Congregational church ranks among the first of the ministers in Wisconsin. He is a clear-headed, sound, and acceptable preacher. There have been several warm days this week. . . .

One of my fellow passengers, Judge Doty of New York, is on a very melancholy journey. A son-in-law of his, a clergyman, left home in May, attended the Old School General Assembly at Cincinnati, and started on a journey up the Mississippi and down by the lakes. He was last heard from at Madison, Iowa, early in June. There are some circumstances which have occasioned the fear that there has been foul play somewhere. Judge Doty is on a tour of inquiry and search. . . .

⁵ In the Milwaukee Presbyterian Church 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 Peter 4:10, As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, on August 10. In the Congregational Church he preached from John 1:29, The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

I feel more and more a confidence in the Divine Government that God will do what is best for me in relation to the field of my labors. My desire is that I may never do anything else but stand and see the Salvation of God. When He calls, I know he will sustain me, but woe be unto me if I lean to my own understanding. . . . I am sometimes afraid that in my letters I may be betrayed into some extravagance of expression of my feelings which a dignified Christian man would not approve. In this I really desire to write nothing which in after life we might not review with conscientious satisfaction and approbation. . . . Mrs. Chapin is a lady of cultivated mind and of great dignity of character. She was from Berkshire Co., Mass. . . . Good evening, my M., quiet and pleasant sleep, divine aid in your devotions in the closet and in the house of God be yours, a holy, useful quiet life. My love to your parents and to George. Adieu.

Yours, Wm. Salter.

Maquoketa. Jackson County, Iowa, August 16, 1845.

My dear Mary:

O what a change in eighteen days from you to this study and this log cabin. I had hoped to have made you out a long letter this evening, but how little do we know what is before us. I arrived here this afternoon and found that the kind family in which I board had this morning buried their beloved and only son. That bright little boy whom I left two months ago the hope of his parents and in health and vigor now sleeps beneath the clods of the prairie.⁶ He was a promising child of six years of age, one of our most interesting Sabbath School Scholars and perhaps the last of all the children in the neighborhood whom we should have been willing to give up. I sat down and wept with these afflicted parents. It is a severe stroke, and as I have spent nearly two years in the family, I could not but make their sorrow my own.

My last left me at Milwaukee. I had the benefit of Bro. Chapin's criticisms after preaching which I must have you compare with yours. He says my style needs simplicity, and a conversational, every day air, is too stately and wants more action in delivery. I came to Janesville on Rock River, 65 miles on Monday. The twenty miles from the Lake the country is heavily timbered and broken, after which are the most beautiful prairies. At Janesville, I found an old friend, Rev. C. H. A. Bulkley with whom I spent a very pleasant night. He was a New York student. I found him boarding in a very pleasant family and in most comfortable quarters. He complains of his "hard field," as does everybody. The ministers in Milwaukee, perhaps one of the most eligible places in the West, tell me they are not by any means on a bed of roses. Rev. Bulkley has a lively and cultivated imagination, I expect has read more than he has mastered, has a fine library. He is gathering a small church and doing good. The next day I came to Wiota [?] a little mining village where I found lodging in the garret of a log cabin in which were

⁶ The son of Mr. and Mrs. John Shaw.

five beds "some" on the floor. Wednesday at 2 p. m. I reached Galena and enjoyed the hospitality of Brother Kent. Mr. K. is a pioneer of the Upper Mississippi, he came to Galena 16 years ago, held on under great and many discouragements and has now an active, flourishing church of 225 members. Thursday morning, I came by steamboat to Dubuque whence by stage to this place today. Br. Holbrook corresponds with the Ladies of Park st. church who assist in his support. He is a very animated interesting writer. I should be glad, if in some way, you could get hold of his letters. He has recently engaged the ladies to make up a box of articles to be sold at a fair in Dubuque for the benefit of his meeting house. He is the missionary who makes "plea for the West" in the August number of the *Home Missionary*. . . . He is a man of great ardor and zeal and perhaps colors a little too highly, so that you may sometimes receive what he says *cum parvo grano salis*. . . .

This is Iowa. The chance is great when I think of what I have proposed to you. That you should leave the best of homes and the best of land to be the wife of a humble missionary. I'm so humble and weak I almost tremble at my presumption. You thank God in your prayers that you were born in this age of the world, and yet you are willing to put yourself five centuries back and be as those who two hundred years ago settled in New England. But this is a great work, and I trust is of God. Blessed be His name. If He has put it into my heart to be willing to endure privations and hardships here. Men and history may both blunder as to the use of our lives, but if God sees our efforts to be of some avail we shall have the plaudits of Him whose smile is better than that of ten thousand worlds. And He who puts us into this ministry will sustain us in it. God will not give.

Sabbath evening.

When my candle expired last night, not wishing to disturb the family, I retired. I have just been looking through Payson's⁷ life to see if I could have his sanction to taking up my pen this evening. First, as was natural, I examined chapter 12 (Tract Society edition) but no light in the matter, then chapter 17, but nothing there. At last, I found something to the purpose on page 159, and now I am *in medias res*. Payson's has been a favorite memoir of mine. He was a minister *in earnest*. I was about saying last night that God will not give us willing heart to come and labor here and then desert us but will give more grace as our day may require. Let me have your feeling about this Sabbath writing. My conscience commends this use of it. . . . We had a delightful shower this morning which in some measure refreshed the parched earth, a beautiful day. In consequence of my late arrival yesterday and a Methodist camp meeting four miles off . . . my congregation was very small today. This afternoon I took my text in Romans 1:10,⁸ gave a report of what were

⁷ Asa Cumming, *A Memoir of Rev. Edward Payson, D. D. Late Pastor of the Second Church in Portland*. There are several editions. Mr. Salter was using the one of the American Tract Society, New York (183?).

⁸ Romans 1:10. Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

said and done in the Western Convention at Detroit. There has been a good deal of sickness through the country this summer. There has been oppressively warm weather here. I feel anxious to hear of your health and of your mother's. . . . The exact condition of matters in Burlington as far as I can learn as follows: Br. Hutchinson⁹ is their stated supply. His year is up next November. In consequence of ill health, he has now a summer recess. The church is feeble. Their house of worship unfinished. A deacon and leading man in the church is a political newspaper editor and has not much influence and is not highly esteemed as a Christian.¹⁰ An Old School Presbyterian minister is soon expected there. Burlington is an important and growing town of 2500 inhabitants. The case is only presented to me through the A. H. M. S. In case of failure of Brother Hutchinson's health, then they would like to have me go there. But the church will have a mind of its own, and I am told feels its own importance very fully. In Burlington there is much of Kentucky and Southern society and influence. I rode in the stage with one of Mr. Adam's¹¹ congregation yesterday. He says they are expecting Mrs. Adams to return with him to Davenport. Rumors in Andover and elsewhere said that she was a Miss Gould. You have seen Brother Alden¹² no doubt. For remember that one good turn deserves another. Let me hear how he is getting along. I have been talking mostly this evening with this bereaved family. Mrs. Shaw is a member of my church and a woman of very lovely quiet, meek and amiable spirit. Their three surviving children have the whooping cough and summer complaint, the same disease which carried off her son. It seems as though she could hardly restrain her grief. She mourns, but does not complain. How near death seems in that home whence one has just been taken out to his long home. The little boy was laid out in my study. I seem to hear the angel's whisper as he warns me that soon he may bear his commission to me. God help me to live with a conscience void of offense toward God and man, that at any time I may be prepared to give up my account. A preparation to live is the best preparation to die.

This is a beautiful evening. The full orb'd moon walks the Heavens queen of the night. . . . As I am so lately from you I probably think more of the privations of this country than I shall after I shall have in a few weeks become fairly introduced again into the harness. Many of my people receive me with very warm hearts. Mr. Shaw's little boy wanted to hear me preach again. Three men who were sometimes in my congregation and whom I saw but a short time before I went away are now in their graves. How loud the admonition to be faithful. . . . O,

⁹ Rev. Horace Hutchinson, a member of the Iowa Band.

¹⁰ James Gardiner Edwards, editor of the *Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot*. A file of this newspaper, the property of the Burlington Public Library, has for some years been housed in the vaults of the *Burlington Hawk-Eye*. These files were presented to the library through the efforts of Mr. Salter. For an itemized list of this collection see: ANNALS OF IOWA, Third Series, Vol. VII, p. 314.

¹¹ Rev. Ephraim Adams, a member of the Iowa Band and author of *The Iowa Band* (New and Revised edition) Boston, 1868.

¹² Rev. Ebenezer Alden, a member of the Iowa Band. *Vid.* ANNALS OF IOWA, Third Series, Vol. VI, pp. 576, 584, 585, 589, 590, 598.

how delightful to acknowledge God in all our ways. How correct the sentiment of the noble Robert Hall¹³ in those two (I had almost said) best sentences in the English language, which I have often studied and which I know you will love to study: "God himself is immutable; but our conception of his character is continually receiving fresh accessions, is continually growing more extended and refulgent by having transferred to it new elements of beauty and goodness, by attaching to itself as a centre whatever bears the impress of dignity, order, or happiness. *It borrows splendor from all that is fair, subordinate to itself all that is great, and sits enthroned on the riches of the universe.*" This God is our God. . . . Your daguerreotype is before me. . . .

Yours most affectionately,
Wm. Salter.

[Maquoketa] Saturday evening, August 23, 1845.

My dearest Mary:

. . . Your rich, precious (O, for a new language) letter from Oxford, mailed the 6th., reached me Wednesday afternoon. I could hardly repress my feelings. I wanted to get on the wide prairie and give thanks. . . . These things and death and sickness in this family, and some sickness in the country made me feel I cannot tell how bad until I got your letter. And then we are five weeks apart, i. e. before we can write and get an answer. . . . The Eastern Mail comes here twice a week, Wednesday and Saturday evenings. . . . I think if you and I could get hold of Uncle Sam together he would be apt to make tracks powerful fast for one while. . . . This evening at sunset I went and visited the grave of the little boy whose death I mentioned in my last. Over his new made grave and with a sense of my own mentality I had great joy in looking up and dedicating anew my life to God and in supplicating upon you his blessing. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

[Maquoketa] Monday. August, 25, 1845.

Good morning, my dearest friend. How are you this pleasant morning? Did you enjoy a pleasant Sabbath? We had a beautiful day here. At 10 a. m. our Sabbath School met. Our superintendent was absent from sickness, many of the children sick, but few of our teachers realize their responsibilities, only 15 scholars were present. I promised a copy of the New England Primer (from your donation) to all the children who would be punctually present on the four Sabbaths of the next month. I hope this will serve to provide a large attendance, and prepare the way for doing good. At 11 a. m. I preached a funeral sermon for the death of Mr. Shaw's child. The house was crowded, a complete jam, about seventy present, and many at the doors and windows. My congregation very

¹³ Robert Hall (1764-1831) an English Baptist divine whose fame rests mainly on the tradition of his pulpit oratory. *Vid. Dictionary of National Biography.*

serious and attentive. It might startle you in the course of the service to hear a child cry or to see a mother unable to quiet her child, go out with it. *But you will soon get used to these things.* It can't be helped in a new country. I always tell parents to come to meeting and bring their little ones with them. I have a little choir and tolerable singing for the backwoods. In the afternoon I resumed the account of my "journey", told them, among other things, of my visit to the Sabbath School¹⁴ in Massachusetts which had sent us such beautiful Library Books. I have then made two sermons of my "prosperous journey". My people think I have seen and done great things. And the *least of all* has been told them. Poor blind mortals. They will open their eyes one of these days. The Methodist Circuit Preacher was here at 6 p. m. and organized a class of ten members. They are disposed to be sectarian and push a little with their horns. . . .

Dr. Alexander¹⁵ of Princeton in the *New York Observer* (under signature of A. A.) is one of the most heavenly writers I have ever met with. He excels all men in facility and appropriateness in introducing the language of the Bible on every subject. I heard him preach several years ago on the sufferings of Christ. His style is very simple and tender. The truths of the Bible seem to be in him as an ever gushing well of water. His delight is in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth.

Wednesday evening. August 27.

I have been sitting an hour trying to read the life of Evarts,¹⁶ but with my eyes half the time looking down the road for the stage . . . anxiously anticipating information of you. . . . And now the stage comes. Hurrah! Hurrah! (But, my son, don't disturb the neighborhood.) . . . I walk over to the post office and with the most consummate equanimity of speech and countenance ask for my letter. "nothing for you."

. . . . The Methodist Preacher last Sabbath evening told us the death of Christ accomplished two objects. 1—it took away the sin of the world, i. e., the sin of Adam, then the death of Christ was the reason Adam did not die the very day in which he sinned, and *thus infants are saved!* 2—it took away the sins of the world. We are impelled to join the church because we are more likely to be converted in the church than out of it, the church being an hospital where there are physicians to doctor the sick. And all these preachers, in the eyes of many, just as good as you and better too. Has not this, my Mary, a great tendency to exalt a man and make him think more highly of himself than he ought to think? One of the severest trials of ministers in such a field as this arises from the fact that most of the people, on account of being used to such preaching, as I have given you a specimen of, make no kind of requisition upon a minister to study and divide the word of truth. Great occasion, it is

¹⁴ The Winthrop Church of Charlestown, Massachusetts.

¹⁵ Dr. Archibald Alexander (April 17, 1772–October 22, 1851) the first professor of Princeton Theological Seminary. *Vid. Dictionary of American Biography.*

¹⁶ E. C. Tracy, *Memoir of the Life of Jeremiah Evarts.* New York. 1845.

proverbially said, make great men. He must be a dull preacher who can preach well before an educated and enlightened congregation who will estimate what is said. O the difficulty of studying to preach well when there is no immediate purpose to do so. There is but one collegiately educated man in this country, and he does not come to meeting more than half a dozen times in the year. If it be the glory of the Gospel as of old that it is preached to the poor, it has that glory here. It is not an ignoble enterprise to elevate the unenlightened. I met a little boy today and asked him why he was not to Sabbath School last Sabbath. "I dirtied my clothes," he replied, "and could not come." "I am sorry," I said, "you will get these clean and come next Sabbath, won't you?" "Yes, sir, if I can get a cap, I'll be sure to come." We had an interesting prayer meeting this evening, about thirty present. We are suffering delay in not getting brick for our Academy¹⁷ as soon as we had anticipated. The brick makers are expecting to burn their kiln in a fortnight after which we expect to go right on and get upon building. I have thought some of having a study built this fall which may answer another year as an addition to *our* house.

Though there are many troubling things in this new country, it is after all a glorious work and one in which I would not change places with "15/16ths" of the ministers of New England. The future is all bright. I feel confident that if I can hold on the Lord will give me in ten years a flourishing church and large congregation. This country is rapidly filling up. Many strange faces have come in during my absence. Among others a merchant with a small stock of goods from Springfield, Mass. But we come here not because the field is inviting and easy, but because it is hard, expecting to endure self-denials and not repining at any privations, if so be we may save souls and extend the name of Christ, building not on others' foundations. I rejoice in feeling assured that these are your feelings. I believe I have no other desire than to be in the highest possible degree useful. I desire to be the child of Providence. God probably knows better than I do where I can be most useful. I want to feel that the best way to prepare for future usefulness is to do the best you can in present circumstances. I feel renewed strength and confidence in having your prayers. . . .

Maquoketa. August 30. Saturday afternoon.

. . . As my horse is lame and I have been disappointed in getting another I must go afoot to Andrew. It is most 6 o'clock. In my next I will write particularly of the many interesting things you speak of. I am afraid there will be a long space between your receiving my Detroit and Milwaukee papers. If I have any time Monday morning, I will fill

¹⁷ Rev. Salter saw the need of a school in Maquoketa and persuaded members of his congregation to donate land, material, and labor. Meanwhile, Rev. Salter collected \$300 from friends and relatives in the East. The Academy was incorporated by act of the legislative assembly, January 15, 1846. The building was completed in 1848, and Rev. George F. Magoun, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Galena, delivered the address. Eventually, the property was turned over to the public school system of Maquoketa.

out this sheet. Goodbye, my Mary, the thoughts of you will make my walk short. . . .

I am yours,
Wm. Salter.

I got about one half mile on my way and met one of my church here who had compassion on me and engaged to go up to attend meeting at Andrew tomorrow and carry me, so I returned and have the pleasure of talking with you. . . . My health has been very good though the warm weather be somewhat enervating. We have an abundance of wild plums and delicious melons. . . .

Your Wm.

Maquoketa. Jackson County, Iowa, Sept. 6, 1845.

My dear Mary:

Saturday evening has come again and I have half a sermon to write. Other multiplicity of cares this week have prevented my taking up my pen "toyowards", hitherto, so that now I must be hurried when I ought to have time to express my best thanks for your two letters. (am I not rich?) received this week, those of August 18th. and 25th., and the last received tonight in ten days after it was mailed. I guess Uncle Sam has profited by our threatened chastisements and begins to find out that the route between No. 7 Union street and this prairie is of the first importance. You write of many interesting matters which perhaps I ought to talk over first, but I presume to opine that you will want to know what I have been doing the last week. Last Sabbath morning I rode to Andrew and preached in the courthouse (a log building) to a small congregation of forty, but some of the excellent of the earth are in that church. I have two families in it who for much worth and devotion to the cause of Christ are not excelled in Iowa. They come regularly six miles to meeting, really hunger for the bread of life. I cut a little account of one of them from an Iowa paper and send it to you in a transcript the last mail. Some of your friends may be interested in seeing from it that the people are not all "heathen" in the Far West. The other family named "Young" are pure gold in the ore, plain, honest, and good from Pennsylvania. Mrs. Young was brought up in Mr. Duffield's¹⁸ church in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, who, by the way, was a very faithful, useful pastor. He is now in Detroit. You will be delighted to attend prayers in this beloved family. Here all the children sing and unite with Mrs. Y., children and all, in calling upon the name of the Lord. I preached twice. The Sabbath School has declined during my absence owing to sickness and other causes, and I was requested to form the whole congregation into a Bible class which was done. We are to study "the Romans". I have one very intelligent and gentlemanly lawyer in my congregation there from Virginia.

¹⁸ Rev. George Duffield (July 4, 1794—June 26, 1868), for thirty years pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Detroit, author of many theological books, and of the hymn, "Stand up, Stand up for Jesus." *Vid. Dictionary of American Biography.*

. . . I commenced early in the week a sermon on Josh. 24:15,¹⁹ but could not make it go. Yesterday I took up Psalms 144:12.²⁰ . . . My subject is education. It should be thorough, preparatory to usefulness in life, and to another state of existence, and the whole applied to our Academy here which is commended to the prayers and generous benefications of my people. My text in the p. m. is what Christ said to Matthew. What a text for your pulpit. Almost equal to Isaiah 53:1.²¹ But about my journey in the p. m.—I rode to Deacon Cotton's²² and found my appointment had not been sufficiently circulated to get a congregation. Mrs. Cotton had just returned from the East (western New York) bringing her mother with her, aged eighty years. The old lady endured the fatigues of her journey remarkably well. She was one of the first settlers on what was called the Holland Purchase in Western New York. Her husband in 1802 erected the first frame barn on the purchase. Men came to the raising of it a distance of thirty miles. How wonderful the growth of our country. Monday morning I borrowed a horse and rode to Bellevue, found most of my friends having the ague. Rev. Mr. Smith who has gone there this summer, a Bangor theological student, has the ague, and the family in which he boarded being sick, he has gone into the country to stay, so that I did not see him. He must have a hard time. Bellevue is one of the most abandoned places I was ever in—a most dreadful population. The only evidence I have that I have preached the truth among them is that they hate me. I can assure you that it is very trying to know how to get along with wicked men here. I treat them kindly and take trouble to gain their confidence, that if by any means I may save them until I feel that necessity is laid upon me to repair their vices when a torrent of abuse is the only reward of my faithfulness. I have had much of this experience. The leading physician of this country is of this character. Once he was polite and affable, but reproof has wounded him and now he never passes me without curling his lip in scorn. Living among such men one is able to appreciate and unite in the prayer [of] Psalms 26:9.²³ . . .

Sabbath evening.

If the "evening and the morning" are the first day of the week then the second day of the week has come. . . . I have had a pleasant Sabbath, a beautiful day, a house full of people, and some attentive hearers. . . .

¹⁹ Joshua 24:15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your father served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

²⁰ Psalms 144:12. That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.

²¹ Isaiah 53:1. Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed.

²² Samuel Cotton, a descendent of John Cotton, Puritan preacher. Mrs. Cotton was of the Bemis family, from "Bemis Heights," Saratoga, New York. *Vid.* Salter's, *Sixty Years*. p. 263.

²³ Psalms 26:9. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.

Judge Wilson²⁴ of the district court for this part of the country came along here with his wife (who is a member of the church in Dubuque) just before the hour of meeting on his way to hold court in a county below. He and his wife came into meeting in the course of the services, after which they got their dinner and went on their journey, a pretty example for a judge's family? I had 30 at the monthly concert this evening.

I am in hopes of getting out a good sermon one of these weeks on the text "My Kingdom is not of this world." . . . I spent last Monday night with Mr. Magoun²⁵ at Galena. He has nobly and enthusiastically thrown himself upon the rising current of education in the West. He promises to be one of the most awful men of the country. We talked nearly the whole night about everything. Preliminary measures are on foot for getting up the new church in Galena. It will consist of some choice spirits and will afford a most desirable field of usefulness. They will be very particular about their minister. He ought to be first rate. . . . I went to Dubuque on Tuesday and entered at the land sales 80 acres of land for the gentleman I board with who is unfortunately in some pecuniary trouble.²⁶ I did it entirely to relieve him and have no advantage from it. I had a very hard horse and finding myself sore from riding, I came directly home on Wednesday. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

Maquoketa. September 12, Friday afternoon.

My dear Mary:

The wind has been blowing very severely all day, and the heavens are brewing a storm. I have had but little success in my studies. Many things discourage me among my own people. I have too much reason to complain that they all seek their own, rather than to help one another, and to advance the cause of Christ. Then, when all that love the Saviour ought to love one another and strive together for the faith of the Gospel there exist alienations and divisions. In reading the fifth [chapter] of Matthew, I was led to think that if I would require my people before coming to meeting to be reconciled to their brethren (verse 23-24)²⁷ I should have a very thin congregation. Contention about lands and one thing and another distract our community very much. I asked a very intelligent gentleman who was here this week and who has purchased some property in the neighborhood from Cincinnati, if he would not move his family out soon. No, said he, I think I must wait until you get a little further along. Isn't that encouraging? . . .

²⁴ Supreme Court Justice Thomas S. Wilson. *Vid.* Edward H. Stiles, *Recollections and Sketches of Notable Lawyers and Public Men of Early Iowa*, Des Moines, 1916, pp. 45, 571.

²⁵ Rev. George F. Magoun was the author of *Asa Turner and His Times*, Boston, 1889; and was the first president of Iowa College. *Vid.* ANNALS OF IOWA, Third Series, Vols. III, pp. 53, 86, 92; VI, p. 357; VII, pp. 68, 370-371; VIII, p. 190.

²⁶ Mr. Shaw.

²⁷ Matthew 5:23-24. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Is Mars indeed the God of War and does he indicate the approach of that dreadful scourge upon our land. I pray not, and yet I watch with fearful anxiety the belligerent on the South West. Who does not hang his head to own himself an American who looking at the course our government has taken to perpetuate and extend slavery. I tremble for my country, said an infidel, in view of the commissions of slavery, when I remember that God is just. And has not the Christian who believes God governs among the nations, removes the fears. There are few evils to be so dreaded as war. What a commentary upon the little Christianity in our land is the existence of so much desire for war. I am going to *fire a charge* on the subject as soon as I can "make ready".

I suppose some of your friends will have to study their geography to find out where Iowa and especially Maquoketa is. You must make them all interested in this land, and tell them you will find something for them to do here. There is one interesting thing about Iowa, to wit: that it is the only part of the country West of the Father of Waters which is *free*, thus affording both a more promising field of labor and a more desirable home to all that believe that the Messiah's kingdom "shall break in pieces the oppressor". Psalms 72:4.²⁸ It is washed by that river of which that prophetic observor of our country's progress, Jeremiah Everts, said nearly twenty years ago, "that in a hundred years, it will be more traveled than any other thoroughfare in the world." Still as I have often told you—our work is one of self-denial. By the way, I saw in Evert's life, pages 195 and 196, his observations on the difficulties of planting religion in a destitute portion of Tennessee through which he traveled. They apply very nearly to this country. New difficulties are discouraging and yet they are the very reason why we must labor and toil here. The greater the difficulties, the louder the call to self-denying effort. . . .

I have two very excellent ladies here Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Shaw, women of intelligence, good sense, and worth. . . . But I feel that our good efforts must be in behalf of the rising generation. If we can be instrumental in establishing our Academy aright, we shall not have lived in vain. In relation to the education of our public schools, strenuous efforts will be needed to have it of a Christian character, and if this cannot be accomplished, we shall have to abandon those schools and walk in our own way. You know and I know the importance of French education. We want mothers to build up the church and to save the state. In all these enterprises I shall feel strong in your cooperation. . . .

I have had no opportunity to preach my Western sermon since I saw you. I preached it once in Buffalo and in New York. I shall get up a new sermon on the subject for this latitude next month. I am also plotting a sermon on the original condition of man. Do you think the Garden of Eden was located on a prairie? If not, you may have your eyes opened on the subject another year. . . .

²⁸ Psalms 72:4. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

I really get fatigued in preaching. I believe it is my business as it is my enjoyment. Monday I generally spend reading papers, on little things. Though I look at newspapers as matters of the greatest importance. They are of wonderful power in controlling public sentiment. I want they should be under a Christian influence. There are few objects of greater moments to my view than the reformation of the press. I hope we shall be able to do something in this case one of these days. I am very thankful for papers from you. . . . My relatives were all from Portsmouth and New Hampshire where the family has been for several generations. There was a Dr. Salter, clergyman, in Mansfield, it seems, 60 years ago after whom Dr. Storrs was named, but I know nothing of his family. Those whose names were in the *Puritan* you sent me, I know nothing of. . . .

Most affectionately yours,
Wm. Salter.

Maquoketa, Iowa. September 20, 1845.

My dearest Mary:

I have much to write you. . . . It is now Saturday night and nearly 11 o'clock. I have had a week of joy and grief. I want to go over all with you, but I have not time. Last Sabbath I preached three times to a small congregation, Monday a. m. I visited a little, and then set my face toward Cascade. On my way I visited Mr. Alexander's family. They are an excellent family, Scotch Presbyterian. The girls have attended the Romish school in Dubuque because there was no other school in the country. I could not but think of you as I was reminded by my preaching in the neighborhood last winter when I had one of the girls to ride to meeting a mile and a half on my horse behind me. I passed through a settlement of Irish Papists where is a log church and school and resident priest. I believe this is one instance of the executing of the plan formed in Europe to Romanize the West of which you have seen notices. I had a delightful visit at Cascade, spent Tuesday there. We talked and sang together. . . .

I found some new cases of sickness on my return home. We are called to mourn a very distressing death in this village. Though I might have mentioned that while at Cascade, I heard of the death by lockjaw of Mr. Alexander, the father of the family I have spoken of above. He died in Dubuque very suddenly. He has left a large family. The other death was that of Mrs. Plato on yesterday morning. She was a widow lady, sister of Mrs. Hall. There were many extremely melancholy circumstances in her decease. I hardly dare to write of them. I was completely unnerved yesterday so that I could do nothing. I was with her when she breathed her last. She was sick but five days, taken with rather a severe bilious fever, but the immediate cause of her death was unquestionably injudicious medical treatment. Her funeral is to be attended tomorrow. I have been engaged all day in preparing a sermon from Romans 14:8.²⁹

²⁹ Romans 14:8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefor, or die, we are the Lord's.

She was a very useful woman in my little society here, one of the kindest friends I had had. She was very active and intelligent, a good Sabbath School Teacher. The Lord seems to have no mercy on us. Taking away the best of our Society. Not that I mourn, for this I would never do, but it does seem to be a dark cloud in the prospects of this country. Mrs. P was expecting here in a fortnight from the East a son and a sister. Her heart was set on seeing them. But inexorable death would not wait. It is most twelve and I have not time for reflection. . . . Goodnight.

Sabbath eve.

The soft light of setting day seems kindly propitious to my thoughts of the precious one far away. All is peaceful and serene. I trust it is the emblem of the peace of my soul. I had a large congregation this morning, about one hundred, a sad service it was to me. I trust I shall be made better by it. In preaching this afternoon from Luke 21:34-35³⁰ I could not but illustrate the state of mind in which we ought *always* to live by the fact that Mr. Crosby mentions in his sermon on your grandfather's³¹ death, that a few hours before his death he said, "Seventy and seven years have I been waiting for this crisis." By the help of Heaven's grace, let us so live. . . .

I must go and visit a sick man and then to prayer meeting, after which I will write a few lines if I can get out of this preaching strain.

It has got to be past midnight . . . and the bedside of a sick man is a poor place whence to write you. But I am in a good school. The lesson I learn tonight will come in play perhaps when you want a little nursing. My patient is a Rhode Islander. A sketch of his history may add a short chapter to your idea of the motley mixture of society in the West. He fell out with some of his family at home, and came here where he has been engaged like a true Yankee in all kinds of business to get a living by his wits, keeping school, talking, and trading. He is irritable and cross and has made himself obnoxious to many of our people. He is a Unitarian, he has a severe attack of bilious fever. I am doing the best I can for him, but I find myself a poor nurse. . . .

You understand from what Mr. Bridges told you the relation of the A. H. M. S. to churches in the West. The Society does not direct or dictate either to church or minister. It advises. The church at Burlington probably feel very independent and high-minded. I have never preached to them. My conduct in relation to the whole matter will be, as I know you will wish it to be, directed, I trust, by that Latin motto which we fell in with at the McLean Asylum. I have Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*. The light of my candle is about dim enough to tell you my cloudy views of his speculation. But as I write for your comprehension, I had better wait for the light of day and for a time when my mind has turned from the labor of preaching. My portfolio is I believe

³⁰ Luke 21:34-35. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

³¹ Amos Tufts.

perfectly a sanctum. I have all confidence that the family I board with are not busy bodies. I have a lock and key to it. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

Maquoketa. September 25, 1845.

My dearest friend:

I have been in vain trying to write a sermon this week. . . . There are troubles in the community. You never know what to expect or rather what not to expect in so new a country. When you begin to think that the prospects of society are good they are perhaps well clouded over in half a day. I have a sore trial with one of my elders, he has been behaving very bad, and we shall probably have to cut him off. I had a pretty good attendance at prayer meeting last evening. . . .

You ask about ministers around me. Mr. Kent is a dull preacher, always writes, but can make a very fervent appeal and tell a rousing story for the West. I. D. Stevens of Platteville, W. T., 60 miles north east of this, is now in the East. The West has a competent advocate in him. He was for many years a missionary of the A. B. C. F. M. among the Indians at Mackinaw and St. Peters. Rev. Mr. Wells, chaplain at Prairie Du Chien, would charm any congregation with the felicity of his style and the grace of his address. J. J. Hill in Clayton co. is of rather a heavy, slow cast of mind, but Mrs. Hill is all soul and goes ahead. You know of Mr. Holbrook as a forceful animated preacher, a vigorous writer and devoted to his work. Brother Boal of Marion, I have never heard. He, however, has a good reputation. Brother Turner has a well-balanced mind and preaches good plain sermons. Brother Emerson is a very zealous animated preacher, unfortunately sings a little when excited, I mean has a singing tone. He labors at Albany, Illinois and in Dewitt, 20 miles east of me. Brother Adams preaches a serious, sober, dignified and instructive sermon. Brother Robbins is a plain, clear and interesting preacher. In the South, Rev. D. Lane is in my opinion, head and shoulders above his brethren. I think he always writes. He has a discriminating strong mind, is of the highest moral excellence, and commends himself as a man of God and minister of Christ to every man's conscience. I had a letter from him last week in which he informs me that he is going East very soon for his wife's sake. She has the dropsey and is considered dangerous. He hopes that "home" and the sea air may benefit Mrs. L.

. . .

Saturday afternoon. September 27.

I had just mended my quill when I was interrupted by a call from the new Methodist preacher who has just arrived on the circuit. . . . Our association is at Davenport October 21. I shall probably preach in Dubuque Oct. 12. . . .

Yours, Wm. Salter.

[To be continued]

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