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Correspondence of the Reverend Ezra Fisher

Pioneer Missionary of the American Baptist
Home Mission Society in Indiana,
Illinois, Iowa and Oregon

Edited by

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EDITORS' PREFACE

The letters here given to the public were written by the Reverend Ezra Fisher to the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Their publication was planned by his youngest daughter, Mrs. Sarah Fisher Henderson. She collected the letters, had them transcribed, and with the assistance of Miss Latourette had done part of the editing before her death. In her will she provided for the completion of the work. Her executors entrusted this to Miss Latourette and Mr. Latourette, who have tried to carry it on in as close accord as possible with her original plans. These included a life of Mr. Fisher, such occasional changes in the text of the letters as would make them more clear, and notes of historical explanation. The life is the work of Miss Latourette. The emendation of the text was begun by Mrs. Henderson and Miss Latourette and was completed by the latter. These emendations seemed to Mrs. Henderson desirable in view of the conditions under which the letters were composed. They were written under the most adverse surroundings of frontier life, amid frequent distractions and without opportunity for revision. Certain minor rhetorical and grammatical errors inevitably crept in which the author would, with his usual care in such matters, have corrected had he had the opportunity. It is to make these corrections that the emendations have been designed. They have been slight, have in no instance altered the meaning, and usually

have been indicated. Omissions, also indicated, have been made of occasional phrases, sentences and paragraphs. The historical notes are the work of Mr. Latourette.

The editors wish to express their heartiest appreciation and thanks to those who have helped make this work possible, especially to the officers of the American Baptist Home Mission Society for the loan of the original manuscripts; to Mr. George H. Himes, of the Oregon Historical Society, for frequent and ungrudging contributions from his rich stores of information; to Mrs. Ann Eliza Fisher Latourette for her constant interest; to the executors of Mrs. Henderson's will, Mr. L. E. Latourette and Mr. R. W. Fisher; and to the editors of the *Quarterly* of the Oregon Historical Society for their kindness in offering its pages to the initial publication of the larger part of the letters.

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THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

Ezra Fisher was a native of New England. He was a descendant of Anthony Fisher, who came from Syleham, County Suffolk, England, in 1637, and settled at Dedham, Mass. Here at the beginning of the Revolution lived Ezra Fisher's grandparents, Benjamin and Sara (Everett) Fisher. Five of their sons answered the call to arms of April 19, 1775. Six of them served later in the war, the eldest dying of camp fever at Ticonderoga.

The youngest, Aaron, was in Captain Asa Fairbank's company at the Lexington alarm, it is said, when but seventeen years of age. He afterward served in the regiments of Col. Ephraim Wheelock, of Col. Carleton and of Col. Rufus Putnam, most of the time with rank of sergeant. During the war he was married to Miss Betty Moore and, at its close, they removed from Dedham and settled on a farm near Wendell, Mass. Here it was that Ezra Fisher was born, January 6, 1800.

His environment was that of the average New England boy at the beginning of the last century. In the home of his parents were few luxuries and much hard work, but there was a fireside where God was worshipped, the Bible read, religion and education discussed and a vital interest taken in the affairs of the State so lately formed. Like other boys of his day, he was privileged to learn, from the generation who had desperately struggled for them, how the civil liberties of that State were won. Unlike most boys of his time,

he learned from Baptist parents the meaning of religious liberty. They themselves had been forced to contribute to the support of the established church and could relate sad tales of the various persecutions which had harassed their denomination in New England until at least 1799.

All the early years of his life were spent on his father's farm. The knowledge of farming there obtained and later supplemented by reading along that line served him well as a pioneer, as did also an unusual ability to turn his hand to many things. To the hard conditions of his life on the farm he doubtless owed not only the latter talent, but his tireless industry and his ability to endure hardships. In spite of health which was never rugged, these qualities were his to a marked degree.

From the common schools near his home, he gained sufficient education to begin teaching at the age of eighteen. At the same age he was converted and united with the Baptist church in Wendell. Out of the religious life which followed came the conviction that he ought to preach the gospel, and with it, the resolution to fit himself thoroughly for the work.

With no other aid than his own, he struggled nearly twelve years to carry out this purpose. His preparation for college was received in part from a nearby academy, but progress was slow because of much time necessarily spent in teaching and in work on the farm. Severe sickness also hindered him.

He was admitted to Amherst College in 1822. That institution had opened its doors only the year before for the purpose of educating "poor and pious young men for the ministry." Here among many with similar aim to his own, he found the opportunities he sought. Although a good student, working his way meant long absences while teaching, and another illness, which was all but fatal, left him much weakened in health, so that his graduation was delayed until 1828, when he took his bachelor's degree with a class of forty, twenty-three of whom were preparing for the ministry.

The following year he entered Newton Theological Seminary, where he studied until January, 1830. He then accepted a call to the pastorate of the Baptist church at Cambridge, Vermont, and was there ordained to the ministry, January 20, 1830.

On February 7th of the same year he was married to Miss Lucy Taft, of Clinton, N. Y., but formerly of Wendell, Mass. Shortly after the wedding they departed in a sleigh for Cambridge, Vt. They had known each other from childhood, and their marriage was the consummation of an engagement which began two years before his entrance to college.

In February of the next year he entered upon his second pastorate at Springfield in the same state. His work of nearly two years in this place resulted in the conversion and baptism of about eighty persons. From Springfield Ezra Fisher wrote, under date of September 22, 1832, the first letter of his correspondence with the American Baptist Home Mission Society. That Society had been organized the preceding April, and while it included in its scope the whole of North America, it was religious destitution in the Mississippi Valley which gave it birth.

Western need of the gospel had appealed strongly to both Mr. and Mrs. Fisher. In sympathy with the Home Mission movement from its beginning and feeling that New England claims upon them were small as compared with those of the West, they had early decided that, if the Lord should open the way, they would gladly serve Him "in some destitute portion of the Great Valley."

Their wish met with the approval of the Home Mission Society. Dr. Jonathan Going, first Corresponding Secretary of the Society, on a visit to their church in Springfield, had encouraged them to go to the Valley the coming fall. Hoping at the time that they might do so, Ezra Fisher wrote the first letter to inform him that they felt unable to leave the church in Springfield until the next spring or fall. Late in October, however, came a letter from Indianapolis, Ind.,

asking Mr. Fisher to come immediately to that place, and assuring him that the Home Mission Society would furnish him an outfit and support him there. The Springfield church having released him, he at once made ready to go.

On the twelfth of November, 1832, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher bade goodbye to their friends in Springfield and, with their little daughter, began their first journey westward. Stopping only for a visit of a few days with Mrs. Fisher's parents in Clinton, N. Y., they were five weeks on the way, not reaching Indianapolis until the 22d of December. He at once began work at a salary of three hundred dollars a year, fifty dollars having been allowed him for outfit. His appointment, voted by the Board, November 8, 1832, made him one of the first missionaries of the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

With his arrival at Indianapolis, his own pen takes up the account of his life and work and continues it almost uninterruptedly until 1856. It is the story of how he strove to place the leaven of the Kingdom of God within the developing life of the Mississippi Valley, of how he journeyed by ox team to the Pacific Coast to perform a like service for Oregon, and of how he did indeed labor in Oregon amid many discouragements to set in motion the forces which make for effective righteousness. For the most part, only the outlines of what he himself has written would be in place here.

While the purpose of his correspondence was primarily to give the Society an account of his own work and of the Baptist cause where he labored, he does much more than this. He describes the country, its places, the life and conditions of every field he occupied, suggests, often with prophet's vision, bases for future operations, gives a comprehensive view of American expansion westward and at least touches upon nearly every event of importance connected with the earlier history of the Pacific Coast.

The church in Indianapolis was a chaotic one of fifty-five members. They had no articles of faith and their beliefs

were almost as varied as the places from which they had come. Most were opposed to the support of the ministry. They had no Sunday school and many did not believe in the institution.

In their association of fifteen or sixteen churches, he knew of no church which had preaching more than one Sabbath a month and there were but two ministers who devoted much time to their calling. Probably the majority of Baptists throughout the state had little or no sympathy with the benevolent societies of the denomination.

His efforts were chiefly confined to his own church. He preached, however, when possible, in neighboring places and visited sufficiently among the churches of the state to keep informed of their needs. He assisted in the organization of the General Association of Baptists in Indiana in 1833, and of a state Baptist Education Society in 1835.

At the close of his pastorate in Indianapolis, March 22, 1835, many discouraging conditions remained, but the church was in harmony, had a Sunday school of ninety or more members, and would, he believed, furnish half the salary of a minister the next year.

Ezra Fisher continued to make his home in Indianapolis until April 12, 1836, the last year acting as agent of the American Sunday School Union for Indiana. Because of a wish to work directly for the Baptist denomination, he declined the invitation to serve another year, and, because his health would not admit of the sedentary life, he also refused a position as the head of Franklin College, soon to go into operation at Franklin, Indiana.

Under commission of the Home Mission Society, he again went west, this time to Quincy, Ill., to take charge of a church of nine members, worshipping in a small school room. He arrived there May 4, 1836. For the first year only his time was divided between the church at Quincy and one called Bethany at Payson, ten miles southeast.

Supported but in part by the Society, during most of his

stay of three and a half years, he was able to live, to use his own words, "only by uniting industry and economy with self-denial." When the brave little church at Quincy was building, he cheerfully taught school to make up the deficit in his salary, and, at the end of that year, wrote: "This church is truly becoming one of the most pleasant churches in the land and will soon become one of the most desirable situations for an efficient preacher in the whole West. . . . When God in His providence shall indicate to me that this place demands another than a frontier man, if my health and that of my family permit, I hope once more to take a frontier post." The church had forty members at the time he left it.

He had hoped to go to Texas in the fall of 1839, but, disappointed in this, he went at that time to Iowa Territory. So far as is known, there is no record of why he did not go to Texas or of his first year's work in Iowa, save that he preached for a time at Bloomington, now Muscatine, and also at Wapsipinikie, now Independence. In serving these places, it is likely that he devoted considerable time to exploring and endeavoring to relieve the general field.

In 1841, when he again takes pen to report his movements since November, 1840, we find him the only Baptist minister in a region "from twenty to fifty miles in width, extending from the mouth of the Iowa river up the Mississippi to the mouth of the Macoquetois (Moquoketa) and thence up that stream some ten miles above its forks." His station was Davenport.

In endeavoring to relieve the destitution, he travelled during the quarter ending December 10, 1841, seven hundred and fifty miles. Through all that part of Iowa Territory and across the river at Rock Island, Ill., and neighboring points, his was a familiar figure for more than five years. He preached the gospel, made religious visits to hundreds of homes, took a leading part in organizing the Baptist work in the territory and in organizing temperance societies, gave

many addresses on the subjects of temperance and of nature, schools and related numerous addresses to the temperance pledge.

The larger part of his time was given to the churches of La Crosse and Milwaukee the latter of which had long been organized by him October 31, 1841. It was not till August 1843 that he planned to go to Oregon for the following year.

Feeling that the opportunity of visiting relatives and friends would not again be theirs, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher and their three children spent the summer and fall of 1841 in the East. It was their first trip back since coming to the Mississippi Valley nearly eleven years before. At the end of the long journey from Iowa the little daughter announced their arrival at the home of her grandparents in life. "Home by exclaiming 'O grandpa, we are home to stay all night.' Their youngest daughter¹ was born during the visit there.

Leaving New York late in the fall they reached La Crosse, Ia. December 15, having come all the way by team.

Under appointment of the Home Mission Society and expecting to go to Oregon in the spring of 1844 Ezra Fisher began preaching in various churches within reach of La Crosse, travelling that quarter four hundred and twenty-eight miles.

Unfavorable reports of the immigration of 1841 soon reached him. Some of the company had returned like the Israelitish spies of Canaan, to discourage the hearts of many anticipating the Oregon land of promise.

The uncertainty of getting beyond Fort Hall with Oregon and the unsettled condition of Oregon together with other reasons, led Ezra Fisher to defer his going to Oregon until 1845. He was therefore appointed to labor at Rock Island Ill. and Mt. Pleasant, twelve miles southeast. In March 14, 1845 at the close of his year with the Antislavery Baptist

¹ Afterwards Mrs. Sarah Fisher Henderson.

Home Mission Society, he received his commission to labor in Oregon.

Early in April, Ezra Fisher and his family set out from Rock Island, Ill., on their journey of more than twenty-five hundred miles to the Willamette Valley, Oregon. Going into rendezvous at St. Joseph, Mo., they left that place the middle of May. To their joy they soon afterward overtook, or were overtaken by Rev. Hezekiah Johnson and family from Iowa, whom they had expected to accompany them, but had given up. The two men had been closely associated in organizing the Baptist work in Iowa. At the solicitation of both, Hezekiah Johnson had also been appointed by the Home Mission Society a missionary to Oregon. A salary of three hundred dollars¹ for one year from the time of their arrival in Oregon had been advanced to each of them.

Like the rest of their company, the two missionaries and their families experienced none of the extreme sufferings which fell to the lot of many who travelled the Oregon Trail, and of some who that year departed from it. So far as known, the worst Indian depredation in the family of Ezra Fisher was the cutting off of the brass buttons on his son's round-about. But there were trials in abundance and their share of the very real suffering and danger which were a part of crossing the plains to Oregon.

One of their trials was the disregard of the Sabbath, which they not only felt to be wrong, but which prevented their accomplishing as much in a religious way as they had hoped. Except in a genuine emergency, such as lack of water, or of feed for the cattle, on the Sundays when their company insisted upon travelling, the missionaries would tarry behind, have family devotions, rest and overtake the main company late in the evening.

About half of the Sabbaths were observed at least by halting. On these occasions, one of the three ministers of

¹ See letter of March 22, 1845.

the company would preach, a wagon usually serving as a pulpit.

At The Dalles Ezra Fisher preached his first sermon in Oregon from John 3:16. Here the missionaries camped and built a flatboat. They were out of provisions and obliged to pay eight dollars per hundred pounds for flour and six dollars for beef. Dried salmon, bought of the Indians, was generally a substitute for the latter.

Some of the party, Ezra Fisher among them, brought the cattle and horses down the Indian trail on the north bank of the Columbia. On the flatboat, laden with their wagons and other possessions, including a skiff for use in catching their flatboat below the rapids, the rest of their number embarked, and thus came to the portage at the Cascades, where they camped in a drenching rain.

Their boat, which was set adrift to go over the Cascades, lodged in the rocks amid-stream and all efforts to dislodge it were in vain. In their extremity, they sent to Dr. McLoughlin for aid. With his usual kindness, he sent them a bateau.

At the Cascades, or, it would seem more likely, at a later camping point, those who had come down the north bank joined them. They were wet and in a nearly famished condition. Ezra Fisher and his son¹ had been living for the last day or two on a daily half-pint of milk, and a little wheat which they had in their pockets. Hot biscuits² were a never-to-be-forgotten luxury of their repast that night.

Continuing their journey in the bateau, the party arrived at a point near Linnton on or near the sixth of December. Here the two families separated, Hezekiah Johnson and family continuing up the river to Oregon City, while Ezra Fisher and family, piloted by Edward Lenox, went to Tualatin Plains.

¹ Ezra Timothy Taft Fisher.

² Throughout the journey, the family baking had been done with the aid of a tin reflector, which stood on four legs, was bent so as to form a hood and enclosed at the sides. From the front, baking pans were slid into place along grooves.

In the log cabin of David T. Lenox, well known as captain of the first company to reach Oregon in 1843, they found shelter from the rain and cold. It was the same cabin in which had been organized, on May 25, 1844, the first Baptist church west of the Rocky Mountains. It was about eighteen by twenty-two feet, and had a "lean-to." Although the family of David Lenox numbered thirteen and the "lean-to" was occupied by a widow and three children, with the utmost hospitality the six new arrivals were made welcome. Together the three families spent the remainder of the winter, all making the best of their cramped quarters.

Each morning the bed, which had been spread out on the puncheon floor, would be rolled up in the buffalo robes which had seen duty on the Plains. They did their cooking over the stick fireplace. This was simplified because of a lack of materials with which to cook. They were without flour, milk, butter or eggs, and their only meat was the game which they were able to kill. Boiled wheat, occasionally served with molasses, potatoes and dried-pea coffee, were their chief dependence. They had, besides, dried peas and turnips.

In the evening they would gather around the fireplace, seated, for the most part, on benches or blocks of wood and, by the light of a pitchy knot, Ezra Fisher would read the words for the children to spell. On Sunday evenings he would conduct a Bible class.

Upon their arrival at the home of David Lenox, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher and their eldest daughter had at once united with the little church which had been organized the preceding year and of which Rev. Vincent Snelling, of the immigration of '44, was pastor. This was at West Union, six miles north-east of what is now Hillsboro. During the winter Ezra Fisher provided for his family, travelled up and down the Valley, going nearly as far south as the Luckiamute River, acquainted himself with conditions and needs, and preached every Sunday but three.

In the spring, when David Lenox moved his family into a new log cabin, Ezra Fisher rented the old one and conditions became more comfortable for all. The following summer he taught a term of school, kept up his preaching each Sabbath, superintended a Sunday school of twenty-five pupils, and, when Rev. Vincent Snelling moved to what is now Yamhill County, became pastor of the West Union Church. During the few months of his pastorate there were ten or twelve conversions.

Believing that near the mouth of the Columbia lay the point which would become of first commercial importance for Oregon, and that no other place except Oregon City was of more immediate consequence, he moved to Astoria in the fall of '46. That part of Oregon had then its share of settlers, at least one other denomination was beginning an effort there and the outlook for steady growth was most encouraging.

Throughout the winter he preached every Sunday but, with only two American families in Astoria besides themselves, his field of usefulness was limited. Most of his time for two months was occupied in building the house which for many years served as Astoria's postoffice and which has often been pictured as a landmark of the place. It was made of shakes, split with a frow, and was built entirely from one big tree, a portion of which remained unused.

Their privations and discouragements that year were great. They had received neither word nor remittance from the Home Mission Society since leaving Rock Island, Ill. They had no mail and very little reading matter. Their first home was a log cabin which had been abandoned some time before. It had been made habitable no doubt by some repairs, but it had no windows and in it were few indeed of the commonest comforts of life. They were wearing old clothes which had served their day in Illinois and of food had small variety, although better supplied than the year before. The winter was severe and he lost all but two of his twenty cattle. More

than all his privations, he regretted that he could be of so little use as a minister of the gospel and must spend so large a part of his time in providing the necessities of life. "If I have one object for which I desire to live more than all others," he wrote, "it is to see the cause for which Christ impoverished Himself making the people of Oregon rich."

In anticipation of the needs of California and of Puget Sound his first letter from Astoria had this: "Should the settlement of the Oregon question be what we anticipate, we shall greatly need a missionary stationed at Puget Sound before you can commission a suitable man and send him to the field. And should Upper California remain under the United States government, a missionary will be greatly needed at San Francisco Bay immediately upon the settlement of the Mexican War. . . . This whole country and Upper California are emphatically missionary grounds, and our relation to the whole Pacific Coast and the half of the globe in our front demands prompt and faithful action. . . . Whatever God has in store for our majestic River and our spacious and safe harbors on the Pacific, one thing is now reduced to a demonstration: We must become a part of the Great North American Republic. It remains for the Christian churches of that Republic to say whether our territory shall prove a blessing or a sore curse to the nation. Shall the needed help be denied us?" His plea for San Francisco and Puget Sound was often repeated.

In the spring, because they could the better earn their living and, at the same time, be as useful as at Astoria, they moved to Clatsop Plains.¹

In connection with the Presbyterians, they at once organized a Sunday school in the log school house where their eldest daughter² taught during the week.

This at first numbered twenty-five and soon grew to thirty. Following Sunday school each week, either Rev. Lewis

¹ See letter of Jan. 26, 1850.

² Miss Lucy J. G. Fisher (Latourette).

Thompson, the Presbyterian minister, or Elder Fisher would preach, the two men acting alternately and their congregations numbering about fifty.

In June, mail from the East began to reach the Baptist missionary. It was the first since leaving St. Joseph, Mo., more than two years before. In August, two boxes from the Home Mission Society arrived. At the age of seventy-six, the only living member³ of the family remembers with what delight these, and a box from her grandparents, which arrived at the same time, were received.

The goods from the Home Mission Society had been ordered from Tualatin Plains, April 17, 1846, and were sent in response to the wish of Ezra Fisher that a large proportion of his salary each year should be spent on supplies purchased in New York at the lower New York prices and forwarded by ship to Oregon. This method of remittance was satisfactory to both and became their practice. The salary of the two missionaries would appear to have been less than two hundred dollars each, as they received word in 1847 that it had been increased to that amount. They sometimes received donations from eastern churches and societies. These, however, were usually books and periodicals for general distribution.

Removing four miles farther south on Clatsop Plains, near what is now Gearhart, Ezra Fisher kept up his appointments at the former place and began preaching on the alternate Sundays in his own home, a log cabin built by himself. In the fall, he made a four-weeks' tour of the Willamette Valley, taking with him a supply of Bibles, Testaments and tracts which had been received with the goods from New York.

The third winter in Oregon was passed more pleasantly than the two which had preceded it. But life on Clatsop Plains in 1847 and 1848 was hardly modern. Around them, far more numerous than the white settlers, were the Clatsop

³ Mrs. Ann E. Latourette.

Indians, and Chinook Jargon was in daily use. Ezra Fisher's cabin was lighted by a primitive lamp without a chimney and burned oil obtained by the Indians from a whale which had been cast ashore. The lamp was a luxury of his own family, most of their neighbors using a saucer or small bowl of oil or lard in which a twisted rag served for a wick. His home was swept by a hazel broom which he himself had made. Indian baskets were common receptacles and, except for wild cranberries raked from numerous bogs, the family fruit supply was the berries gathered in the summer and dried. Mrs. Fisher had a few cherished dried currants, which on rare occasions she would add to a pudding or cake. The only apples or oranges the children had seen in Oregon were a few presented to them by a sea captain at Astoria.

In the Spring of 1848, Ezra Fisher helped to build a log house to serve for school and church purposes, and on March 18, 1848, organized the Clatsop Plains Baptist Church. At this time he was the only minister in the county, its population was gradually increasing and at his two stations were two Sunday schools with forty-two scholars, ten teachers and one hundred and twenty library books.

In June, he made another trip to the Valley, this time to aid in the organization of the first Baptist association in Oregon, and to awaken an interest in starting a denominational school. At West Union, the Willamette Baptist Association was organized, June 23, 1848, Elder Fisher being elected moderator and David Lenox clerk. Thereafter, throughout his life, Ezra Fisher was greatly interested in all the work of this Association, was its moderator many times, preached to it and served it in numberless ways. In connection with it was a Ministers' Conference which he helped to organize and of which he was repeatedly elected moderator. He later assisted in the organization of the Corvallis Association, and of the General Association, in both of which he took an active part.

At the close of the West Union Meeting, he made an ex-

tended tour of the Valley, preaching and looking over the field with the thought of a suitable location for a school constantly before him. He travelled on foot sixty-five miles above Oregon City, crossed the Willamette near Salem and visited the Yamhill church, returned through the Chehalem and Tualatin valleys and arrived at Oregon City on the twentieth of July. Leaving Oregon City on the twenty-fourth, he reached home the twenty-eighth.

About this time came the California gold excitement.

In the spring of 1849, none of his church on Clatsop Plains was left but members of his own family. Amid the general confusion and excitement there was little hope of accomplishing much in Oregon, and he lacked the means to devote himself to missionary effort in California. The loss of his supplies from New York for that year in the wreck of the bark *Undine* off Cape Horn and the absolute necessity of devising some method by which to provide for the needs of his family induced him to go to the mines. This he did, hoping, at the same time, that he might be of more service by going than by remaining at home.

In San Francisco he met and preached for Rev. O. D. Wheeler, whom the American Baptist Home Mission Society had sent to California in 1848. He was in the mines about eight weeks and took out about one thousand dollars' worth of gold, most of which, upon his return, went toward the purchase of a claim to furnish a site for a Baptist college. If any one should think him mercenary, let him read his letters of '49 and that of Jan. 20, 1853.

Arriving home on August 23, he set out on the twenty-ninth for the Willamette Valley. At the call of several representative Baptists of the Valley, a meeting was held at Oregon City, Sept. 21, 1849, to consider the question of establishing "a permanent school under the direction and fostering care of the Baptist churches in Oregon," and on the following day was organized the Oregon Baptist Education So-

city.¹ The attendance being small, it was voted to adjourn and meet with the church in Yamhill County on Sept. 27.

At the Yamhill gathering, every church except one, that of Molalla, was represented. A site for the institution was agreed upon, a Board of Trustees appointed, and to Rev. Richard Cheadle was assigned the task of raising two thousand dollars for the building and other expenses. Ezra Fisher was placed in charge of the institution and was requested to move to the place as soon as practicable and put a school in operation. The chosen location was on the "east bank of the Willamette about eight miles above the mouth of the Calapooia river."

Upon his arrival with his family at Oregon City late in November, Ezra Fisher learned that the intended site was not vacant. While awaiting developments, he opened a school in the little meeting house² which Hezekiah Johnson had built in Oregon City the year before, and where his niece, Miss Mary Johnson,³ had taught for a few months immediately after its completion.

It was finally thought best to locate the college in Oregon City, the opportunity of purchasing a claim adjoining the townsite of Oregon City, the success of Ezra Fisher's school, and the desirability of Oregon City as a place of location, doubtless being the chief reasons which led to this decision. The claim was purchased for five thousand dollars by Hezekiah Johnson, Joseph Jeffers and Ezra Fisher, the latter giving twelve hundred and fifty dollars, most of it being what he had dug from the California gold mines. About fifty acres, half a mile back from the town, and so located as to command an unsurpassed view of the Willamette River and Cascade Mountains, when once it should be cleared of timber, were donated for college purposes. To obtain title from the government Ezra Fisher moved to the claim on November 30th,

1 See letter of Feb. 8, 1850.

2 It was the first Baptist church building west of the Rocky Mountains.

3 Afterward Mrs. Henry V. Clymer.

1850. There he built a home and lived until November, 1855. He made final proof for patent in January, the same year. Pursuant to agreement made at the time of purchase, he then deeded to James R. Robb and George H. Atkinson, successors respectively of Hezekiah Johnson and Joseph Jeffers, certain portions of the claim. For the Oregon City College he held in trust fifty-one acres which, in 1864, he deeded to the Trustees of Oregon City University.¹

In November, 1851, the Home Mission Society appointed him Exploring Agent for Oregon, this action meeting with the hearty endorsement of the Willamette Association. In this capacity he labored until 1856. As Exploring Agent, he travelled on foot up and down the Willamette Valley many times, visiting also the Umpqua and Rogue River valleys. He visited and preached to the churches, assisted in the organization of others, held meetings, kept before the denomination higher standards of efficiency and was everywhere an influence for good. His was in very truth "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."

Of his work during the time he made his home in Oregon City, he has given a fuller account than of any other period of his life. Let us leave to him the details of both it and of the Oregon City College.

On Jan. 20, 1854, at her home near the site for the Oregon City College, Mrs. Fisher died at the age of forty-eight years. Her illness was short and her family unprepared for so great a calamity. She left five children. The oldest² was married; the four at home were aged respectively nineteen, fourteen, ten and six. She had lost two daughters: one at Quincy, Ill., in 1838; the other at Muscatine, Ia., in 1842.

Mrs. Fisher had been a missionary's wife for twenty-two years. She had the same missionary spirit as her husband

¹ In Jan., 1856, the school obtained a charter under the name of the Oregon City University. The fifty-one acres were afterwards sold for the benefit of McMinnville College.

² Mrs. L. D. C. Latourette.

and was constantly encouraging him in his work. With sweetness and fortitude she bore every privation. If her own heart was ever dismayed, her family seldom knew it and she took fresh courage from her beautiful faith in God and the blessedness of their work. Her children have often said that they never heard an unkind word from her lips.

She knew how to make the most of everything. On scraps that many would have thrown away she could get up an attractive meal. If her home was sometimes a rough log cabin, it was a clean one and a most pleasant place to be.

Her death was the beginning of a revival, in which about twenty-five were converted, most of them uniting with the Baptist church in Oregon City. Among the number were three of her own children and three from the family of Hezekiah Johnson.

Old pioneers of Oregon who knew Ezra Fisher well have said that he was a pleasant man to meet and converse with. In manner, he was quiet, kindly and dignified. In appearance, he was six feet in height and thin. His complexion was fair, his eyes blue, his hair light brown and abundant. His health, never the best, made him appear somewhat delicate, but he was muscular and had great endurance. In later years his beard was nearly gray, while his hair was but slightly so. He was careful of his appearance and, according to the almost universal custom of New England ministers, wore a stove-pipe hat. For the first eight years after coming to Oregon, his trips about the Valley were made on foot and he always carried the usual carpet bag of those days.

When he preached he was earnest, convincing and scholarly. He could preach a doctrinal sermon, but seldom did. No pioneer minister of Oregon could be more depended upon to hold up the Christ than Elder Fisher. He disliked either levity or sensationalism in a minister. In delivery he was pleasing; he used simple language and was sometimes eloquent. He generally used a skeleton. Those which have been preserved, show that his ideas were surprisingly mod-

ern. He often used the expression, "one more observation." If young people ever objected to this, they liked his pleasant smile after the sermon was over and he was very successful in his work with them.

At the close of the Willamette Association of 1852, over which he had presided and to attend which he had walked from Oregon City to Parrish Gap, about twelve miles above Salem, he placed his hand on a boy's head and said: "I could walk this country all over for my Master, if I could only be successful in winning souls to Christ." He then appealed to the boy¹ to become a Christian. It was one of many similar appeals. "He was always sowing good seed," said one who knew him well.

Of what he was in his home life his daughter² has thus spoken: "My father was very kind and thoughtful of mother and the children, never omitting when starting on his frequent journeys to kiss us in his kindly way, and we were always glad to welcome his home-coming. He usually brought some start of fruit tree or flower to add to our home comfort." Wherever he lived, he soon had trees, small fruits and flowers growing. He gave them excellent care and was skillful in pruning, grafting and budding.

In 1853 he bought a white pony called Dolly. Thereafter in speaking of his trips Dolly was always included. "Dolly and I" found traveling bad today, or "Dolly and I" met with an accident, he would say. Dolly was the "carriage" of a news item which appeared in an eastern paper and read:

"Rev. Ezra Fisher, of Oregon, while on his way to one of his appointments, was thrown from his carriage and one of his ribs was broken."

On June 27, 1854, Ezra Fisher was married to Mrs. Amelia Millard. She was a woman of Christian character, whose

¹ Andrew J. Hunsaker, who was afterward General Missionary of the Baptist Convention of the North Pacific Coast, financial agent for the McMinnville College and who is a man so well known and esteemed throughout the state as to need no further mention.

² Mrs. Ann E. Latourette.

coming into the home was a blessing to her husband and to his children. Such a woman as she was much needed there. By her kindness and tactful counsel she won the hearts of her husband's children and grandchildren, and she lived to see some of his great-grandchildren and to be loved by them. The remembrance of her kindly face and loving deeds during frequent visits to their homes is one of their pleasant childhood memories. She survived her husband many years and was much beloved by all who knew her. She died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. James Elkins, in Albany, Oregon, at the age of ninety-seven years. To the end, she took an intelligent interest in everything, but especially in the work of her church and of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

Ezra Fisher entered upon his last year as Exploring Agent, April 1, 1855, with the request that the Board of the Home Mission Society should be on the look-out for a suitable man to take his place, and at its close resigned. His work and the hard conditions attending it had told on his strength and he felt the necessity of a less arduous life. Wishing to settle near the center of the Valley within easier reach of the churches most needing ministerial aid, he accepted the pastorate of the Santiam church, located at what is now Soda-ville, Oregon. The removal from Oregon City was made in December, 1855, ox teams being provided by members of the Santiam church. They were six days on the road, having stopped over Sunday at Parrish Gap.

The Santiam church numbered at that time about thirty-six members. In a revival conducted by Ezra Fisher and Rev. William Sperry in 1853, there had been fifty additions to the church, but half the membership were dismissed to form what is now the Brownsville church.

In 1856 the Willamette Association met with the Santiam church. The log school house being of insufficient size, the gathering was held in a new barn fitted up for the occasion. Heretofore the Willamette had been the only Baptist Asso-

ciation in the state. That year it was divided into three, the Santiam church, because of its location, going into the Corvallis Association.

Ezra Fisher was a strong anti-slavery man. As time went on he found himself in a church and association whose members were largely from southern states. For the sake of harmony, his policy at first was to say little. But as the slavery question grew larger and Oregon was threatened with admission as a slave state, he felt that it was no time for silence. In public and privately he exerted his influence to the utmost against slavery. When the adoption of a Constitution was before the people, his fight was a valiant one. A well-educated man from Kentucky said that he had met no one since leaving the East who reminded him so much of Henry Clay, and added, "He is as earnest and logical as Henry Clay himself." Few awaited the returns of Nov. 9, 1857, with more anxiety of mind than Ezra Fisher¹, and none was made more glad by Oregon's decision.

The pastorate of the Santiam church continued until 1858, when Ezra Fisher and the other anti-slavery members of the church withdrew and formed a church of their own near Washington Butte. They adopted the usual Baptist articles of faith, but declared also non-fellowship with those who in any way countenanced slavery.

While with the Santiam church, Ezra Fisher had a farm of about twenty-five acres, from which most of his livelihood was gained. Upon moving to Washington Butte, he sold or traded it for another farm of about the same size. In the summer of 1861, he sold this and, putting most of the money into live stock, moved to The Dalles.

Four miles from The Dalles, he bought a small place having for improvements little else than a poorly built log cabin and from which its former owner had not been able to raise enough to "feed the squirrels." Here, with his wife and

¹ As a good rule for the guidance of American citizens, he was fond of quoting "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

thirteen-year-old son, he spent the record-breaking winter of 1861-1862. With plenty of wood, it was all they could do to keep from freezing. With the opening of spring, only a few of their stock, which had been let out for the winter, remained. He was almost penniless and obliged to receive help from a daughter to buy food supplies.

He was sixty-two and Mrs. Fisher sixty, but they at once set themselves to the task of developing and making a living from their place. They set out strawberries and planted vegetables and fruit trees. After a few years, they were able to make a comfortable living.

While he was doing this, he did not forget to preach. There being no Baptist church, he frequently preached for other denominations. The one Baptist family in The Dalles at the time they came soon moved away. Two leading men from the church at Washington Butte moved with their families to The Dalles, and others began to come, so that about 1863 Ezra Fisher began to preach on Sundays to the few Baptists of the place, their meetings being held in the court house.

Later a church of sixteen members was organized. Ezra Fisher generally preached to them on Sundays, but being unable to give much time to the work, he would not permit himself to be considered as a pastor or to receive pay. At this time he was often working fifteen or sixteen hours a day. Rising about three or four o'clock to get his products off on an early boat down the river, he would then work the remainder of the day on his place. His sermons would be prepared on Sunday morning after breakfast and he would then travel, often on foot, four miles to town to preach. In 1870, a letter from The Dalles church to the Willamette Association reported: "We have been holding meetings every Sunday for some time; generally have preaching by our beloved Elder Ezra Fisher." He thus served the church until 1872.

By his untiring labors, and those of his wife and son, their barren land was transformed into one of the pleasantest

homes in the vicinity of The Dalles, and was a favorite visiting place of their many friends. They had built a good frame house, and the fruit from his orchard was known throughout the county. Indeed, he was one of the first to prove the superiority of The Dalles cherries.

The strenuous work on his farm became harder for him each year. It paid him well, but he was continually going beyond his strength. He therefore sold his place and moved to California.

The climate was favorable to the health of both, but, after a year spent near San Diego, the church at The Dalles, which was then able to pay a small salary, gave him a most urgent call. Feeling that it would be a joy to be once more of service in preaching the gospel, especially to his loved people of The Dalles, and wishing also to be near his children, he returned to Oregon.

He arrived in time to attend the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Willamette Association. He gave a memorial address, preached to them on the Relation of the Doctrine of the Resurrection to the Scheme of Salvation, and was the only one present who had helped in the work of organization a quarter of a century before.

At the time of his return in 1873, the church at The Dalles had twenty-three members. They were still without a building, but had two lots which Ezra Fisher and one or two others had purchased about 1868. As actively as in his younger days, their pastor took up the labors before him. Besides working toward a church building, he preached two well-prepared sermons each Sunday, taught the Bible class in the Sunday school and did much pastoral visiting. He was also elected County School Superintendent.

Upon returning to Oregon, he had earnestly prayed that God might once more bless his efforts in the conversion of souls. During the winter he held revival meetings in which he labored for six weeks. Sixteen of the young people of the town were added to the church. Among the number

were his youngest son,¹ Rev. C. M. Hill, present head of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Berkeley, Cal., and Rev. G. W. Hill, a Baptist missionary in China.

The next summer he came to the Valley to visit and to attend the Baptist State Convention and the Willamette Association, in both of which he took an active part. To the latter, which met at Forest Grove, he extended an invitation in behalf of his church to meet at The Dalles the following year, expecting that their \$3,000 church would then be ready for dedication. The minutes of that year record: "Elder Fisher preached at the Baptist church to a full house. The venerable servant of God seemed to renew his youth, while he held forth Jesus as the Great High Priest of our profession, and urged all to come to Him and live."

On September 9, 1874, he conducted the exercises at the laying of the corner stone of the First Baptist church of The Dalles, Rev. D. J. Pierce, of Portland, giving the address of the occasion.

Elder Fisher preached his last sermon on October 18, 1874. While away on a forty-mile trip visiting the schools of Wasco county, he contracted a cold, which resulted in typhoid pneumonia. He was brought home to The Dalles, and there died November 1, 1874. He would have been seventy-five in January. His will provided that, at the death of Mrs. Fisher, one-third of whatever remained of his estate, which was small, should go to McMinnville College.

From those who knew him in the East, among the number two of his classmates at Amherst, from men and women who had lived near him in the Middle West, from California acquaintances and from the pioneers of Oregon has come the testimony of what he was. It has been unanimous that his was a character of the highest type.

The Society in whose employ he labored so indefatigably for nearly twenty-five years has placed the name of Ezra

¹ Francis Wayland Howard Fisher.

Fisher high on the roll of its missionary heroes. Many words of praise from men who have guided its affairs might here be quoted. But from a most unexpected source came a simple testimony from one who crossed the plains with him, and, since no better test of character could well be imagined than the trials and vexations which attended the journey by ox teams to Oregon, it is here given. It came from Andrew Rodgers, who fell with the Whitmans at Waiilatpu. In a letter to Mrs. Whitman's sister, Miss Jane Prentiss, written from Tshimakain and dated April 22, 1846, he wrote:

“There were three ministers in the company, one a Seceder minister (Dr. T. J. Kendall) from about Burlington. The other two were Baptist ministers, one from Iowa, the other from Rock Island, Ill., whose name was Fisher, and who was formerly of Quincy, and is doubtless well known there. He manifested more of the true spirit of Christ while on the road than any other man with whom I was acquainted.”

None but God knows how the influence of Ezra Fisher lives on in the lives of many. He was an apostle of Jesus Christ sent to the frontiers of this country to have a part in shaping the destinies of the West.



CORRESPONDENCE.

Springfield, Sept. 22, 1832.

Rev. and Dear Sir:

I take pen and paper to inform you relative to our prospects so far as they are connected with the Valley Mission.¹ The result of our protracted meeting was rather favourable, some few conversions and others serious. The brethren to whom we have disclosed our designs, at first were so affected that they knew not what to say, or how to act, but have since become somewhat reconciled; yet they think they cannot relinquish us until the opening of the spring or next Sept. But how the Society may feel relative to our support when they learn our designs we cannot say. We are rather inclined to think that duty requires us to remain in this vicinity till spring; and if it should be your pleasure to assign us our field of labour in Illinois or Indiana, which we think we should prefer, if Providence opens the door, we should wish to remain till next Sept. Were we to consult our own desires, we should rejoice to be ready to give the parting hand to our dearest friends in Springfield this moment. It is our daily prayer that the Lord open an effectual door by which we may publish the gospel to some destitute portion of the Great Valley as soon as it may be pleasing to Him.

If not deceived, we both sincerely desire the work and would gladly make all necessary sacrifice. We think we

¹ In 1817 the General Convention of Baptists for Foreign Missions sent two missionaries into the Mississippi Valley, the first work of the organized Baptist denomination in that region. In 1820, the support of these missionaries was discontinued by the Convention. The work was partly kept up by the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society. In 1832, the Baptist Home Mission Society was organized, and early in its existence sent missionaries into the Mississippi Valley.—*Baptist Home Missions in North America, 1832-1882*. New York, 1883, pp. 295, 296, 302.

Rev. Jonathan Going, to whom the letter was addressed, was born in 1786. He was pastor in Worcester, Mass., 1815-1831, and was one of the prime movers in the organization of the Home Mission Society. He was its corresponding secretary from 1832 to 1837.—*Ibid.*, pp. 307, 313, 355.

should prefer the southern section of the above-named states to the northern, if the claims are equally imperious.

We feel confident that it is not the design of the Board to send labourers into the moral wastes of the West to suffer for the want of the necessaries of life, yet it would be pleasing on our part to learn whether we shall be obliged to depend, to any considerable extent, on any other resources for our support than the preaching of the Word. We desire to give ourselves to the preaching of the Word as far as practicable.

We have increased the subscription for the Valley Mission to \$35 and two strings of gold beads. . . . We hope to have one or more teachers, tolerably well qualified, to accompany us from this church on their own responsibility. . . .

We should gladly receive any instructions relative to the Valley. Please answer this as soon as practicable.

Your obedient servant,

EZRA FISHER.

Rev. Jonathan Going,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. S.,
Worcester, Mass.

To the care of
Rev. F. A. Willard,
Worcester, Mass.

Springfield, Vt., Oct. 31, 1832.

Rev. and Dear Sir:

I did not intend to trouble you with frequent communications when I last wrote you. But providences are at present somewhat different from what I anticipated at that time. Since I am determined to leave the place in a few months, our people are inclined to direct their attention to another man for their pastor, and I had engaged to spend my time till I went to the Valley in collecting funds for the Home Miss. Soc. under the direction of the Vt. Bapt. State Con-

vention,² and for the Vt. Branch of the Northern Bapt. Ed. Soc.

But on my returning from the Convention last week I received a letter from Br. Lawrence of Indianapolis, inviting me to go immediately to that place; stating in the same that he had conversed with you on the subject, and you assured him that the Home Missionary Society would furnish me with an outfit if necessary and sustain me in that place. Although I feel quite inadequate to sustain so important a place, after conversing with Brethren Graves and Hall, before whom Br. Lawrence presented the claims of Indianapolis, and with our friends in this place, I have with great reluctance come to the conclusion that we would leave this place as soon as the twelfth of Nov. for Indianapolis by water. As the season is so far advanced that it will be impossible to go out this fall if we wait to receive instructions from your Board before we go, we thought we would venture to defray our expenses from the avails of our furniture and rely on the outfit to replace that after we arrived, and wait at Indianapolis for instructions. You may think me too presumptuous. But I can assure you that I should not have ventured so much had it not been for the fact that you expressed your wish when with us that I might go out the present fall, if I could leave this people, and for the assurance on the part of Br. Lawrence that you would approve of the measure.

If this is not the place where you would wish me to labour, it would rejoice me if you would direct me to some less responsible station immediately on my arrival at Indianapolis.

We hope to arrive at that place as soon as the tenth of Dec. and to find instructions there when we arrive.

Yours in the Kingdom of Jesus,

EZRA FISHER.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
Worcester, Mass.

² The Vermont Baptist State Convention was organized in 1824.—*Baptist Home Missions in North America, 1832-1882*, p. 296.

Indianapolis, Ind., Jan. 28, 1833.

Rev. and Dear Sir:

I now take my pen to give you an outline of God's providential dealings with us since we left New England. We succeeded . . . in adjusting our affairs at Springfield, Vermont, so that we took our leave of the brethren and friends of that place on the 12th of Nov. last; and, finding the season for journeying so far advanced as to render the prospect of our reaching this place before the closing of canal navigation very problematical, we spent no time in visiting . . . except five days with Mrs. Fisher's friends in N. Y., as we found ourselves compelled to seize the first opportunity, whatever might be the accommodations, or relinquish . . . our desired object. We proceeded by the way of Buffalo, Cleveland, Columbus and Dayton and arrived at this place on the 22nd of Dec. in comfortable health. The town is pleasantly situated on the east banks of White river; but presents to a stranger all the appearance of recent origin.³ The place is fast filling up with emigrants, so that every log cabin and almost every room in town contains a family. Rent is high. One can scarcely rent a house of any description, with a small garden attached to it, for less than fifty or sixty dollars per year . . . Notwithstanding the extreme cheapness of vegetables and meat, board is from \$2.00 to \$3.00 per week and horsekeeping \$2.00. We have taken a chamber for a few weeks and, although but partially replenished with furniture, we cook our own meals, expecting soon to find a small house which we can rent for the year. I shall delay purchasing a horse till spring, as they may always be hired for 50 cents per day. The principal religious societies are the Methodist, which has by far the largest membership, the Presbyterian, which has attached to it a very consider-

3. The site for Indianapolis was selected in 1820 by a commission appointed by the state legislature. It was chosen because of its central location, but was in an unhealthy situation and was but slowly settled. In 1821 it was surveyed by Alexander Ralston, who had helped L'Enfant in his survey of Washington. In 1825 the first legislature met there.—Lyman P. Powell, *Historic Towns of the Western States* (N. Y., 1901), pp. 147-156. Julia Henderson Levering, *Historic Indiana* (N. Y., 1909), pp. 149-156.

able number of the most influential men in town, and the Baptist. This church has been in existence five or six years and, in some of its earliest days, enjoyed peace and prosperity.⁴ But to these days have succeeded years of adversity. The present number of members is about fifty-five (and it would be somewhat difficult to describe the various differences of faith which they embrace). They have no articles of faith but the New Testament. It is said that several of the most influential members are admirers of Alexander Campbell's doctrines,⁵ some are called New Lights,⁶ and perhaps a majority of all the members are regular Baptists. Society is still in its elements and exhibits but little of fixed principles. Baptists from the several parts of the Union have met in this place and brought with them all their prejudices. At first our feelings revolted at the thought of uniting with a church of this description. But upon more mature reflection we think the most effectual way of doing them good is to conform to the present state of things as far as practicable, hoping that the constant exhibitions of the humiliating doctrines of the Cross will melt the stubborn hearts and mould them into the likeness of their divine Master. As it respects my support, nothing has yet been done by the church. I expect the church will give me a formal invitation to preach for them one year at their next monthly meeting; and then I think something may be done by way of

⁴ The first Protestant church in Indiana was Baptist, the Owen, or Silver Creek church. It was organized in November, 1798, not far from Louisville, Ky. The early growth of the Baptists was hampered by the fact that so many were anti-missionary ("hard-shell").—Levering, *Historic Indiana*, p. 168.

The Presbyterian church was the oldest in the city, having been organized in 1823.—*Ibid.*, p. 154. William T. Stott, *Indiana Baptist History*, p. 37.

⁵ By the "Campbellites," to whom reference is made here and in other places through these early letters, are meant the Disciples of Christ. This movement was started by Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone, all formerly Presbyterians, in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. At first their followers were in fellowship with Baptist churches, with whose ideas of baptism and church government they were largely in agreement. Gradually, however, the Disciples were seen to be at variance with some of the Baptist teachings of the time, especially Calvinism, and they withdrew from the Baptists. This separation is shown by these letters to have been in progress at the time they were written, and something of the bitterness of the feelings aroused on both sides is seen. The "Campbellite" teachings were especially popular in the Middle Western states.—*Encyc. Brit.*, 11th ed., VIII:311. *New Int'l. Encyc.*, VI:280.

⁶ The New Lights was another name given to the followers of Alexander Campbell.—Stott, *Indiana Bap. Hist.*, p. 54.

securing a small part of my support. I find eight or ten brethren who have tolerably correct views respecting the support of the gospel; but they have never reduced their principles to practice. These are mostly poor . . . Our congregations are very small and our prospects of increasing the number rapidly are not very flattering. Everything is yet to be done for the Baptists in this place; yet perhaps this is the most important point to which we as a denomination can direct our attention in the whole state. Churches are rising up about us in every direction, and I know of no church in the whole Association which have preaching more than one Sabbath each month; and too much of that illy adapted to promote the peace and harmony of the church. I know of but two men in the whole Association, comprising 15 or 16 churches, who devote any considerable portion of their time to the work of the ministry. As yet I have visited but three of the neighboring churches and find them better organized than the one in this place, but they are all, with one exception, feeble bodies. I design spending some time in the spring in visiting the churches on the Wabash, which is destined to become the most commercial part of the state. The Baptists in this town have never had a Sabbath school, but those who are in favour of the institution have sent their children to the Methodist and Presbyterian schools⁷; and the Bible class has taken the same direction. We design commencing a Bible class immediately, as there is none in town at present, and as soon as the mud disappears in the spring we shall make an effort to get up a Sabbath school. We have established a weekly prayer meeting. I spend most of my time in visiting and preach from one to three evenings in the week. . . .

Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

EZRA FISHER.

⁷ It will be recalled that at this time Baptists were divided on the matter of the Sunday School, many opposing it.

Indianapolis, Ind., March 29, 1833.

Rev. and Dear Sir:

By the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, our lives and health are continued to the time when it becomes our duty to give you an outline of my labours since our arrival at this place. I regret that I have so little to communicate in the present report that is cheering. And were it not the fact that you have become personally acquainted with many of the obstacles to the success of the missionary in this region, I should despair of the subjoined reports meeting a favourable reception with you. We arrived at this place, as you have already learned, on the 22d of Dec. last. Found the church (if indeed the association is worthy that name) in a lamentably chaotic state. Yet I remained for some time ignorant of the extent and inflexible obstinacy of the existing evils. I had, however, learned that the church experienced little else than one continued scene of discord for three whole years; that some of the principal members were regarded as the disciples of Alexander Campbell, and that one of the same had proposed to sell the house and dissolve the church. I also learned that the church had no articles of faith. But I did sanguinely hope, by preaching Christ crucified and enforcing practical godliness, that the tone of religious feeling would become so elevated that a reconciliation would be easily effected. These measures I adopted and for a while they seemed to produce the desired effect. The congregation though small at most gradually increased; the standard of piety became more elevated, and, by the unanimous consent of the church, the 15th of Feb. was spent in humiliation and prayer. The ensuing day was the regular meeting of the church, at which time Mrs. Fisher and myself, together with two others, united with the church by letter; and three disaffected members who had taken letters from the church returned. Peace and harmony seemed to be restored. The next day the Lord's Supper was administered for the first time since last May. At the close of the sacramental feast, while the Spirit of Peace appeared to pervade the bosom of

every communicant, the Br. who had proposed to sell the meeting-house arose and denounced the doctrine of the divinity of Christ and entreated his ministering brethren never more to publish the doctrine.⁸ I visited him the next day, presented to him the evidences of the divinity of Christ as taught in the Scriptures and administered a gentle reproof. At the next monthly meeting of the church he came forward and requested to be released from the duties of a member at present, professing to be dissatisfied with the mode of worship, saying that he regarded it antichristian, and at the same time renewing a former request that the church would open the house for the use of the Campbellites on Friday and Saturday of the present week and the ensuing Sabbath. How many of the members are attached to his views, from various causes, is not known. But a rupture will be occasioned if the church attempt to discipline him. Our brethren say the blow is aimed at me, inasmuch as the prospects of the church have become somewhat brighter since my arrival. We have an aged minister in the church who has seldom, and perhaps never, preached for this church since his ordination, who is decidedly opposed to giving the charge of the church to any one minister. And in addition to this, it is reported that one of the deacons of the church has declared himself the Bishop of the church. With these and similar conditions, the brethren have delayed giving me any formal invitation to preach, but express a determination to bring the subject forward on the next monthly meeting. Of course, no measures have yet been taken to secure any part of my support. Yet I have the pledge of Br. Bradley and others that something shall be done soon. Nothing but a conviction of duty would induce me to stay in this place a single week. But I desire to learn and do the will of our divine Master. I have not yet determined what is my duty, but shall be better able

⁸ The "Campbellites," or Disciples of Christ, were quite frequently denounced as being Unitarians, and some indeed may have been such through a misunderstanding of the teachings of their leaders. They are, however, Trinitarians, but object to many terms of theology, such as "trinity," "eternally begotten," "co-essential" and "consubstantial," and insist on the use in definition of no other terms than those actually found in the New Testament.

to judge when I have visited the churches on the Wabash, which I contemplate doing in May, unless you should regard such a tour unimportant.

On the 17th inst. I baptized one . . . and we expect one or more brethren to unite by letter soon. I have a Bible class of about twelve members, and contemplate commencing a Sunday school soon if we stay in the place. The custom of the place is but one sermon on the Sabbath. When practicable I have preached once each Sabbath in the country. Since my arrival have preached thirty-three times, established and attended regularly a weekly prayer-meeting at the meeting-house, spent as much time as practicable in visiting from house to house, and visited four neighboring churches which are supplied with monthly preaching, and all but one of which are now oppressed with trials. We have become acquainted with a young brother by the name of James Woods, who was educated for a Presbyterian minister, but before completing his theological studies embraced the Baptist sentiments and united with the church in Spencer, the chief town of Owen County. During the past year he has had the charge of a Presbyterian Academy in this county (Marion). He expresses a desire of devoting his whole time to the work of the gospel ministry, and contemplates settling over the church at Spencer and dividing his labours among two or three churches in that vicinity. The place is 50 miles down the river from this and, from his account, is a very desirable place to be occupied by the Baptists. Br. Lawrence and myself think him a valuable acquisition to our ranks and approve of the measures he is pursuing, and feel safe in recommending him to the A. B. H. M. S. as a suitable person to be employed in the service of said Society in this state. He will remove his wife immediately to Spencer, at which place you can address him. Br. Lawrence has determined to change the character of his school, so as to adapt its instructions principally to fitting young men for teachers and college. He designs adopting in part the manual labor system. I expect to attend a meeting the fourth Saturday of next

month, the object of which is to consult on measures relative to the formation of a State Convention. I have received from one brother the use of his horse to the amount of one dollar and the making a hoe from another, 75 cents.

Please give me your advice relative to the course to be pursued with this church.

Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

EZRA FISHER.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. S.,
New York, No. 4 Bowery.

Indianapolis, June the 23, 1833.

Rev. and Dear Br.

After a long delay I proceed to report in brief my services for the quarter ending June the 22d. . . . When I first learned the great variety of religious sentiments embraced by the members of this church, I had but little hope of uniting all the members in the doctrines of the gospel as embraced by the regular Baptists. And when I saw the determination of a brother who had almost the entire confidence of the church to draw over all our members to A. Campbell's faith, my hopes of success were still diminished. He was untiring in his efforts and artful in his designs to rend the last existing bond of union. Although our immediate prospects of success seemed dark and all our efforts paralyzed, yet I regarded the location of the church too important, and many of her members too valuable to be abandoned in time of the enemies' approach without an effort. I was regarded the great obstacle that endangered the success of the Campbell party, and when the motion was made to invite me to the pastoral care of the church it met with spirited opposition, and on the whole our friends thought it best to invite me in common with Brs. Lawrence and Hawkins to supply the church. . . .

The body of the church, with the exception of the Arian party, which is not large, appear more firmly united than at any previous period since my arrival and express more confidence of prosperity than they have had for years. But I am not altogether confident we may not have other trials to endure before we are altogether disincumbered of the enemies of the cross of Christ. The brethren express a strong desire that my labours may be continued with them. Since April I have spent about one-third of my time in labouring with this church, preaching on Sabbaths and attending the regular prayer-meetings each Tuesday and visiting during the week as much as practicable. The remaining part of my time I spend in attending public meetings and visiting the churches and preaching as often as circumstances admit. I trust that more good may result to the denomination by this course than if all was prosperity at home and my entire labours devoted to the interests of this church. During last quarter, aside from the labours devoted to this church, I rode about 500 miles, assisted in organizing the General Association of Baptists of Indiana, attended a public meeting at Noblesville, the seat of justice for Hamilton Co., another at Greensburg, the seat for Decatur Co., visited Franklin, the seat for Johnson Co., Greencastle, for Putnam Co., Rockville, for Parke Co., Covington, for Fountain Co., and LaFayette, for Tippecanoe Co., and many other towns of less note. My principal object has been to become acquainted with the state of the churches and at the same time to promote the objects embraced by the General Association of the state. The present prospects of a support, to any considerable amount, are not very flattering. Yet I think there will be a gradual increase (perhaps as great as in any other place in the state) if my services are continued. No efforts have yet been made on the part of the church to raise any part of my support, on account of the deplorable condition in which we have been placed. I have received during the last quarter the amount of six dollars and thirty-four cents in such articles as would be of service in my family. I feel

desirous of relieving the Board from all unnecessary expense, and if my support becomes burdensome before I can raise up churches which will freely sustain me, please inform me and I will secure the principal part by teaching in the week and preaching on the Sabbath. . . . It is the opinion of the brethren in the ministry who feel the deepest interest in the cause of Christ in Indiana that I ought to devote my whole time to the interests of religion if I can be sustained. I feel willing to spend my time in such a manner and at such a place as will tell the most in the interests of our divine Master. All of which I respectfully submit.

Yours in the fellowship of the gospel,

EZRA FISHER.

. . . P. S.—Before mailing this, I wish to suggest a few among the many important places in this state which demand the immediate attention of your Board. You know the importance of attending to the wants of the church at Salem, Washington Co.,⁹ from your personal acquaintance with the place. This church has just lost her pastor, Br. James McCoy, and wife by the cholera.¹⁰ Rockville, Parke Co., is one of the most commanding points on the Wabash. . . . Several of the first men in the county express a desire that an educated Baptist minister settle with them. Numbers of the churches in the vicinity are tired of Parker's doctrines and only want a little influence exerted among them to leave his ranks. I have been earnestly solicited to settle with them. And if I should leave this place I know of no other place which I should prefer for usefulness in the state. If you send a man to Rockville, he must be one who is not discouraged at trifles, for he would have to contend with the ignorance and impudence of Parker's creatures.¹¹ Covington,

⁹ Salem had been one of the aspirants for the state capital.—Levering, *Historic Indiana*, p. 148.

¹⁰ This was possibly the Asiatic cholera. It was introduced into America in 1832 by emigrants from Europe.—*Am. Cyc.*, IV:511.

¹¹ Parkerism was the name given to a branch of the Baptists, the followers of Rev. Daniel Parker, of the Wabash Valley. The anti-Sunday school, anti-Mission, ultra-predestinarian views of the body were a great obstacle to missionary work.—*Bap. Home Missions in North Am., 1832-1882*, p. 330. *Stott, Ind. Bap. Hist.*, pp. 55 ff.

25 miles above, likewise needs a preacher exceedingly at the present time. Here is a small Baptist church. John Hawkins, a wealthy and liberal man, is a member of this church. No minister of any order in this place. Greensburg, Decatur Co., very much needs a minister who can teach and preach part of the time in town and part of the time in the surrounding country. Bartholomew Co. is one of great importance to the Baptists, and demands immediate attention. Loganport will become the Rochester of the state in a few years. It ought to be attended to soon. . . . Hamilton County needs a Baptist minister located at Noblesville, 22 miles up the river from this place. The church is small, but of the right sort, and the brethren would do all they are able for his support. A large school might be kept in operation through the year in this place.

Yours, E. F.

. . .
 Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
 Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.,
 No. 4 Bowery,
 New York.

Indianapolis, Sept. 2, 1833.

Rev. and Dear Br.:

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the General Association of Baptists of Indiana, I was directed to address you by letter relative to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom in this state. When our General Association was organized we did not anticipate a general co-operation of the Baptists without a long and determined effort on the part of its friends, and we feel confident that we shall not be disappointed in this respect. Yet our plans of operation meet with as general approbation from the denomination as we anticipated. We expect the amount of funds which will be forwarded to our first annual meeting will be small, but our hands have been put to the plough with a determined resolution to persevere, having the assurance that the enterprise pleases God.

We feel that no ordinary obstacles will induce us to abandon the work.

As yet we have employed no agent, but some few individuals have engaged to do what they could in their immediate vicinities for the Ass. without incurring any expense of agencies till the time of our yearly meeting. . . . The members of the Board, as far as we have been able to obtain their opinion, are convinced that it will be important to the promotion of the cause of religion that an efficient agent be employed to travel through the state and labour under their directions. The questions which we wish to propose at the present are designed to secure your opinion on the following subjects: If the Trustees of the Bapt. Gen. Ass. of Ind. should think it advisable to appoint a general agent, would it probably please the Board of the American Bapt. Home Miss. Soc. to appoint a joint agent with said Ass. for this state? If so, would your Board probably concur in the appointment of such an agent as the Trustees of the Gen. Ass. of Ia.¹² shall recommend? What proportion of the salary of such an agent would your Board be willing to allow? We think an agent may be found who will faithfully discharge the duties of each board for the same salary which you give the present agent for this state.

We deem it all important to the interests of the General Association that a man be employed who is acquainted with human nature as it exists with us. Please answer these inquiries immediately, as we shall wish to present the answer before the Trustees at the annual meeting, which will take place on the first Friday of next month.

Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

EZRA FISHER, Cor. Sec. of the Gen.

Ass. of Bapt. of Ind.

N. B.—Our prospects in this town and vicinity are becoming more flattering. The church in this place will probably soon be freed from conflicting opinions and troublesome members. I assisted in the constitution of a small church in

¹² The abbreviation of Ia. stands for Indiana, not Iowa.

a town ten miles east of this place on the National road, about eight weeks ago, since which time I have visited them four times and baptized four members, and two more are to be received upon the administration of the ordinance of baptism, which will take place soon. Prospects encouraging.

Yours, E. F.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
 Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.,
 No. 4 Bowery,
 New York.

Indianapolis, Jan. 15th, 1834.

Dear Br. Going:

The time has arrived in which it becomes my duty to make a condensed quarterly report of my labours as they stand connected with the cause of religion in this place and vicinity. This I do with mingled emotions of joy and grief. The emigrant who enters the forest with limited resources, begins to feel his bosom swell with joy as he sees the undergrowth removed, and the fatal blow struck at the root of the more stately trees, before the seed is sown and the blade begins to shoot forth, the happy omen of the harvest. But, as he finds his resources failing and turns his eye towards the huge timber which remains as an incumbrance on his soil and threatens to scatter blight and mildew among his grain before the time of harvest, despondency settles upon his heart and sadness is depicted upon his countenance. You are well aware, sir, these and kindred feelings must pervade the bosom of almost every true friend and servant of Christ, when commencing his labours in a new country where society is fluctuating, pecuniary resources limited and all the local prejudices of the several parts of the globe are brought together and perpetually fanned to a flame. I rejoice to say that this state of things is generally disappearing in this vicinity. But the fruit of my labours has yet to be realized in a great measure, or I fear that my patrons will have occasion to take up the lamentation that they have laboured in vain and

spent their substance for that which is not bread. Yet, on the whole, the prospects of the Baptists in this town are more encouraging than they have ever been at any former period since my arrival. During the quarter ending Dec. the 22d, 1833, I have preached twenty times, attended twenty-four preaching and conference meetings, mostly in this town, attended the General Association of Baptists of Ind. three days, the General Meeting of Western Baptists at Cincinnati six days, the Danville Association in this state, two meetings of the Indiana S. S. Unions held at this place, assisted in the organization of a Baptist Sunday school and Bible class at our house of worship on the first of Dec., have attended them weekly and instructed the latter, consisting of about 17 members. Our Sabbath school numbers more than sixty regular scholars and fifteen teachers. They both meet at the same place on the same hour, and a very laudable interest is manifested by members of the congregation in the school. I have also attended one meeting of the Board of the General Association of Baptists of Indiana; visited as much as the circumstances of my family would admit, and devoted more time to study than in any former quarter of the year, and this has been but for fractional parts of days.

During the quarter we have had some two or three additions to the church by letter, but none by baptism. I have \$44 pledged for the last quarter by the church and citizens of this place; they have also raised \$22 in aid of the funds of the Gen. Ass. I am well aware that the part of my support which I receive from the people in this place may appear very trifling to your Board, but I think I am receiving more from this people than any other Baptist minister in the state receives directly from his people, and yet the state numbers more than 11,000 Baptists. I leave you to judge whether this is missionary ground.

The prospects of support are more flattering the ensuing year than they were last spring. I do not neglect to remind

the leading brethren that something must be done at home if they expect aid from abroad, and they seem well apprised of the fact. All of which is respectfully submitted.

EZRA FISHER.

P.S.—As I have paper I will append a few remarks and inquiries. We have raised about \$20 for an A. S. S. library, and procured one dozen copies of Winchel's Works, which are placed in the meeting house, hoping by this means to procure uniformity in books. The few brethren who are able and in favor of ministerial support contribute as liberally as the brethren in the New England churches. I perceive that my appointments make my year commence on the 8th of Nov., but I did not arrive at this place till the 22d of Dec., and I have made my reports from that date. Please inform me whether you intend to have me conform my reports to the time of the appointment or to the time of my arrival in this place. We have an old minister in the church who wishes to preach part of the time, and there are some in the church who wish things to be so and it is thought expedient for the present to let him preach at 11 half of the time, if he chooses, and for me to preach the other half at 11, attend the S. S. and Bible class each Sabbath at 2 P. M., and at 6 preach again. It is believed that the old brother will not wish to preach many weeks, if no opposition is manifested. His congregations are said to be very small. As yet I have preached in the country when he preaches in town, so near that I can return before 2 P. M. We have sustained a weekly meeting on Tuesday evening, ever since last February, and the interest is better sustained now than at the commencement. We have also a regular meeting of the S. S. teachers each Saturday evening.

Our expenses, after living as economically as we ever have in our lives, are greater than when in Vt. But we do not mean to complain, if our income will allow us to live so that we can secure the greatest amount of usefulness to the cause of our Blessed Redeemer in this state. We feel confi-

dent that Providence directed us to this place. If some minister had not been directed here near the time in which we came, the Campbellites would have probably taken the meeting house and disbanded the church. The church is now in a tolerable state of harmony.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. S.,

Baptist Misison Room, Clinton Hall,

New York.

Indianapolis, Jan. 15, 1834.

Dear Br. Going:

At a meeting of the Board of the General Association of Bapt. of Ind., held Dec. 11th, 1833, I was authorized to inform you that Br. Samuel Harding was appointed our General Agent for nine months after the first day of April next, with the expectation that the Board of the A. B. H. M. Soc. would appoint him their agent for this state the same term of time. He is directed, on our part, to visit the most important places in the state and all the churches whose members are known to be friendly to missionary operations, to form auxiliary societies where it is practicable, to impress the churches with a sense of the importance of at least in part sustaining those who minister to them in spiritual things, to attend associations and public meetings, to preach Christ crucified wherever he goes, to cultivate a friendly intercourse with the ministers of our denomination and to hold frequent consultations with the leading men of our denomination who are known to be friendly to benevolent operations.

The Board have agreed to pay him twelve dollars and fifty cents per month on their part, with the expectation that your Board will pay him the same amount. We would not take it upon ourselves to dictate to your Board, yet we think the small amount of funds which he will raise should be collected in favor of the General Association of Indiana, as he would probably raise more for this object than he would for both, if they were both to be presented.

Br. Harding is a tried friend to the benevolent operations of the day, has acted as agent one year for the American Sunday School Union and is as highly approved in the churches and as generally known as any minister in the state. . . .

Please address Br. Harding at Franklin, Johnson Co., Ind.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER, Cor. Sec.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Bapt. Mission Room, Clinton Hall,

New York.

Indianapolis, March 4th, 1834.

Rev. and Dear Sir:

I take the opportunity to inform you of the state of things in this region of country. The church in this place invited me at their last meeting to preach all the time the ensuing year, and, although our congregations are small and the present prospect for support not the most flattering, I think a greater amount of good will be realized to the denomination in the state by complying with this request than by any other course which I can pursue.

Very little can be effected for this place without a regular ministry every Sabbath and every day in the week. I am invited to attend a church five miles from this place once each month. This is destined to become an important country church. The brethren in this place think that the best method to pursue is to exchange occasionally with a young br.¹³ who has lately been ordained in that church. By this course we hope gradually to bring that church into the benevolent measures of the day. Our Sabbath school flourishes and, notwithstanding the mud and storms, we usually have 74 scholars, and my Bible class interests my entire evening

¹³ This was probably the Lick or Sick Creek church, and the "young brother," Rev. Thos. C. Townsend. See next letter, note 19.

congregation, which varies from 40 to 60. I will write more particulars in my next quarterly report. . . .

Perhaps the discipline of this church can now be as promptly and harmoniously exercised as in any of the New England churches.

Br. Woods has removed his family into Shelby Co., about six miles from Shelbyville, and the present arrangement is that he preach to the two churches which Br. Harding¹⁴ has formerly attended, viz., Franklin, the seat of Johnson Co., the Blue River church in Johnson Co., and the remaining time in Connersville, the seat of Fayette Co., and vicinity. Perhaps Connersville is as important a point to be occupied at this time as any in the state, and Franklin but a little less so. The brethren in both these places are embracing correct views of the support of the gospel and are only wanting the man and the means to sustain in part the ministry. If Br. W. should be successful at Connersville, I think that will be the place for him to locate. He will probably realize \$100 or more from the three churches the present year, and, with \$100 more from the A. B. H. M. S., I think he will be comfortably sustained, as he will have no rents of account to pay and his family are in the country. Br. Woods will receive communications from you at Shelbyville Postoffice with the most convenience. He has some anxiety to know whether he shall be continued by your Board. We have a young br., recently from the vicinity of Brockport, N. Y., by the name of Eliphelet Williams,¹⁵ who is preaching with acceptance to the churches in the vicinity of Shelbyville, and, from the short acquaintance which we have had with him, we think him well adapted to the place where Providence has placed him, for the opportunities he has enjoyed. He

14 Rev. Samuel Harding was born in Kentucky, Dec. 24, 1787, and moved to Indiana in 1825, settling on lands seven miles southeast of Franklin on Blue River. He helped to organize the Blue River and Franklin churches. He died in 1836.—W. N. Wyeth, in *First Half Century of Franklin College, Franklin, Ind., Jubilee Exercises, 1884*, Cincinnati, 1884, p. 11.

15 Eliphelet Williams helped in the organization of Franklin College.—Levering, *Historic Indiana*, p. 426.

He was born in Ashford, Mass., in 1804, and came to Indiana in 1833.—Wyeth, *Half Century of Franklin College*, p. 21.

appears to be much such a man and preacher as Br. J. M. Graves of Vt. was eight years ago. . . . It is now a favorable time for Baptist influence to be exerted in the town. The people in Shelbyville and the churches to which he would preach will probably give \$100 the first year. Br. Williams wishes to stay till Oct., then return to N. Y., spend the winter in study, and in the spring come out and settle. If your funds will justify you in giving him an appointment of one year at \$100, I think the money would be well appropriated. The funds of our General Association are exhausted, and we have already made appointments to almost twice the amount collected the last year. But for this we would pay him \$50 for six months. If your funds will not admit of his appointment, please write him immediately at Shelbyville.

Br. Lewis Morgan,¹⁶ who was with me at Cincinnati, has been discontinued from his agency in the service of the A. S. S. Union, we all suppose through the influence of the Gen. Agent of Indiana. The reason assigned is a want of funds. Br. Morgan wishes to devote himself to the cause of Christ, but says, unless he has some assistance, he must do it at the sacrifice of a part of his farm, which he is determined to make, if assistance comes from no other quarter. There are several destitute churches in his vicinity, unable to contribute much, which seem naturally to look to him for preaching or they must remain destitute. Would it be practical for your Board to unloose his hands in part? Please write him at Shelbyville and inform him whether any help may be expected for him, or write Br. Harding at Franklin respecting these cases severally, as he will enter upon his labours the first of next month. Br. Nathaniel Richmond,¹⁷ who preaches at Noblesville, the seat of Hamilton Co., at Pendleton, the falls of Fall Creek, an important

¹⁶ Rev. Lewis Morgan was born in Tennessee in 1788, and in 1816 moved to Shelby County, Indiana. He died in Iowa in 1852.—Wyeth, *Half Cent. of Franklin College*, p. 16.

¹⁷ Rev. Nathaniel Richmond came to Indiana from Onondaga County, N. Y., in 1817. His ministerial labors were largely in Fayette and Wayne Counties.—Wyeth, *Half Cent. of Franklin College*, p. 20.

place, and at Cumberland, ten miles east of this on the National road, had received no commission four weeks ago. These are among the best preachers we have in the state. If we except Brs. Harding, Rees¹⁸ and Fairman, and one or two in the south part of the state, they are the best. I feel it important that the most promising talents in the state be encouraged, if practicable, till the churches begin to feel the importance of sustaining their own ministry and conveying the blessings they now enjoy to the more destitute. A few years with a faithful ministry will, under God, accomplish this object.

Our requests may seem to be beyond your means but, unless something more is done for Indiana, the present influence of our denomination must yield to other denominations which are doing what they can for the salvation of the West.

My family are in tolerable health. Br. Holman's health is partially restored. We expect several school teachers from Mass. to come to this state this spring. One is much needed in this place at present. I have been repeatedly solicited to take the S. S. Agency, but I do not think it duty to leave this place.

Yours affectionately,

EZRA FISHER.

N.B.—A railroad will probably be commenced the present season from Lawrenceburg to this place, which will eventually be continued to the Wabash, probably Lafayette.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.,

Baptist Mission Room, Clinton Hall,

New York.

Indianapolis, April 9th, 1834.

Dear Brother:

Another quarter having passed away, never to be recalled,

¹⁸ Rev. William Rees was born in Pennsylvania in 1797, and early moved to Ohio, where in 1820 he was ordained. In 1832 or 1833 he moved to Delphi, Ind., where he founded the Baptist church. He died in 1849.—William T. Stott, *Indiana Baptist History, 1798-1908*, p. 175.

it becomes my duty to report the amount of my labours and their apparent success for the three months terminating March the 22d. It is with regret that in the statement of facts my reports present so little that is cheering to those who are bestowing their prayers and alms to sustain the cause of Christ in this place and vicinity. Yet to one who has been an eye-witness to the various scenes through which the church has passed in this place since our arrival, as well as the interest which has been excited in the denomination through the state, the conviction is strong that our labours have not been in vain in the Lord. All the changes which have taken place in this church since last summer have evidently been preparing the way for a permanent Baptist influence to be exerted in this place. But hitherto it has all been uphill work. Indeed, I believe it is one of the decrees of the Almighty that His people shall not reap a plentiful harvest from the fields on which they have bestowed no labour. I sometimes feel to bless God that it is so. Our Sunday school and Bible class, which together consist of about thirty-five scholars, were both put into successful operation on the eighth of Dec. last, and it was regarded altogether problematical, both by friends and foes, whether the school could be sustained. But it was made the subject of daily prayer, and to our great satisfaction, in less than six weeks, our school numbered more than sixty scholars, independent of the Bible class. We then found ourselves obliged to take almost every member of my Bible class for teachers . . . and to appoint another hour for the Bible class, which was immediately after the evening preaching. By adopting this plan we furnished the school with efficient teachers and secured the attendance of the night congregation at the Bible class, which continues to be sustained with more interest than we had anticipated. The S. S. continued to increase gradually till the close of the quarter. . . . It numbered 89 scholars, and last Sabbath there were present 100 and more than 20 teachers. One of the great sources of the success of this school has been the weekly meetings of the

teachers on Saturday evening, when plans are devised for the promotion of the interest of the school. These plans are put into practical operation during the ensuing week. These meetings I attend and contribute perhaps my part of labours through the week to this object. The state of the church is gradually improving, so much so that at the regular meeting in February the brethren were pretty unanimous in inviting me to become their stated preacher, which was more than I had anticipated could be done. . . . The Campbellite and Arian influence is so reduced that we had nothing to fear from that source, and a wholesome discipline is easily exercised. We have religious exercises at each church meeting, at which time I address those present, and all the business is conducted with Christian unanimity. During the last quarter I preached regularly twice each Sabbath, attended the S. school at 2 P. M., and at 7 in the evening attended the Bible class. I often deeply regret that we see no more fruit of our labours by the ingathering of spiritual members to the church, but while we thus lament we are not left without some external tokens of God's favor. Our congregation has undergone an entire change within eight months, still we have a gradual increase at our Sabbath meetings and, within a few weeks, I have found more than usual seriousness in the minds of a few individuals. Comparatively little can be done by way of preaching in town during the week. We, however, sustain a regular weekly meeting each Tuesday evening, which commenced about one year ago with five or six attendants, and has increased to from 15 to 40. Of late I have commenced giving a short discourse on these occasions. On Saturday evening, as you have already learned, I attend the teachers' meeting and usually address it. Although I preach little during the week, almost every moment of my time is employed in town. I spend from one to two days each week in preparing for the several exercises of the Sabbath, and as much of my time as practicable in visiting, after attending to the concerns of my family and maintaining my correspondence.

In summing up my labours for the last quarter, I find that I have preached 23 times, assisted in the ordination of Br. Thomas C. Townsend¹⁹ at Sick Creek church . . . attended three church meetings at Indianapolis and one at Sick Creek, administered the ordinance of the Supper once, attended 13 prayer meetings, 12 teachers' meetings, the Sab. school 13 times, the Bible class 9 times, heard preaching at this place five times, attended two meetings of the County Temperance Society,²⁰ assisted in the organization of a State Peace Society, and spent as much time in visiting for the purpose of promoting the interests of religion as was practicable, and, if not deceived, have enjoyed more of the Divine Presence than in the same term of time at any former period since I came to the Valley. If I know myself, I am willing to make sacrifices and endure hardships, if, by so doing, I can be made instrumental in increasing the light of the knowledge of God among the inhabitants of the wide-spread and luxuriant West.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

N.B.—By the strong solicitation of several members of the church and the advice of others, I have consented to take charge of a class of seven young ladies one quarter, which occupies from one to two hours each day for five days in the week. It is not my design to continue the class longer than the middle of June. I needed the avails thus made to enable me to sustain myself and family, and, on mature deliberation, I thought the influence which it might exert on the cause would be good, as they are young ladies of the

19 Rev. Thomas C. Townsend was born in Virginia in 1799, served as pastor in several places in Indiana from 1834 on, and moved to Iowa about 1856.—William T. Stott, *Indiana Baptist History, 1798-1908*, p. 145.

Stott calls the church Lick Creek, not Sick Creek, and says it was four miles south of Indianapolis.—*Ibid.*

20 The temperance movement, to which mention is so often made in these letters, began early in the nineteenth century. In the decade between 1820 and 1830 it had a remarkable growth, over a thousand societies existing in 1829. The first national temperance convention met at Philadelphia in 1833, with delegates from twenty-two states.—James Schouler, *Hist. of the U. S.*, III:524. *Harpers Encyclopaedia of U. S. Hist.*, IX:39.

first respectability in town. The cause of truth is evidently advancing in this state. A protracted meeting has recently been held with the church to which Br. Harding (the Gen. Agt.) preaches, during which more than twenty experienced a hope in Christ. Prospects are flattering in the region where Brother Richmond preaches; four have recently been baptized and more are expected to go forward in this ordinance at the next meeting. We receive pleasing intelligence from other sections of the state. We are confident that the spirit of religious enterprise is gradually rising among the Baptists. The high sound of Campbellism seems to be gradually dying away like the slow murmurs of the evening bell.

As yet no efforts have been made to raise a part of my support for the present year; but I am assured that something will be done in a few weeks. Mr. Bradley, who is always ready to seize the most favourable opportunity, proposes to wait till the merchants get on their summer goods and business becomes a little more lively, which will be in three or four weeks. The number of friends are increasing, but the extreme pressure of times for which everyone is looking, renders it doubtful whether we get much more raised this year than we did the last, but I will inform you more particularly on that subject soon. I shall give Nicholas McCarty an order on you for thirty-one dollars due me for the last quarter's services of last year; and seventy-five dollars due me for the last quarter's services, making in all \$106.

I expect to attend the ordination of Br. James V. A. Woods²¹ on the 4th Friday and Saturday of the present month, six miles this side of Shelbyville.

Yours &c., E. FISHER.

P.S.—I expect to hear a young brother by the name of Blood recite during the summer. He is about 18 and promises to be useful in the ministry. He is a descendant of El-

²¹ J. V. A. Woods helped to organize Franklin College.—Levering, *Historic Indiana*, p. 426.

der Blood. . . . 160 volumes in the S. S. Library.
 Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
 Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.,
 Bapt. Mission Rooms, Clinton Hall,
 New York City.

Indianapolis, July the 8th, 1834.

Dear Br. Going:

I have delayed making out my quarterly report for more than two weeks, that I might be able to inform you whether there were any prospects of my securing any considerable part of my support for the current year from the people in this place. The brethren have been waiting to avail themselves of the most favorable opportunity to start a subscription paper, which was not issued till about the first of this month. The success has somewhat exceeded my expectations. I have not yet ascertained the precise amount subscribed, but it is said to exceed \$120, and I think enough more will be subscribed to make the amount \$150. It is truly gratifying to see the change which has been effected during the last twelve months in this respect. Subscriptions have been as liberal as could have been expected from the same number of men and the same amount of property in any of the New England congregations. I have not altogether neglected to instruct the people, both in public and private on suitable occasions, in the duties of the church relative to the support of the gospel. With a few exceptions, the scriptural rule has been kindly received. I doubt not but there is more pledged the present year than would have been, if I had not commenced building. Rents becoming high and its being uncertain whether we could occupy a house three months before it was sold, we determined to build a small house, which will involve us about \$200 in debt beyond our present means. I get my lumber on credit from the former treasurer of the state and present president of the bank. He engages to await till I can pay it at six per cent interest after the first year, and says, if he is prosperous in business,

he would rather give me the whole lumber than have me leave the place.

The church in this place is enjoying more than an ordinary degree of union and brotherly love; but we have to lament that as yet we have not experienced those effusions of the Holy Spirit which are beginning to be enjoyed in other parts of our land, and even in a few places in this state. Our congregations are on the whole increasing, but so slowly as to be imperceptible, except as we compare them with what they were two or three months past. The assembly manifest more than ordinary attention to the Word preached . . . and I have found several instances of more than usual seriousness during the past quarter, but have no evidences of any hopeful conversions.

Our Sabbath school remains in a flourishing condition and has about 130 scholars, of whom we have about 100 each Sabbath. My Bible class continues prosperous.

During the past quarter, I have preached 43 times, attended 13 teachers' meetings . . . attended S. school 13 times, attended the Bible class 12 times, attended four church meetings, two protracted meetings, two county temperance meetings, in which I participated, assisted in the constitution of one church four miles from this place, with which a number of our members joined, assisted in the ordination of Br. James V. A. Wood, one of your missionaries, assisted in the organization of a ministerial conference for the central part of the state of Ind., attended the semi-annual meeting of the Board of the Gen. Ass. of Bapt. of Ind., attended a meeting of the Baptists on the subject of Education,²² from which I am sanguine that a Baptist literary institution will be the result; attended one funeral; attended a class of six

²² This refers to the meeting of June 5, 1834, in Indianapolis, which was the first step toward the organization of the future Franklin College. Another meeting was held in October, and in 1835 the institution called "The Indiana Baptist Manual Labor Institute" was located at Franklin. In 1836 a building was erected and in 1837 the first teacher was employed. In 1844 the institution was re-chartered as Franklin College. G. C. Chandler, whose name appears frequently in the letters from Oregon, was president, 1844-51.—W. C. Thompson, *First Half Century of Franklin College*, pp. 29-37.

females five times a week and visited as much as practicable for the purpose of promoting the interests of religion and education. If I am not much deceived, never did I feel so strong a desire to see the cause of our blessed Redeemer advance in the Western Valley, and especially in the state. Although we have many trials to which we were strangers when in New England, yet the joy we feel in seeing an interest beginning to be awakened to the great subject of Christian enterprise among the Baptists in this state more than compensates us for all our trials.²³ There is nothing wanting but a few more efficient men in the field, judiciously located, to see the Baptist cause rise in this state as fast as it ever did in Mass. or New York. Prejudices are not so deeply rooted as I anticipated before coming to the state, and two years of devoted service in the cause of Christ and His church will live down more than half the prejudices which the enemy can array against an eastern minister. God is evidently preparing the hearts of the people for just such a ministry as you would wish to send us. Br. Harding is labouring faithfully and with a good degree of success in the cause of the Gen. Ass. In addition to the sum raised in this place for my support the present year, I shall be disappointed if we do not raise at least \$37.50 for the Gen. Ass., and should an institution of learning be located near this place, something liberal will be contributed to that object. I feel as though my family need the avails of my class in addition to my stated income to render our situation comfortable. . . .

All of which is respectfully submitted,

E. FISHER.

. . . . N.B.—Br. Woods will probably go to Logans

²³ Here, as elsewhere through these letters, there is evidence in the growth of the modern Baptist denomination, of the effort required to create in the extremely individualistic Baptist churches, averse to Sunday schools, to a supported ministry, and to extensive missionary and educational work, an interest in missions, home and foreign, in education, in a supported ministry, and in an organized, aggressive denominational life. It is to be expected that the extremely individualistic, democratic, decentralized form of church should be developed and maintained longest on the frontier, and that with the passing of frontier conditions, the more highly organized church with its specialized ministry should come to prevail. The impetus, naturally, came from the Atlantic states.

Port, and I think perhaps it will be best. Men will sometimes work to the best advantage when they can feel at home themselves. He has talents enough to sustain the place, if he exercises enough of prudence. Connersville is now suffering for the want of a minister. Lafayette needs an able, efficient young man. Br. Fairman would do what he could to sustain him. If you know of any suitable men for these places, who can be principally sustained by the Home Missionary Soc. for two or three years, I should be in favor of having our Gen. Agent visit those places the present summer and learn what can be done.

E. F.

The south part of the state is suffering for the want of a suitable man at Madison, and another at New Albany and Salem. Vincennes, Terra Haute and Rockville ought not to be overlooked.

I baptized one in this place last Sabbath and expect to baptize several more the first week in August, 10 miles up Fall Creek, where we shall probably have occasion to form a church soon. The Lord is at work there for the Baptists.
Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. S.,

Bapt. Mission Rooms, Clinton Hall,
New York City.

Indianapolis, Sept. the 29th, 1834.

Beloved Br.:

I am again called upon, agreeable to the terms of my appointment, to make my quarterly report for the quarter ending the 22d of the present month, which is less interesting than I could have wished. Although my family and myself have suffered more from the climate the present season than at any former period since we arrived in the place, yet we feel to bless God that I have been enabled to attend all my appointments except two or three. During the month of July, I was subject to a disease resembling the flux, so as to

be confined principally to town. Since that time, Mrs. Fisher and our little daughter were severely afflicted, about ten days each, with sore eyes. With these exceptions our health and spirits have been good.

My occasional preaching has been directed principally on Fall Creek and in the bounds of Pleasant Run church. Early in the summer the Pleasant Run church received a number by baptism, amounting to 12, mostly the fruits of a protracted meeting held in May. Up Fall Creek, 10 miles from town, the prospects were flattering during the months of June and July and I thought a work of grace had already commenced. Several appeared unusually serious for a few weeks, but one unfavourable occurrence seemed to cast a gloom over the whole prospect. The wife of a man who was said to have another wife living, offered herself as a candidate for baptism. The church thought it not advisable to receive her; the family connexions being somewhat numerous, and several of them evidently serious, the circumstance seemed to chill the feelings of the whole settlement. I trust, however, that the seed sown will eventually spring up and bring forth fruit to the glory of God. One worthy sister came forward and submitted to the ordinance of baptism and united with the Pleasant Run church.

The cause of Christ in this place wears much the same aspect as when I made my last quarterly report. On the 6th of July I baptized one sister of an amiable Christian temper. Sabbath school remains as flourishing as could be expected during the sickly season. In consequence of the multiplicity of services on the Sabbath, I have changed the character of my Bible class, and am now spending an hour each Sabbath in interpreting the historical part of the Old Testament, after which I give an opportunity for any one to ask any questions relative to the portion of Scripture under review. The plan succeeds well thus far. Our congregations have remained as good in the sickly season as they were in the spring, but no unusual attention to the subject of religion.

The church and citizens will probably pay half my salary the present year. My attention has necessarily been engrossed more than I anticipated in my building, and much more than it would, if my means would have justified me in letting the job out to one man; but I feel to bless God that this care is now principally off my hands, at least till the pay day comes, and that may as well come in a house as in rents for four years. I think you would judge in the same way were you here. The cause of missions in our denomination is evidently gaining ground in this state, although it is as evident that opposition is becoming more bold. Doubtless the majority of almost every association in the state is either opposed or indifferent to the benevolent institutions. The moderator of our association had the hardihood to warn the brethren against all the benevolent institutions, but we have little reason to fear his influence long. We are told the triumphing of the wicked is short. We feel confident that the mission cause will eventually take root in every church, if there is efficacy in prayer and efficiency in action, for it is the praying and doing part of the church who are awake to this subject. If war must be declared on this subject, we are prepared to act on the defensive. The subject of education is one which has rested with great weight on my mind, and I trust something efficient will be decided upon relative to an institution adapted to our immediate wants at the meeting of our General Association the present week. Were it not for the great pressure of the times in relation to money, we should have probably issued a subscription list the present fall. We shall probably feel as though we could not delay longer than till spring. A few must make the commencement, or the time for the Baptists in this state will be over in a few years. If we had anything like an efficient ministry in this state at the present time, and unity of action in the churches, the ground might be ours to a great extent. The old and new school question is now agitating the Presbyterian Church throughout the state, and the question is not adapted to produce union in their

churches.²⁴ My services are so much needed in this place that it is impracticable for me to attend many public meetings abroad. If we could have one or two revival preachers to travel and attend protracted meetings, for one or two years, whenever they were invited, and to spend the rest of their time in preaching at some important place or places in the state, men who would not interfere with the broils in churches unless solicited, I think much good might be effected. Such meetings are now becoming popular in the churches.

During the past quarter I have preached 43 sermons, attended one ordination, one association, 34 other meetings, and visited as much of my time as practicable. . . .

Yours in gospel bonds,

EZRA FISHER.

N.B.—Br. Rice McCoy has departed this life. The event occurred three or four weeks since. It may be said with emphasis that another good man has fallen.

P. S.—Br. Lawrence has joined the Campbellite Church in Charlestown. My fears are now realized.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.,
Clinton Hall,
New York City.

Indianapolis, Nov. 25, 1834.

Dear Br.:

I received a letter from the Recording Sec. a few days since, informing me of my reappointment for twelve months at this place with a salary of \$100, requesting me to answer it soon. He likewise informed me that if I needed more to sustain me it would be allowed on my representations. It is

²⁴ The trouble between the Old School, or Conservative, and the New School, or Liberal, Presbyterians came to a head in 1837, although the trouble had been brewing for some years. The two parties virtually formed separate denominations until their reunion in 1871.—McClintock and Strong, *Cyc. of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, VIII, 534.

altogether uncertain whether as much will be realized the ensuing year as the present, from the consideration that several contributed more liberally than they would, if I had not been engaged in building a house. But I hope that as much, and perhaps more, will be contributed from the people here. My congregation increases slowly and the Baptist cause is altogether an uphill concern, but I do not despair of its ultimate success. This place needs a more leading mind and a more popular speaker than myself. The ground is now cleared so far as the church is concerned. I will accept the appointment and labour to the best of my feeble abilities, relying for the blessing on Him who alone can give success to the Word, but, if you can find a more suitable person to fill this place, I will most cheerfully retire to some less responsible station, where God in His providence may direct, but within the Valley. I must leave this for another subject.

Yours &c.,

EZRA FISHER.

N.B.—I am directed by the Board of the Gen. Association of Bapt. of Ind. to open a correspondence with you relative to the expediency of sustaining an agent a part of next year. You have doubtless before this time received a copy of the minutes of our Gen. Ass., which contain an abstract of Br. S. Harding's report for six months. He will probably raise more than half enough money to pay him, awaken an interest in a large number of churches and accomplish three times as much in preaching as he would if he had been located in the bounds of the churches which he ordinarily attends . . . Will you lay this subject before the Board and inform me before the first of January whether you will aid us another year in sustaining an agent eight or ten months in the same proportion as last year? The churches at Franklin and on Blue river, which Br. Harding formerly attended, think they can sustain him in the field all the time, if he can receive \$100 from the Home M. S. the next year. Br. Morgan will receive little or nothing from the churches where he labours,

unless windows should be made in heaven. Under these considerations, and believing Morgan equally as good an agent as Harding, the probability is that more will be secured to the cause by appointing him to this work than any other way we can do, unless you can help us to a man able to meet the western prejudices in this capacity.

E. FISHER, Cor. Sec.

P.S.—Madison is now ready to receive a preacher of the right sort; and if Br. Mathews does not go there, do not fail to send a suitable man if one can be found in the eastern states.

Connersville is an important place for the Baptists, where a man of the right sort might soon be sustained. . . . Our great weakness consists in the want of a few strong men to place in the most important places.

Br. Woods has gone to Logan Port. He needs a little of that excellent grace which so eminently characterized Job.

E. F.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. S.,
Clinton Hall,
New York City.

Indianapolis, Dec. 23, 1834.

Dear Brother:

The second year of my labours in the service of the A. B. H. M. S. terminated yesterday. Although I have nothing very cheering to communicate in connection with my labours, yet on reviewing the influence which has been exerted on the Baptist cause in this place and vicinity, I trust my labours have not been wholly lost. Since the sickly season our congregations have become more numerous than they have ever been since we came to the place, and are very attentive. Beyond this I see but little evidence of fruit. Our Sunday school has been better sustained than either of the other schools in town.

The church is enjoying as great a degree of harmony as has ever been experienced, and our last church meeting was unusually interesting and two were received by letter. The cause of temperance is gradually gaining ground in the town and county. The cause of missions is gradually gaining ground in this (Indianapolis) Association, but it must still be years before the Association as a body will favour the measures. This church is almost unanimously friendly to benevolent operations, and I am fully convinced that almost all the opposition is kept alive by a few members. An improvement is gradually going on in almost all the churches with which I am personally acquainted. In relation to an institution of learning under the direction of the Baptists in Ind., I fear nothing efficient will be done before next Oct., as it seems almost impracticable to bring the friends together more than once in a year,²⁵ but the spirit is increasing. During the past quarter I have preached 36 times, attended teachers' meeting and S. S. 11 times each, heard 10 sermons, attended the General Association and one protracted meeting, three prayer meetings, three temperance meetings, three church meetings and one at Sick Creek. The church has received three by letter, two are waiting an opportunity, and I expect to baptize one soon. I have had a class of six or seven with whom I have spent from one hour to an hour and a half five days in a week for ten weeks, but do not think of hearing them more than two weeks, if I can meet the demands against me without. But the expenses of building have driven me to this alternative and I hope it will not prove any essential injury to the cause of Christ. . . . I wrote you some time since signifying my acceptance of the appointment for the ensuing year. This I did, however, hoping that, at the expiration of the year, you would find a more able man to sustain this place and give me an opportunity of locating in some less responsible place to which my tal-

²⁵ More was done in 1835 than the author foresaw. Important meetings of the Indiana Baptist Education Society were held in January and June of 1835. At the June meeting a board of directors was appointed, which had by October secured some land for the institution.—Thompson, in *First Half Cent. of Franklin College*, pp. 29-31.

ents will be equal. This town is emphatically a political one and the care of all the churches must come upon the minister locating here. . . . While I remain here I will endeavor to subserve the interest of our divine Redeemer to the extent of my abilities.

Yours in the service of our common Lord,

EZRA FISHER.

N.B.—I wrote you some time since relative to the prospect of the A. B. H. M. S. uniting with the Gen. Ass. of Ind. in sustaining a traveling agent 9 or 10 months next year, and if you have not answered it, please do so soon.

P. S.—Br. Bradley, the most efficient lay brother in the state, is now sick with a fever.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. S.,

Clinton Hall, New York City.

Indianapolis, Feb. 5, 1835.

Dear Brother:

I take my pen to inform you that I have been solicited to become the Superintending Agent of Indiana for the American Sunday School Union,²⁶ and my friends in this place, both in the church and out, advise me to accept of the appointment on condition that I receive the commission, believing I shall be more useful to the cause in that capacity than to have my labours confined to this place. If the Board of A. S. S. U. should concur with the wishes of the Executive Committee of the Ind. S. S. U., I think favourably of the subject. In that case I shall have to request the Board of the A. B. H. M. Soc. to send to this place a man of suitable talents as soon as he can be found. The door is fairly open, and I think half a man's salary might be made here the first year. We think of Br. George C. Sedwick, of Zanesville, Br. Cressey²⁷ of South Boston, and Br. Matthews, now at

26.—The American Sunday School Union was organized in 1824. It immediately began to employ missionaries to organize Sunday schools, in addition to providing Sunday school literature. In 1830 it inaugurated a plan for establishing within two years a Sunday school in every needy settlement in the Mississippi Valley.—The New Shoff-Herzog Encyc. of Religious Knowledge, XI, 157-158.

Lawrenceburg, and feel confident one of the three can be obtained. In case I engage in the S. S. business, I shall immediately correspond with some of the brethren, with the expectation that your Board will see that a suitable man is sustained here.

The friends of education in Ind. met at this place the 14th and 15th of last month, formed an educational society,²⁸ adopted a constitution for a literary institution and resolved to decide on the place of location the first week in June, as you will probably learn by the Cross and Baptist Journal in the next number. There is a disposition to go ahead among some of the brethren, but we want a Moses and an Aaron to lead the great mass out from preconceived prejudices, by which they are more strongly bound than were the Israelites in Egypt. The cause is dying in Ind. for the want of a few strong men and for want of strong faith in those we now have. . . . Three or four men we must have the present year, if they can be had and, I had almost said, sustained, too, at your expense. Will your Board aid the Gen. Association in sustaining an agent 8 or 10 months the present year? On this subject we have received no answer from the letter I wrote you more than two months ago. The Board have resolved to put forth an effort to raise \$500 this year by \$5 subscriptions.

My health has been very poor the two past months from the prevailing influenza, but is now almost restored.

S. S. flourishes and the cause in other respects remains much as usual, except a gradual increase of attendants at public worship the past winter, but things move very slowly.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

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 Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
 Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.,
 New York City.

²⁷ Rev. Timothy R. Cressy (1800-1870), was with the author, both in college and seminary. He was pastor in Massachusetts and Ohio, and became pastor of the First church in Indianapolis in 1846.—Stott, *Indiana Bapt. Hist.*, p. 147.

²⁸ See notes 22 and 25.

Indianapolis, March the 25, 1835.

Rev. and Dear Sir:

It becomes my duty to make my first quarterly report for this year, and for the quarter ending the 22d of the present month. I have preached the past quarter about 40 times, attended the S. school and teachers' meeting weekly, the usual temperance meetings, in one of which we have resolved to make an effort to organize a society in every preaching place in the county, if practicable, and I am appointed one of the committee to see this resolution carried into effect; assisted in the organization of a state Bapt. Ed. Soc.,²⁹ and framing a constitution for an institution of learning; devoted as much time to visiting as the state of my health and that of my family would admit. S. school flourishing and numbers about 90 students. Church in harmony, but religious interest remarkably low in the whole town. I have accepted of the appointment of S. S. Agent for the state and entered on the services the 23d.

At the commencement of the year, when a subscription should have been opened for my support, Br. Bradley (on whom devolves a great part of the management of the church) was dangerously ill, and about the time the subject of my engaging in the S. S. cause began to be agitated, the brethren were about to open a subscription, but that prevented it and nothing has been said to me in relation to any compensation for the three months' services, excepting by one brother, who has paid me one dollar, and I presume nothing will be done, although every member of the church approves of the plan of my future operations. While we have never more needed help, Mrs. F. has a young babe and we are obliged to keep a girl, while our other expenses have been considerably enhanced. My expenses for the past quarter have probably exceeded seventy-five dollars, exclusive of rents. I regret exceedingly to throw myself entirely on your Board for the past quarter. Under the present circumstances I shall order you to pay fifty dollars for my services

²⁹ See notes 22 and 25.

and I will lose the balance. I shall not be compelled to make any further draft on you for the ensuing year at least while perhaps I may promote the cause in our denomination more than I could at this place.

We have had five added by letter the last quarter; our S. S. numbers 90 scholars, about 200 volumes in the library, have a society for domestic missions.

Respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER.

N.B.—The church have taken measures to request Br. Cressey to visit them, but the prospects for support are not so immediately flattering as last year, almost one-third of our supporters having removed and being about to remove from the place, and some of them our most efficient members. Yet the place is important, it being the capitol of the state. Nothing further will be done till we learn the mind of Br. C.

Br. Woods, who is under appointment from your Board, has been at Logan Port five or six months, and his prospects as represented by him are flattering and lately some hopeful conversions; he wrote me some time since that he feels peculiarly straitened for want of pecuniary resources, and says he shall be obliged to abandon the object of preaching in part, unless he can have more aid. I think the Gen. Association will make him \$25, if the people at L. Port will raise \$75. Will it not be best, in case he is disposed to remain at L. Port, to make him up \$250 from all sources for the present year? It costs more than twice as much to support a family at L. P. as it does a few miles further down in the country. That place is destined to become the Rochester of Ind.,³⁰ and Br. Wood's talents are equal to the place, if he does not faint by the way. I do not think a family can be supported there and a man save a few dollars annually for the infirmities of age short of \$300 a year.

We have heard nothing from you relative to the expediency of sustaining a joint agent as last year in Ind. I think

³⁰ This prophecy about Logansport was only partly fulfilled. It has extensive railway shops and other manufactures, and in 1910 had a population of 19,000.

it doubtful whether a suitable person can be found in the state who will engage in that work.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
 Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.,
 Baptist Mission Rooms, Clinton Hall,
 New York City.

Indianapolis, Jan. 25, 1836.

Dr. Going,

Dear Sir:

I take this opportunity to inform you of my designs relative to my future course. My mind has been strongly inclined towards the west part of the state of Illinois³¹ ever since I saw you at the Western Convention at Cincinnati. Yet the repeated solicitude of the friends in this state that I should devote myself to the interests of the Institution about to go into operation at Franklin for a while almost gained the ascendancy over my better judgment. Had I not been fully convinced that my health would not admit of a sedentary life, I should have consented to go into the Institution as a teacher. Just at the time I declined being considered a candidate for that place, I received a pressing invitation from the Board of the A. S. S. U. to continue in the work in which I am now engaged. But, for reasons which I suggested to you, I feel convinced that it is the will of the Almighty that I should decline engaging another year in that agency. I cherish the most cordial friendship to that institution, but, if my labours are worth anything, they are more needed in the Baptist cause than in any other. I have therefore determined to remove as early as the first of next April to one of the three following counties: Adams, Schuyler or Hancock, if I can be sustained in the work of the ministry. The brethren from Illinois informed me that their state convention has appropriated \$100 to the church in Quincy, provided they can obtain a suitable preacher. That, or Rush-

³¹ Illinois, with Indiana, had been having a very rapid growth at this time, just preceding the financial stringency of the later thirties.

ville, will probably be the place where I shall choose to labour. It would be gratifying to me to know whether I might expect any aid from the Bapt. Home Missionary Society, in the event of my engaging in the ministry in one of those places, and not being entirely sustained by the churches with whom I labour.

The institution at Franklin will probably go into operation as early as the 20th of May.³² Br. Levernet will probably be the teacher for the first year. A building 38 by 26, one-story, is being erected, to be completed the first day of May. It is to contain a school room 26 feet square and a room 12 by 14 as a study for the teacher. Between \$4,000 and \$5,000 have been subscribed for this object, including the 88 acres of land. If Br. Morgan's health does not fail, I think he will increase the subscription the present year from \$7,000 to \$10,000 in the state.

Under the present arrangement, little will be done for the General Association. Unless a few efficient men are sent out and almost entirely sustained in some of the prominent places in the state by the H. M. Soc., the cause must rise slowly for several years at least. With a very few exceptions, there is nothing like an inclination in the churches to come up to their duty in the support of the gospel. The brightest prospects of the Bapt. cause stand connected with the anticipated institution at Franklin. Br. Spaulding has arrived at Laporte, and his prospects are the most flattering of any man in the state by far. The church expect to support him and are determined to go to the work, relying upon God for success; and, if they bring their church to town, the members within six miles from the place are able to entirely sustain him.

In determining on the future course of my life, I have been daily led to seek direction from the Most High, and, if

³² Warren Leverett was elected as teacher, but never served. The building cost \$350, and was finished about as indicated. For Rev. Lewis Morgan, see note 16. Of the eighty-eight acres, eight had been given and eighty purchased. The eighty-acre tract was later platted and sold off in lots for the benefit of the college.—Thompson, in *First Half Cent. of Franklin College*, pp. 30-33.

I have erred, I have done it seeking the path of duty, and the solicitude has been doubly increased from the consideration that in this matter I differ in opinion from so many of my dearest friends on earth. If, in the end, it is found that I have deviated from the path of duty, I trust the brethren will rather attribute it to a lack in judgment than an inclination to disobey the calls of a gracious Providence.

Yours affectionately,

EZRA FISHER.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.,

Baptist Mission Rooms, Clinton Hall,

New York City.

Quincy, Adams Co., Ill., May 5, 1836.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.

Dear Br.:

Agreeable to instructions communicated by Br. Luther Crawford from the Board of the A. B. H. M. Soc., I left Indianapolis for this place the 12th of April, and, after more than three weeks of mud and chills and fever, by the blessing of Almighty God, I arrived at this place with my family yesterday about 2 P. M., with my health improved. I find in this place and vicinity a small, feeble church, but apparently united in the bonds of the gospel. They have, however, been waiting in expectation of seeing a Br. Leach, from N. York state, as a preacher who wrote them last winter, giving them some encouragement that he would come out in May under the patronage of your Board. The brethren answered him some three months since, but have received no response. . . . They express little hope of seeing Br. L., and as individuals request me to stay with them at present and express the warmest feelings of gratitude to your Board that they have remembered Quincy. They think they must have preaching in town every Sabbath. I learn, however, that the church on Mill Creek, about 10 miles southeast of this, are expecting to share in the labours of the man who preaches at this place.

and are willing also to share in the support of the gospel to the extent of their ability. Perhaps this course may be wise at present, if my labours should prove acceptable to both churches. . . . The town is elevated somewhat more than a hundred feet above high water mark on the bluff of the river, and delightfully situated in every respect, except that some parts of it are cut with deep ravines. . . . The river along the town washes a fine quarry of limestone, so as to afford one of the finest landings for steamboats the whole length of the town. There the largest sized boats unload their freight on the shore with the greatest convenience. The place contains about 1,000 inhabitants,³³ and is improving the present year more than in any three former years. The country, back through the county, is the most delightfully rolling country and the most equally divided into timber and prairie I ever saw in my life, and, in point of fertility, perhaps is not surpassed in the West. I wish you to send me a copy of the American Baptist directed to this place, and, if in the providence of the All-Wise, it may be my duty to locate in another place, I shall hereafter direct it to be sent there. I shall visit the churches in the adjacent country as far as practicable and wait at this place the disposal of my future labours as God, and the churches, whose I wish to be, may direct.

I remain,

Yours in the bonds of Christian affection,

EZRA FISHER.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
 Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.,
 Clinton Hall,
 New York City.

Quincy, Nov. 9, 1836.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.
 Dear Br.:

At the expiration of the first quarter after my arrival at

³³ In 1837, Quincy had a population of 1,653.—*Am. Cyc.*, XIV, 153.

this place, I neglected making a quarterly report on account of my being unable to learn what part of my support could be raised in the two churches to which I preach. I will now proceed to report the substance of my labours for the last six months, ending the 4th instant. On my arrival I found the church in this place consisting of but 9 members. It was constituted in Aug., 1835, and left entirely destitute of preaching except two or three Sabbaths, when it was imposed on by a man who proved an abandoned villain. . . . The brethren felt the need of a spiritual teacher, and received me with all the cordiality desirable. They had maintained prayer and conference meetings twice each month for several months. I did not visit the Bethany church till June, but spent my time in this place doing what I could by visiting and preaching, except two Sabbaths, on one of which I was confined to my bed by chills and fever;³⁴ the other I spent at a three days' meeting with the Union church, 16 miles N. E. from this, on Bear creek. I found the Bethany church, consisting of 13 members, 10 miles S. E. of this, in a most delightful part of the country, but surrounded by two anti-mission Bapt. churches and three of other denominations in the vicinity. Consequently the field of labour appeared quite limited and immediate prospects of usefulness rather forbidding, except that this little band of brethren were efficient members, and we had the assurance that ours was the cause of God and that truth is triumphant. I found this church sustaining a S. S. and Bible class, both of which consisted of the church members and their children. I preach regularly with this church on the first and third Sabbaths and on Sat. before the first, and attend the S. S. and B. class on my preaching days. The congregations here have been very small, till within the last six weeks, when they have nearly doubled. In July, two were added by letter, and, at the close of a three days' meeting last Sab., I baptized one brother who professes to have found the Saviour about three weeks since.

³⁴ Malarial fevers were very prevalent at this time in the Middle West, and the supposed freedom of Oregon from them was one of the causes leading to its settlement.

The meeting was pleasingly interesting and solemn, especially among the children, the brethren were revived, and the field seems widening in this section of the country. The congregations at Quincy have been but a handful, except when I preach in the Congregational house, which has been almost every Sabbath for three months, when in town, and then the house is filled to overflowing. We have nothing but a small schoolroom to meet in as yet, but hope something will be done next summer. The interest seems gradually increasing and our meetings are becoming better attended. Our regular meetings here are preaching twice each Sab., when I am in the place, prayer meeting each Sab. night, prayer meeting each Friday night and church conference the 2nd and 4th Saturdays each month. The 4th Saturday in June a br., about 35 years of age, and a young sister gave a relation of their Christian experience to the church, and the next day, in the presence of a large and attentive concourse, I had the happiness of burying them in baptism. The interest of the occasion to me was heightened by the reflection that the Father of mercies had conferred on me the honor of being the first Baptist minister to consecrate the Father of Waters above the mouth of the Illinois. I was again permitted to administer the ordinance to a young br. on the 4th Sab. in September. This church has received seven by letter since I came to the place, so that our present number is 19. We expect several additions to each of these churches in a few weeks. We organized a small Sabbath school in this place about two months ago, which now numbers about 25 scholars. When in town, I attend the school regularly; when absent, the brethren sustain prayer meeting at the time of the morning services. Friday before the 5th Sabbath in July, I met with the ministers of Salem Association at Newhope church, McDonough Co., at which time we organized a Ministers' Conference and held a protracted meeting. On the last Friday in Oct. we held a protracted meeting and Ministers' Conference at Warsaw, 35 miles above this place, on the river, and on the Sabbath I baptized an interesting young

brother into the church at that place. I attended a called meeting of the State Convention at Springfield in Aug., but was prevented from attending the annual meeting in consequence of the sickness of Mrs. Fisher, who had the fever for the second time since our arrival. In addition to the labour, as named above, I have visited from house to house, preached occasionally, and directed my labours to those objects which seemed most to demand my attention for the promotion of the cause. These little churches are composed of lively stones, and seem to me to be as praying a people as any with whom I have ever lived. For the last two months I think I have realized the importance of an entire consecration to the work of the Lord more than I have before since I left Vermont. Yet I come far short of exercising that apostolic faith which is indispensable to the success of a minister of Jesus Christ. O, that I might make the glory of God the reigning passion of my soul till the salvation of the Lord might go forth as brightness throughout this region! By the signs of the times I am bid to believe that God will soon appear to build up His own Zion in this town and vicinity. This town is rapidly improving and, although about one-third of the present houses have been built since spring, yet everything that has the name of cabin is full, and numbers of families have been obliged to go to St. Louis to winter. Board is very high, rent is as high as in N. York City, wood is worth \$4 per cord, and all kinds of provisions are high except corn. Common labourers earn their dollar a day and board, and woman's help is almost out of the question. Our brethren here think I cannot support my family short of \$400 the present year, and I am convinced that I cannot do it comfortably for a less sum. The two churches think they can raise \$200, but I expect it will fall somewhat short. Immediately after my arrival, the corresponding secretary of the State Convention gave me some encouragement that I should receive \$100 from that source, but I have not yet learned whether I shall realize anything from that source. As soon as I hear from him I will write you. I have neces-

sarily incurred above \$100 of debts since my arrival; more than I am able to meet at present. I shall order you to pay \$50 in a few days.

I remain, dear br., yours in Christian esteem,

EZRA FISHER.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Society,
Clinton Hall,
New York City.

Quincy, Adams County, Ill., March 30, 1837.

To the Corresponding Secretaries of the A. B. H. M. Soc.
Beloved Brethren:

I hasten to comply with a request I have just noticed in the *Pioneer*.³⁵ Our mails being so irregular at this season of the year that my papers have been delayed about two weeks, must be the only apology if this fails of reaching you in due time. I have laboured in the service of the Society since the first of last April. . . . Have supplied the church at this place half the time and the Bethany church the remaining half. We trust there have been six or eight cases of hopeful conversions connected with my congregation in this place. Six have been added to this church by baptism and seventeen by letter; one to the Bethany church by baptism and four by letter. I have also baptized one into the church at Warsaw, to which Br. N. Parks preaches. A small Sab. school and Bible class is sustained in the Bethany church during the warm season of the year. We have constituted a small Sunday school at Quincy, which is sustained through the winter, and two of the scholars and one of the teachers have become hopefully pious. One hundred and twenty-five dollars are pledged towards my support in this place, and seventy-five at Bethany. The church in this place have contributed in aid of the Ill. S. S. Union and the Ill. Bapt. Ed. Socy.; the Bethany church have contributed in aid of the

³⁵ The "Pioneer" was a Baptist paper, first published in 1829, in Illinois, by Rev. J. M. Peck.— *Bap. Home Missions in N. Am., 1832-1882*, p. 305

A. Bible Soc., and the A. & F. Bible Soc., pledged something in aid of the Ill. Bapt. Ed. Socy., and contributed to the Ill. State Convention. Efforts have been made by both churches, in connection with our fellow citizens, in favor of temperance, and the cause is making very laudable advances. At the last three monthly meetings in this place, more than 100 members were added; the first of these meetings I addressed. Ten copies of religious periodicals are taken here, and six at Bethany. As yet but a few hundred pages of tracts have been distributed, but I hope in a few days to receive a packet from Alton. . . . The churches, although small, are willing to do their duty when they learn it, and it has never fallen to my lot to labour in a more inviting field. The church in this place at the last meeting expressed a vote of thanks to the Home Mission Soc'y for the services rendered them in sending them a preacher and aiding in his support the present year, and, in view of the rising interests in this place, resolved that it was their duty to use every laudable means to sustain the gospel all the time in Quincy. They further resolved that they would sustain a preacher the whole time the ensuing year, provided the Home Missionary Soc'y would appropriate two hundred dollars towards that object, and invited me to preach with them all the time. I have not yet given them an answer, although it is my decided opinion they should have the entire labours of a preacher. I cannot sustain my family for a less sum than four hundred dollars a year . . . and I shall be impelled to preach a part of the time to the Bethany church . . . or be dependent upon the liberality of your Soc'y for half my support. The brethren here say, two or three years and God working with them, they hope to be able to sustain the cause at home and help in sending it beyond them. That you may be the better able to judge relative to my duty, I will notice a few facts relative to this place.

The church, although few in number and poor, have resolved on building a house of worship, about forty-five feet by fifty-five, with a basement . . . for a school, and have

secured a lot six rods square, twelve rods north of the N. W. corner of the public square . . . for eight hundred dollars on a credit, have subscribed about eleven hundred dollars towards erecting a house, and have increased the subscription about four hundred more from the citizens. We feel as though our condition would justify us in adopting the too fashionable practice of asking aid of our more able churches in the accomplishment of this work. Would we not be justified in sending some one to solicit aid from the eastern churches in the accomplishment of this work? The town is growing (according to the common phraseology of the West) with almost unparalleled rapidity. More than fifty frames have gone up for dwellings and stores since the breaking up of the winter, and the work of the season is hardly commenced. Rent is higher at this time than at any former period. The state legislature have undertaken the construction of a railroad from Quincy, through Jacksonville and Springfield, to intersect the Wabash and Erie canal at Lafayette, Ind., which, when completed, will open a direct line of communication with Buffalo, and thence up to Albany and New York. The Congregational church sustain a preacher all the time. The Methodists one, and, in case of emergency, two. The Congregationalists are about to build a house to cost at least ten thousand dollars. Last year the Methodists built a house fifty feet square, with a basement . . . and are calling on the public for aid to pay off their old debts. The Lutherans are about sustaining a preacher, and have secured a lot for a house. The Catholics have secured a lot and are circulating their paper for a church, and the Episcopal church are circulating their paper, soliciting aid for erecting a chapel. Under these circumstances, comparatively little can be done without a suitable house and a man on the ground.

While I write, it becomes my duty to represent the case of the Bethany church. The church have agreed to purchase a lot the present week in West Union, a little town rising up in their midst, and intend building a house of worship this

year or next. . . . They are few in number, consisting of but eighteen or nineteen, yet they are able and willing, for a new country, and if they had a minister settled with them whom they esteemed, they would take care of him to about \$100 the first year. Although they were quite circumscribed last spring by means of two anti-mission churches and an Arian church, yet their field is becoming cleared, and I know of no church in the vicinity more worthy a good minister than they. They manifest an unwillingness to give me up. They want a man capable of teaching them and with a good share of common sense. A man located with them would find as inviting a field before him in the rising towns in the south part of this co., and in the north of Pike, as the state can afford, leaving out a few of the prominent points. This church is surrounded with a country unrivaled in point of beauty of scenery and fertility of soil.

Yours with esteem,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—I shall probably comply with the invitation of the Quincy church, believing that you will judge it my duty on the whole to devote my labours to this place and its immediate vicinity.

Rev. Jonathan Going, D. D.,
 Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Socy,
 Baptist Mission Rooms, Clinton Hall,
 New York City.

Quincy, Adams Co., Ill., May 11, 1837.

To the Corresponding Secretaries A. B. H. M. Soc.,
 Messrs. Going and Crawford.

Beloved Brethren:

I now take pen to report my labours from March the 30th to May the 4th. . . . Since my last report we have had no alterations in our churches. My labours have been bestowed as usual. Our Sabbath congregations are rather increasing at both places, but the pressure of worldly business in the

opening of the spring, together with circumstances beyond our control, has brought about declension of vital piety in both the churches. . . . The brethren in Quincy are making some efforts to improve singing in public worship, but, coming as we have from the several parts of the Union, we expect our advances in this work will be slow. We shall probably commence the work for a house of worship the present year, although it is extremely expensive building this year (never more so).

I failed of attending the Ministers' Conference of Salem Association the last of April in consequence of the sickness of my little daughter, but learn that the meeting was interesting. The subject of the expediency of taking measures to get up a high school on the Military Tract was discussed and some preparatory measures were adopted, such as the appointment of a committee to look out a suitable location.

The plan is somewhat novel, but, with a little capital and skill, it **may** eventually succeed. The plan is to enter Congress land, as much as can be done by inducing individuals to make investments, and lay off a town, one-fourth of all the property invested to be appropriated to the public school. It is supposed by some that \$2,000 or \$3,000 can easily be found for the commencement of the work.

In reviewing the labours of my past year, although impeded by sickness of my family, and more by a want of a devout temper of mind and faith in God, I can do no less than say, with emotions of gratitude to the great Head of the church: "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." The first blow has been struck, the field opened for more extensive labours, eight have been baptized, twenty-one have been added by letter, one Sabbath school has been put in operation and another sustained, a lot has been secured for a meeting house in Quincy and the Bethany church have secured one for the same purpose in West Union, a town in the vicinity, \$200 has been raised for the support of the gospel, about \$1,600 subscribed for a meeting house, and several benevolent institutions have been patronized.

How and where I spend the ensuing year will depend in part upon the decision of the Ex. Com. of the A. B. H. M. Society.

I have already informed you that the Quincy church wish my labours all the time, and have resolved to raise \$200 for the next year, provided the Home Missionary Society will raise the rest of my support. I shall not give my answer till I hear from you on this subject. Bethany church still ask as great a portion of my labours as they can have. I have given you my views relative to the importance of that field.

Yours with esteem,

EZRA FISHER.

. . . .

Quincy, Adams Co., Ill., Nov. 29, 1837.

Dear Br. Crawford:

I take pen . . . to report for the first six months of the year commencing May the 5th.

In view of all circumstances, I have concluded that it was my duty to spend my whole time in this place the present year and hazard consequences. At the commencement of the year, the brethren agreed to raise \$200 towards my support the current year, but their extra efforts to build a house will probably cause some retrenchments on that sum. We have experienced no signal displays of grace the present year. I have baptized but one, and four have been received by letter, making, after dismissing one, 36. I preach twice each Sabbath, attend prayer meeting on Sabbath and Friday evenings each week, beside the other public meetings for moral reform in the place, and visit as much as practicable. We still sustain a small Sunday school. Our congregations fill the small schoolroom, which we occupy, to overflowing and would probably soon double if we had a convenient place. A tolerable degree of harmony pervades the church at present. We have raised by subscription about \$2,000 towards building a house forty feet by fifty, have the walls for the

basement story up and expect the frame will go up early in the spring. We have our fears in relation to the event, but we had about \$1,500 on our subscription before the money pressure came on,³⁶ and to alter materially the size of the house or to delay one year would render valueless much of the subscription. (Within the last three or four weeks I have laboured part of the time to render my family comfortable, and shall be under the necessity of doing something more to sustain my family in a town where almost every item of consumption is as high as in New York or Boston. I mention this fact that you may be apprised of the course I must necessarily pursue. Although nothing but necessity would induce me to entangle myself with the affairs of this world, I am willing that the world may know that I can, with Paul, use these hands to minister to my necessities.) The cause is evidently advancing in this (Salem) Association, which includes almost the whole Military Tract north of the south line of Adams County. As a body it is in favour of sending the word of God and His servants to the ends of the earth.

Quincy now contains 1,653 souls, according to the census just taken, showing an increase of more than 900 within the last two years.

We expect the railroad, from this place through Jacksonville and Springfield to intersect the Wabash and Erie Canal, will be put under contract the present winter for thirty or forty miles, commencing at this place, so that the work may be commenced in the spring. Our whole country is destitute of Baptist preaching, except for my own labours and those of two brethren who preach, each of them, one Sabbath each month, but reside out of the county. It may be said with emphasis that the fields are white already for the harvest. But we are well supplied in comparison to the region bordering on the river for 500 miles north of this, including the north part of this state and Wisconsin Terri-

³⁶ This was the effect of the financial panic of 1836, which for a time prostrated business in the Middle West.

tory. We may well ask the question, How can all this multitude be fed, since our men and **available** means are so few?

I shall soon make a draft on you for fifty dollars. I subscribe myself your brother and fellow labourer in the gospel of the Kingdom.

EZRA FISHER.

. . . .

Quincy, Adams Co., Ill., March 23, 1838.

Mr. Luther Crawford,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br.:

The health of my family has deterred me from sooner answering your request in your circular, Mrs. F. having a young child and it being impracticable to find help in this place. Added to this, I have been engaged in teaching a common school for the past six weeks to meet the expenses of the family. But enough of apologies. I shall have laboured twelve months for the Society on the first of April. My labours have been mostly confined to this place. . . . We have received one by baptism, and eleven by letter. There have been one or two hopeful cases of conversion during the past winter. The church have for the first time . . . resolved to take up quarterly collections in aid of Foreign Missions, Home Missions, American and Foreign Bible Society and Educational Society, these to be taken up the first Sabbath in April, July, October and January. As a church we have done nothing for any of these objects, although individuals have done something. I have distributed about 2,000 pages of tracts. Those exhibiting the peculiar doctrines of the denomination are much needed in general among the members, to say nothing of the community in general. We have a small Sunday school, which has been in rather a languishing state for six months past, yet is rather increasing of late, numbering from ten to twenty scholars. A Bible class, just organized of about ten young men and women, promises to be a powerful auxiliary to the preaching of the Word. We

have a library of about 50 volumes in the Sunday school. Most of the church are members of the temperance society and are ready to give their voices in favour of all the societies of moral reform in the land, and some at least let their cry go up to Him, who has made of one blood all nations that dwell on the face of the earth, that He may in His wisdom cause every yoke to be broken and the oppressed everywhere to go free.

Our meeting house is now on our hands and our brethren's hearts are almost fainting lest, when the house is erected to the worship of God, it shall be sold to the service of Satan. If we had anticipated the present pressure everywhere, we should certainly have built small; but so it is. We were disappointed in from \$600 to \$1,000 in the case of one brother in one of the Atlantic states, and in our hopes of sending and soliciting from some of our more able churches. If we had had a suitable place of worship last summer and winter, our congregation would probably have been double the present number, to say nothing of other embarrassing circumstances under which we labour.

We have two promising young brethren in the church who have commenced their studies (with a view of engaging in the ministry) at a manual labour school, under the direction of Dr. Nelson, about five miles from this place. The success of Dr. N.'s school has strongly suggested the expediency of the Baptists starting a school on the same plan somewhere on the Mississippi between this place and the mouth of Rock river. The plan is novel, but one which would naturally suggest [itself when] without funds.

The church still solicit a continuance of my labours and the further aid of your body. They are doing all they can to sustain the cause.

You may ask why our S. S. and other societies are so small. I have only two causes to offer among the many that might be named. The field had been reaped again and again before the Baptists raised the standard or thrust in the

sickle. The other cause weighs ten fold more than that. Our house of worship is only 18 by 20 feet, and at that a dirty school room. This is the best we have in prospect till we have a house.

The present population of the place is not much short of 2,000 and weekly increasing. A railroad, intersecting the Wabash and Erie Canal at La Fayette, Indiana, and terminating at this place, is about being constructed, and about one hundred miles will be under contract next month. This and the fact that I am the only missionary Baptist preacher in Adams County, a territory about 30 miles square, will suggest to you the propriety of holding on at this place. Although we have no business men, nor men of wealth in the church, we are sure things will not long remain so. On the whole, the prospects are encouraging in this county, as well as in this place, and we are much needing three or four faithful men to devote their time to the work in the county. The church which I found numbering nine, one-third of which were either unacquainted with missionary operations or opposed to them, numbers about thirty-eight at this time, with fewer of the anti-effort members than at first. The change has taken place harmoniously, although a few months ago we feared we might experience a serious rupture. Two members, Campbellites in sentiment, came forward at our last meeting and asked a letter of dismission, which was readily granted, specifying the cause, and no unkind feelings were manifested by either party.

I have found it necessary to teach a quarter in order to sustain my family. What would you think of the plan of my removal to Texas after this church get their meeting house so far completed as to be able to worship in it, say next fall or the following spring? I must say the subject has rested with some weight on my mind and, if I were sure duty called, I would not be disobedient to the Divine will.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Owing to the circumstance of our brethren having the meeting house constantly on hand, they probably will not raise more than half as much by subscription for my support the year ending the fifth of May next as they anticipated. This is my only apology for . . . teaching. Yet they have been very kind in presents to my family. About the first of January they appointed a day in which they made us a donation visit and brought in about \$25 worth of presents. As a body they are as kind and attentive to me as any of the New England churches are to their pastors, and deeply regret that they can do no more.

I wish not to have you infer from the suggestion I made in relation to Texas that I am dissatisfied with either this church or place. This place will soon ask for a man of popular talents, and should have one. This being a popular state in the N. E., many . . . will be willing to fill this place where one will be willing to accept the privations of becoming a pioneer in that important field. Probably my constitution is as well adapted to that climate as to this.

Quincy, Ill., May 14, 1838.

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br. Crawford:

The year of my appointment in the service of the Board . . . closed the fourth ult., and it devolves on me to make a report of my labours since the time of my annual report, which was in March last. My labours have been much the same as formerly, when I have written, except that there was a failure on the part of the church of \$100 towards my support. This subjected me to the necessity of teaching a quarter, which increased my labours beyond my strength, and compelled me to suspend to a great extent my pastoral visits, which are always the most useful part of a stated preacher's services—at least indispensable.

Our place of worship is altogether too strait for us, but we hope, almost against hope, that in a few months we shall

be able to go into some part of our house, now in an advancing state. The field of labour for Baptists in town and vicinity is gradually enlarging and, perhaps, there are not more than three places in the state which call for the undivided labours of faithful servants of Christ more than this. We have had some changes since I last wrote, three of our members having left us with a design of going over to the Reformers, **so-called**, and perhaps, when you next hear from me, some two or three more may have taken the same road. But this has been done without difficulty, and, I had almost said, without trial, as it is but what we have anticipated for more than a year. We can say in the language of inspiration, "They went out from us because they were not of us." These changes have left the church almost entirely of one heart and one mind, and, while we have spared some of our numbers, we have been receiving others, so that at the present time our little band has increased from nine to somewhat more than forty, since God in His providence directed us to this place.

Our Sabbath school is small and Bible class rather interesting, embracing a considerable portion of the church. A majority of our members living in the country, our evening prayer meetings are but thinly attended, but we sustain them as often as twice each week. Temperance lectures are given almost monthly in the place, and most of our members are interested.

The church think they can raise \$200 the coming year for my support, and have the subscription made up, at this time, within about \$40. It is due to the church to say that last year's failure occurred because of the meeting house subscription being the engrossing subject. Although they failed in this, they have been kind in presents, so that we shall probably be able to meet the expenses of the year. If they had the house off their hands, with the probable increase in membership, I think they will gladly sustain a minister in two years from this, and, from that time, you may expect

they will repay the H. M. Soc. by aiding them in sending the gospel beyond them. They have voted thanks for past favours to your Board and solicit your aid this year also.

This church is truly becoming one of the most pleasant churches in the land, and will soon become one of the most desirable situations for an efficient preacher in the whole West.

It would require \$500 to sustain a man with a small family in this place so that he could devote, in the best manner, his labours to the work. The way in which I bring around the year is by uniting industry and economy with self denial. I keep no horse and, of course, whenever I go five or ten miles to preach, I imitate the example of our blessed Redeemer, but I cannot do so much in the surrounding country where labour is greatly needed. When my family are sick or feeble, instead of paying from \$2 to \$4 per week for a girl, which must be the case where help is hired, I must give the best care I can, with the aid of Christian friends.

In a review of the two years since we have been in this place, I have found the promise, "My grace is sufficient for you," very precious to me. I feel that I am a frontiersman, and when God in His providence shall indicate to me that this place demands another than a frontier man, if my health and that of my family admit, I hope once more to take a frontier post. Did you ever think how comfortable Paul must have felt, while, relying on the grace of God, he could have the reflection to cherish, that he had so striven to preach the gospel faithfully, not where Christ was named lest he should build upon another man's foundation, but that they to whom he was not spoken of should see; and they that had not heard should understand?

Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Yours by the hand of Br. Ford was kindly received. Br. Ford has preached one Sabbath at Payson. I have not yet learned what are his prospects.

In relation to Texas, I have for four or five months felt strong desires to see that field of labour, and the more I think on the subject the more the arguments which induced me to decide on leaving the New England states for the Valley, operate to induce me to think it may before long be my duty to remove to Texas. The argument is simply this, that scores of eastern men may be induced to come to this state where one will be induced to go to Texas. As relates to the unsettled state of Texas, I judge, from all the information I can gather from one of their papers, published at the seat of Government, and coming regularly to this place, that they now have little to fear from Mexico, and probably by the opening of another spring, or even sooner, the door will be open so far as civil revolution stands connected with the cause of Christ. I suppose that the fall, about the first of November, would be as good a part of the year to go from this place to Texas as any.³⁷

P. S.—Last Saturday two came forward to the church and related their experience and were received for baptism, and on the Sabbath I baptized one of them; probably one more will relate her experience soon; these have been subjects of grace during last winter. I shall make a draft on you of fifty dollars soon.

Yours, E. F.

Quincy, Adams Co., Ill., Aug. 14, 1838.

Rev. Luther Crawford,

Dear Br.:

I now take my pen to make my quarterly report in brief. The scenes through which God in His wise providence has called us to pass since I last wrote have been varied. Two weeks ago last Friday we were called to consign to the embrace of death our infant daughter, after an illness of ten days. We feel the stroke and hope we have kissed the rod,

³⁷ It will be remembered that Texas was already fairly well settled by Americans, and that attention had been drawn to it by its war of independence in 1835 and 1836.

humbly acknowledging the kindness of a Father's hand in the afflictive providence. We trust, we sincerely pray that, by this event, we may be the better prepared to devote ourselves successfully to the work of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to a lost race.

My labours have been confined to this place and vicinity the last three months, except that I have attended one protracted meeting at Payson in May and the church conference the first Saturday of June and July and preached on the succeeding Lord's days at the same place. The church is increasing in that place in numbers and strength. I also preached the last Sabbath in July to the church near Fairfield, sixteen miles northeast from this place. At present this church have preaching once each month, but they are soon expecting Br. Segur from Jemaica, Long Island, to become their pastor, and a large portion of his present church to accompany him. My labours have been much the same in this place as when I last reported, except that the field is gradually enlarging and sickness and death have been more frequent visitants among us than normal. Two of our number have fallen by death within the last three months; one of these was a very active sister, who died instantly by being thrown from a wagon. I have baptized one into the fellowship of this church since I last wrote; an interesting sister. Our meeting house moves on slowly; we shall probably have it enclosed and the floors laid in both stories, so as to be able to meet in the basement story before cold weather, but we shall, for our strength, have a heavy debt hanging over us. Yet we are moving on with it better than we feared. We shall perhaps eventually have to be driven to the painful necessity of begging from our eastern churches, as our last resort, in case of the property being put in jeopardy.

Our Sabbath school is rather increasing the present summer, and a Bible class has been organized. . . . I intend establishing two or three regular weekly preaching places within ten miles of town as soon as the sickly season and

our public meetings are past, which will not be till about the middle of October. Please write me immediately relative to the cause in Texas, if you have any information. I wish you to inform me if you have a correspondence open with the Texas church, and, if so, whether there are any insurmountable obstacles to sending the gospel to that people also. Men go there and venture their lives and fortunes for the sake of Mammon, notwithstanding that the affairs of the Government may be in an unsettled state. I am inclined to think, from what I can learn, that public confidence is being confirmed in the stability of the Government, to say nothing of the course which our nation has pursued in relation to the independence of Texas. I learn that the English government has entered into a treaty of commerce with Texas, which I suppose is virtually recognizing its independence.³⁸ The relation which France sustains to Mexico contributes its portion to cheer the prospects of Texas. The fact that the English language is rapidly advancing westward, and the thought that the power of the Pope must soon be broken in all the republics of Spanish America, to me are strong arguments why Baptists should be first in the field. Will you inform me in what place the Texas Bapt. church is located, or rather who will be the proper man for me to address by letter and where he resides. I see subscribed to the letter of the Texas church addressed to you some months since, as early as January, the following names as the committee: A. Buffington, Z. N. Morrell and Jas. R. Jenkins, but see nothing by which I can determine their postoffice address. I am willing once more to enter a new field of labour, if it is apparent that duty calls, and to make all secondary causes yield to the great work of preaching a Crucified Saviour. I say I am willing. I think I can say I desire it. The church in this place and the brethren in the surrounding churches are kind

³⁸ The United States acknowledged Texan independence in 1837. France in 1839, Belgium and Holland in 1840. A treaty with Great Britain recognizing Texan independence was signed in 1840. British influence in Texas was much feared by the United States in 1842 and 1843.—G. P. Garrison, *Westward Extension* (American Nation Series), pp. 96, 113. The report quoted by the author of a treaty with Great Britain was evidently false.

to me and family, more so, according to ability, than in any place we ever lived, and the field is wide here, but you will probably much more readily find a man for this place than for the unexplored field of Texas. Indeed, I suppose this church could find a man of their choice who would willingly heed their call in three months, if I were to remove. As it respects the expense of living in Texas, if it now is an objection, that difficulty will probably be measurably obviated after gathering the crops of the present year.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—I forgot to notice in its appropriate place the fact that the church at Quincy have a subscription for my support the present year amounting to \$200, which will probably be all realized, also that we have taken up a small collection of something less than five dollars for the A. & F. Bible Soc., and lately a collection of five dollars and seventy-two cents for the Foreign Mission cause. Next quarterly collection is Home Missions, then will follow, the ensuing quarter, a collection for the Education Soc. We can do but little for these objects, however important, till our meeting house is out of danger.

Yours,

E. F.

Quincy, Nov. 12, 1838.

Rev. Luther Crawford,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. Miss. Soc.

Dear Br.:

. . . I have laboured much as usual in this place and vicinity the past three months, but, having been engaged in attending public meetings about half the time, I can hardly say that I think the cause has advanced materially. Indeed, our Sabbath school and Bible class have almost become extinct; there were but the relics of them to be found yesterday.

Our Association, which held its session on the last of Aug. and the first of Sept., was interesting, except that the year showed a barrenness. On Sabbath I preached in favour of Home Missions, after which a collection was taken up amounting to \$24.50. Here I will mention that the collection in Quincy church for that object has been deferred for some weeks on account of the smallness of our congregations. It will be very small, but we shall give that subject a place in three or four weeks. We are still cramped for want of a house to worship in. It is somewhat doubtful whether we shall be able to occupy any part of our house till spring, but we talk of making a new effort to fit up a part of the basement. I attended the State Conv. at Jacksonville. The interest of the meeting was somewhat diminished in consequence of the absence of a large number of our ministers and business lay members, occasioned by sickness in part. The principal business at the Convention was the devising of a plan for putting into operation an itinerating system of preaching in the state and an attempt to raise the Pioneer out of the mud in which at present it seems stalled. Soon after my return from the Conv., I attended a protracted meeting at Payson, Bethany church, commencing Thursday before the 4th Sabbath in Oct. In the very commencement of the meeting, we saw visible indications of Divine favour by a voluntary disposition on the part of the church to work for the Lord and to humble themselves before the Cross of Christ. Several Sabbath school children were soon found ready to ask God's people to pray for them. On the Sabbath I baptized a sister of the Methodist Church and, before the close of the day, some two or three precious youths were hoping in a Saviour's atoning blood. The work had by this time assumed such a character that we judged it duty to continue the meeting. On Monday, Br. Thomas H. Ford was set apart by solemn ordination, after examination, with the following exercises: Ordaining prayer by Brother Jacob Bowen; imposition of hands by the Presbytery; charge by Br. Ezra Fisher; hand of fellowship of the

churches by Br. Jesse Elledge; address to the church by Br. Aaron Trabne; hymn and benediction by the candidate. Br. Ford will probably labour hereafter mostly with the Griggsville church. The religious interest continued through the week . . . and on the first Sabbath of this month I baptized ten candidates into the Kingdom of Christ, after which I continued with the church till the next Friday, and before I left two more were received for baptism. The work seemed still going on, although the weather had become so very disagreeable that our meetings became thin. The brethren engaged at intervals in this meeting were Brethren Kimball, Bowen, Ford, Trabne, Elledge, Bailey and Coffey, a licentiate. I had omitted to mention that I baptized a young sister into this church (Quincy) on the 3rd Sabbath in Oct. The Bethany church feels as though they are now able to support a minister without troubling the Home Missionary Soc'y., and they will soon be able to aid in sending the Gospel beyond them. . . .

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Quincy.

N. B.—In relation to the subject of my removal to Texas, I must say that to me it is not an uninteresting subject. I commend the prudent course your committee have adopted in relation to this subject. What, and how many may be the obstacles in the way of my preaching a crucified, risen Saviour in that important field I am entirely unable to say, and whether my desires on this subject will ever be gratified depends on so many circumstances that I am entirely unable to determine . . . what I shall do. . . . Whatever may be the final issue in this case, I am sure that I have had it in my heart to go to Texas. The argument which you urge against my going, . . . that I am doing tolerably well at present, has been the strong argument which wise men have urged against my removal in every case since I was first settled in Cambridge, Vt. Put this reason beside the one furnished you by your reporter, that I adhere tenaciously to

my Yankee notions, and see the paradox. In relation to this subject, I would say that my Indiana friends were entirely western and I had as fully the confidence of these men as I ever had of any people; and now the western men of a neighboring church are, as individuals, pledging their word that I shall have a support, if I will consent to receive an invitation from their church to become their pastor, and this, too, in full view of my course in relation to that exciting subject, slavery.³⁹ . . . I sincerely thank you for your kindness in alluding to this subject, and I can assure you that my general course is to conform to established usages as far as practicable, if these usages are not sinful. . . . However, considerations like those suggested never chained the master spirit of Paul. . . . So far as relates to my own health, and that of my family, I am not at all certain that in the aggregate the climate in this place is prejudicial. But suppose that of Texas should be, if other men do not occupy that field, should this fact justify me in abandoning it? Men straight from New York hazard their all in the most unhealthy points in the whole of that country for the sake of pelf, and shall Christ's ministers suffer to pass unheeded the promptings of His Spirit from such considerations? I hold this as an irreducible axiom that duty and happiness are inseparably connected. When convinced of the divine Will in relation to my life, I know I shall be the most happy and useful in following His admonitions. I wait with anxiety to learn from Br. Orr the wants of Texas.

Yours, E. FISHER.

Quincy, Ill., March 29, 1839.

Corresponding Secretary of the American

Baptist Home Missionary Society.

Respected Br.:

I have delayed making my quarterly report about two weeks, expecting to learn the name of the brother appointed

³⁹ The author had strong anti-slavery convictions.

in the place of Br. Crawford, deceased.⁴⁰ The name not yet appearing in the Banner and Pioneer, I have concluded to delay no longer. I have little of importance to communicate relative to my labours since I last wrote. I have preached as usual in this place. About two months since, we removed from the schoolroom, which we occupied for two years, to a larger and more convenient room for public worship, and soon found it filled on the Sabbath. The second Sabbath in February I baptized one sister. Our Sunday school seems somewhat revived for a few weeks past, but is still small—about 20 scholars. Our female benevolent society have, within a few weeks, incorporated with it a sewing society, and, although the numbers are small, the prospects are flattering. Last month we took up a collection of six dollars in favor of the Ill. Bapt. Education Socy. In addition to my ordinary labours in this place and vicinity, for the last three months I have made three excursions of three days each about twelve or fourteen miles into the country and have preached two or three times each tour in the heart of an old anti-missionary church, and I trust the labour has not been lost. These labours, together with two sermons preached by Br. Parks from Payson, have resulted in reviving the cause of temperance (just ready to die) in that region, and bringing together the few scattered sheep in the vicinity of a little town by the name of Benton, where they agree to constitute a branch of Payson church, or an independent church, next Wednesday, by the counsel of the Quincy and Payson churches. In that town will be put in operation a Sabbath school as soon as the standard of the Cross shall be raised. The field is one of considerable interest and the Sabbath congregation at first will probably be one hundred. Indeed, there has not been less than that on either night in which I have preached in Benton. Although, by some means, the place has not the best name in

⁴⁰ Rev. Luther Crawford had been corresponding secretary of the A. B. H. M. S. from 1837 to his death in 1839. His successor, Rev. Benjamin M. Hill, was not elected until October, 1839, and did not enter upon his duties until March, 1840.—Bap. Home Missions in N. Am., 1832-1882, pp. 346, 355.

this part of the country, yet the assemblies have been orderly and very attentive. Our meeting-house concerns are rather embarrassing and are in such condition that help must come from some quarter before next year at this time or the house and lot must go. If we could sell for cash a part of the lot, which can be spared, we could make things easy a few months, perhaps till fall. My plan is to ask for a dismissal next May, so as to give the church opportunity to engage a minister in the eastern states who may raise a few hundred dollars for this object before removing to this place. I still think strongly of removing to Texas as a settler next fall, if the political condition of the country will admit. I have made known my intentions to some of the leading brethren, who say that in this case they shall expect me to preach with them till I leave, or till they can secure a pastor. They still pray for aid another year, and hope, by the blessing of God, that they may then be able to sustain their own pastor and give some to the general cause.

In relation to Texas, I probably have as much information respecting the physical conditions as you, but as it relates to the Baptist cause, I know little except what I have learned through the medium of your Executive Committee, but that little speaks volumes.

It would be gratifying to me to learn whether Br. Orr spent last winter in Texas and, if so, to have an epitome of his tour, as I suppose it is in your possession.⁴¹ If I go out next fall, I know I shall prefer on the whole to go on my own responsibility, independent of the Board. Yet in that case, I should like a recommendation from your Committee as to my Christian and ministerial character.

I subscribe myself, Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Quincy, Ill.

⁴¹ As early as 1832, Texas was thought of as a field of work by the B. H. M. S. Some years later the "only Baptist church" in Texas applied for aid, and in 1838 Rev. David Orr, of Arkansas, was appointed. He was unable to go, but in 1839 Rev. James Huckins was appointed and went as exploring missionary and organized a church at Galveston. Seven or eight Baptist churches were reported in 1840. In that year the Society appealed for eight men to go to Texas. This may partly explain the author's interest in the field.—Bap. Home Missions in N. Am., 1832-1882, pp. 328, 337.

Quincy, Ill., May 7th, 1839.

Mr. John C. Murphy,

Cor. Sec. American Baptist Home Missionary Society
Dear Br.:

It becomes my duty to report to the Executive Committee through you my services for the quarter ending the 4th instant. I can simply say that I have laboured as usual in this place, occasionally preached at Benton and Columbus Prairie during the week, and spent one Saturday and Sabbath at the above-named place where, on the 17th of April, we constituted a church of eight members and baptized one candidate. The church in this place have dismissed three to unite with the church at Benton, and two who have removed their residence, so that the church now numbers only about 40 or 41 members. At present the state of religion is low in this place. I have asked a dismissal from the pastoral care of this church and my request has been granted, but the trustees have invited me to labour with them till fall, perhaps Oct. or Nov., as we expect we shall not remove till that time, in the event we go to Texas.

During the past year I have baptized 15. The church have raised about \$30.00 for the various benevolent objects, including the Sabbath school, paid \$36.00 rent for a place of worship and have been moving forward slowly and under embarrassing circumstances with their house. Have raised something less than \$200 on subscription for my support, have made us frequent presents and have sustained a small Sabbath school. But we have experienced no special work of grace in the conversion of sinners, and I often fear that my own unfaithfulness may have stayed the showers of mercy from this people.

The church are embarrassed with the meeting-house debt. The house is so far completed that it would do for summer occupancy, but the contractor does not let us occupy it, although it is said that he is paid. Yet for the want of about \$1,000 dollars over and above our ability, the church must

be hardly pressed before another May, and I fear the property must be sacrificed.

My plan when I resigned was, that the church should invite a man in some of the eastern states to become their pastor who should be put in possession of the facts and then raise from \$500 to \$1,000 for this object to bring on with him. But some of our brethren are perhaps quite as venturesome as prudent in this matter and are determined to secure a pastor, if possible, independent of this object. But for this debt, they could support a minister. Many are saying that if we had our house open, a good congregation might soon be collected. And why not, with a population of 2500 souls and that number rapidly increasing? The church thankfully acknowledge the past favours of your Board and solicit your further aid for the ensuing year. Although I hope soon to occupy another field, yet I must say that in my knowledge of Ill., I cannot put my finger upon any portion of the state more needing the labours of at least one man of somewhat commanding talents than the twenty miles back of and including this town.

I shall make a draft on you in a few days for the sum of fifty dollars, being the sum due me for the six months ending the 4th instant. All of which is respectfully submitted.

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Quincy.

Mr. John C. Murphy,

Cor. Sec. American Bapt. Home Mission Society,

At the Mission Room, 118 Nassau Street,

New York City.

Iowa Territory, Davenport,⁴² Sept. 10, 1841.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. Bapt. H. Missionary Soc.

Dear Br.:

I take pen to make my quarterly report ending this day.

⁴² Davenport, at the foot of the upper rapids of the Mississippi, was laid out in 1836, and in 1840 had 600 people.—*Am. Cyc.*, V:704. Iowa had been erected into a separate territory in 1838, and was being rapidly settled through the later forties.

as my commission was not received till June the 10th. I have devoted my entire time to the work in this place and the county above since last Nov.

In one particular I have not complied with your request, as you will see by the following report. A division having occurred in the church before my removal to this place and the means of support being too limited to warrant my devoting my entire labours to the place while there remained other portions of the Territory, probably equally important, entirely neglected, and other circumstances too numerous to be named in this have induced me to pursue the course I have, which is to the satisfaction of the brethren here. If, when you have taken a map of the Ter. and have traced out a region from twenty to fifty miles in width, extending from the mouth of the Iowa River up the Mississippi to the mouth of the Macoquetois (Moquoketa), and thence up that stream some ten miles above its forks,, without a single Baptist preacher but myself, where are now materials for the organization of six or seven small churches, your Board shall be dissatisfied with the course I have pursued, I will comply with any reasonable instructions which they may hereafter give. If my course has given satisfaction, I shall continue to comply with the general instructions, but probably not spend more than half my time in this place.

During the quarter I have preached somewhat more than half the time in this place, once each month at Parkhurst, at the head of the upper rapids, sixteen miles above this; one Sabbath at Wyoming, on this river, 25 miles below this, and have visited Bloomington twice, spending one Sabbath there. This place is at the most commanding point commercially in the Territory, and I hope a church will be constituted in a few months.

I have spent one Sabbath at the Forks of the Macoquetois [Moquoketa], in Jackson Co., and found about 20 Baptists. There also they took some incipient measures for the constitution of a church. In this place is a heavy settlement

and it seems destined to be an important point, as the country is well timbered, has a fine soil, is contiguous to the mining region⁴³ and is so situated that from Dubuque to Bloomington, a distance of 150 miles by water, no point of the Mississippi is more than 50 miles distant.

I have also preached one Sabbath, and occasionally in the week, 14 miles N. W. from this.

You will see then that I stately supply Davenport and Parkhurst. The church at Parkhurst, at the head of the upper rapids, is called the Bath Baptist Church. I reside in Davenport, Scott County, I. T.; postoffice in the place. This report is for the first quarter of my appointment. I have devoted my entire time to the work of the ministry except for providing ordinary food and raiment for my family.

During the quarter I have preached 27 sermons, delivered two temperance addresses and five addresses on other subjects, attended six church conference meetings, one church meeting for business, two conference meetings on the subject of preparing for church organizations at Bloomington and the Forks of Macoquetois, attended two monthly concerts, and travelled 477 miles to and from appointments. . . . Received four by letter into the churches. I have made 49 religious visits in almost as many families. Monthly concert is attended only at Davenport. I have visited one school. I have obtained signatures to the temperance pledge and been instrumental in the constitution of two temperance societies. I have received nothing for the benevolent societies, but \$11 towards my support. There are two Sunday schools connected with the congregations of my charge, 12 teachers and about 60 scholars: both libraries contain about 100 volumes.

We have a small women's sewing society for the purpose of promoting the S. school interests.

⁴³ These mines were for lead and iron. (See letter of March 10, 1842.)

I propose visiting Bloomington and vicinity and The Forks of the Macoquetois as often as circumstances will admit; and perhaps I shall visit Lynn Co. before the year terminates. I also contemplate attending the Ill. State Convention next month.

By the blessing of our heavenly Father my health and that of my family have been tolerably good during the whole of the sickly season. But my lungs are feeble and I do not think the climate agrees with them so well as it has further south, although it is more like a New England climate.

Our prairies are large, the population sparse, except in the river towns and in the small groves, but the field is truly inviting to a healthy, self-denying pioneer.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary.

N. B.—Everything is new and fluctuating, still, amid all the discouragements, our congregations are good and attentive, for a new country, and the people are generally willing to contribute to the support of the gospel in the products of the earth. I shall probably receive about \$150 in produce from the people for this year's services.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. Bapt. Home Miss. Soc.,
No. 9 Spruce Street,
New York.

Iowa Ter., Davenport, Scott Co., Dec. 10, 1841.

Mr. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. S.

Dear Br.:

I now take my pen to report a summary of my labours during the last quarter ending this day. The present field of labour is somewhat extensive. I at present preach two Sab-

baths in a month at this place, and, as often as circumstances will admit, at Hickory Grove, fifteen miles N. W. from this, where a part of the members of the church live, and one Sabbath each month to the church at the head of the Upper Rapids, 15 miles above this in Scott Co. I extend my labours from the mouth of the Wabepsipineca [Wapsipinicon] River to Davenport. I have made arrangements, since my last report, to preach once each month in Bloomington, 30 miles below this on the Mississippi and the seat of justice for Muscatine County. I also preach monthly on a week day at Salem, a small town 8 miles above Bloomington, on the river.

I constituted a church of six members at Bloomington on the 31st of Oct., and the prospects are flattering that some seven or eight will soon unite by letter. This little band have established a weekly prayer meeting and talk of paying me one hundred dollars for one fourth of my time the ensuing year. In this place our congregations are large for a new place.

The churches are not yet associated in this part of the territory, but probably will be next spring. I still reside at Davenport.

I have probably laboured about ten weeks directly for the Home Missionary Society and spent as little time as practicable in providing for my family.

During the quarter I have preached 28 sermons, delivered 9 addresses, attended 3 prayer meetings, 5 covenant meetings, one council for the constitution of the church at Bloomington, travelled 750 miles, attended the Illinois State Convention and, on my return, attended a protracted meeting with the Rock Spring church, 6 miles back from Burlington. There were eight hopeful cases of conversion and six were examined for baptism. Father Ogle, the aged pastor, Br. Joseph Lemon and Br. Van Brunt, with myself, were the labourers. Baptism was deferred two weeks.

We have received one by letter into the church in Davenport and one at Bloomington during the quarter. I have visited 56 families, including the sick, during the quarter. The monthly concert is observed only by the church at Davenport, and then only when I am in the place.

I have visited but one school this quarter. The serious difficulty which occurred in the church in this place before our removal here is yet unsettled. We are hoping to dispose of it in two or three months. Prospects are rather unpromising till the matter is finally adjusted. It is truly painful to the minister to see all his influence paralyzed in a point of so much promise as this, by the waywardness (not to say stubbornness) of a few brethren lovely in other respects. We very much need a man at the forks of the Macoquetois [Moquoketa], at which point your old friend Br. Doolittle is situated. I have no doubt the brethren there would give a man, with a small family, half a support for half his services and he would find a good field for labour the remaining half. It is possible I may think it best to remove to Bloomington in the spring, as the friends there express a desire that I do so.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Davenport and vicinity.

N. B.—During the summer there has been a S. school at Parkhurst, at the head of the Upper Rapids. We have one in Davenport connected with the Baptist church, and there is one in Bloomington in which the Baptist members and supporters bear an important part.

Yours, E. FISHER.

Indorsed:

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
 Corresponding Secretary A. B. H. M. S.,
 Office of the American Baptist
 Home Mission Society,
 New York City.

Iowa Territory, Muscatine County, Bloomington⁴⁴ [Muscatine], March 10th, 1842.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Socy.
Respected Br.:

The time has arrived for me to make my report for the third quarter ending this day. My engagement with the church in Davenport having expired, and, having received a unanimous call from the feeble church which I constituted in this place last Oct., I have judged it duty to comply with the request, and we moved the present week. We look upon this as a more important point than our former place of residence, and present prospects are more flattering. It is due however to the church at Davenport to say that their protracted difficulties seem to be drawing to a close and we hope the issue will be a happy one. They are making an effort to build a house the coming season; and a part of the church think their best policy is to build and after that look out a pastor, but a majority of the members and supporters do not think this is the best policy. I shall visit them occasionally during the summer. On the whole, Davenport and Rock Island, formerly Stephenson, Ill., directly opposite, are too important points to be neglected and there never was a more favorable time for Baptists to work in those places, if they could harmonize among themselves.

I preach two Sabbaths each month in Bloomington, one in Parkhurst, at the head of the upper rapids, occasionally in Davenport and vicinity, have once visited the Forks of the Macoquetois in Jackson County, and once De Witt, the county seat of Clinton County. Bloomington will be my post office address hereafter. The Forks of the Macoquetois needs a man of good, practical talents who can for a few years undergo the privations of a new county. He will find it a most inviting field. This region of country is properly

⁴⁴ Bloomington began as a trading post in 1833. It was laid out in 1836, and incorporated in 1839. It was chartered as a city in 1851 under the name of Muscatine, which it now bears.—Ency. Brit., 11th ed. XIX:44.

called the Genesee of Iowa, while it has the additional advantage of being located on the border of a rich lead and iron region. Twenty efficient members could be organized into a church at this time.

I have devoted all my time, with the exception of a very few days, to my professional duties. I have preached thirty-two sermons, delivered eleven addresses on temperance and Sabbath schools, attended eight covenant and church meetings and travelled in the performance of my professional duties five hundred and seventy miles.

We have had more than usual attention to the subject of religion in Parkhurst and vicinity, and there have been three cases of hopeful conversion, but I have baptized none. We have received two to the Bloomington church by letter, one to the church at Parkhurst and two to the Davenport church; making in all five. I have visited, including the sick, 40 families, and perhaps as many individuals. At the meetings which I have addressed, we have received 69 names to the total abstinence pledge. I have assisted in organizing the Scott County Temperance Society. The churches at Bloomington and Parkhurst maintain a weekly prayer meeting, but the monthly concert is not at this time sustained in any of the churches. There have been but two Sabbath schools in operation the past quarter among the people where I labour, and one of those, the one at Davenport, is now suspended. I have received during the last quarter about sixty-six dollars towards my support. The church and friends in this place will probably pay me about one hundred and fifty dollars for half of the time the coming year. The remaining part of the time I shall labour in new and destitute portions of this and adjacent counties where but little can be expected. I shall therefore have to look to the Board of the Baptist Home Missionary Society for aid another year or limit the field of my labours, and this seems almost impossible while the cry is on every hand, "We have a few Baptists in our settlements and you will have a congregation, if you will

come and visit us, but we have had no preaching of the right sort since we crossed the Mississippi." These cries come from important places where are rising villages. I have paid more than \$100 the past year out of my own funds to sustain my family, and I wish I could continue to make that yearly sacrifice for the cause of our Blessed Redeemer, but this cannot long be. These feeble churches are willing to contribute liberally, for their ability, to sustain the gospel, and, if fostered a little now, will soon aid in carrying the gospel beyond them.

By the blessing of God our health has been tolerably good during the past three quarters.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

EZRA FISHER.

Bloomington [Muscatine], Muscatine Co., Iowa Territory,
May 9th, 1842.

To the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

Dear Brethren:

On Sabbath last, after preaching on the 8th inst., the first regular Baptist church of Bloomington was called to order, and on motion, the clerk of the church was instructed to prepare a letter setting forth their wants and desires and asking the Board of the Home Mission Society to render us some assistance in sustaining the preaching of the gospel of Christ in this interesting field of labour. In compliance with the instruction of the Board, I shall lay before you the necessary information, together with the resolution unanimously adopted by the church, which is as follows:

Resolved that, in the estimation of this church, there is in our beloved brother, Elder Ezra Fisher, such talent, prudence and deep interest exhibited in the cause of Christ as insures our entire confidence and will result, under divine providence, in greatly advancing the cause of our Redeemer, and, that in order to sustain and continue his usefulness in Bloomington and vicinity, we do respectfully solicit the

Board of Home Missions of the City of New York to render us such assistance as they deem wise and in their power and as will enable us to make up the deficiency requisite to his support.

The location of Bloomington, situated on the Mississippi River, is, no doubt, destined to become a large and important place. It is acknowledged to have many advantages in point of commerce over most of the towns of the Territory, it being the only landing for Iowa City⁴⁵ and a large section of fertile country now rapidly improving and increasing in population. Our town now numbers between eight and nine hundred and is rapidly increasing. The people are generally emigrants of the highest intelligence and refinement from the eastern states. Perhaps we cannot give you a better demonstration of this fact than to inform you that already seven different churches in this yet limited population have lifted up their standards and each pays from two to three hundred dollars per year to sustain preaching twice a month, and that some are now erecting places of worship.

The Baptist church is composed at present of 10 members; has only been in existence about six months. Three more are waiting with letters to join at the next regular meeting, making in all 13, and, in addition to these, there are about 20 more professing Baptists in the town and vicinity who manifest a disposition to be of our number as soon as circumstances will permit.

Judging from the number, about two hundred, which attend at our place of worship, there is as large a number attached to our church as any other. This may however be owing to the fact of our being blessed with a very devoted and acceptable pastor. We have rented for the present a large public lecture room for meetings, and have agreed to pay our pastor, Rev. Ezra Fisher, who is now located in the town, \$200 per year to preach to us twice each month. He

⁴⁵ Iowa City was the capital of Iowa from 1839 to 1857—*Ency. Brit.*, 11th ed., XIV:736.

may possibly (but barely possible) make up for the balance of the time he has in the adjoining country another \$100 more. He is about 42 years of age, has a wife and three children dependent on him for support and it will require much prudence for him to be sustained on \$450 per year, so that the least aid required will be \$100. Mr. Fisher is a regularly ordained minister of the Baptist denomination and completed his theological studies at Newton, Mass. It is desirable that his salary should commence on receipt of this communication.

My limits of brevity, already transcended, will not admit of my enlarging as to the utility and importance of sustaining Baptist influence in this section of the country: suffice it to say, though there is much to make us glad, yet there is much moral death in our midst and many valuable souls are perishing for lack of knowledge.

Dear brethren, may the great Head of the church direct you in wisdom and bless both you and us in our feeble efforts to advance the cause of our blessed Redeemer, is our sincere prayer.

Done by order and in behalf of the First Baptist Church
of Bloomington, the 8th day of May, 1842.

A. L. BEATTY, Ch. Clk.

Iowa City, June 5th, '42.

Dear Bro. Hill.:

This is to inform you that a General Ass. has been formed in this Territory auxiliary to the Am. Bap. Home Society and, as the Sec. of the Executive Board is absent, it devolves upon me to say to you that we have taken up the case of Eld. Fisher of Bloomington and have deemed it expedient to request of you one hundred dollars to aid the Bloomington church in his support.

Respectfully yours,

W. B. MOREY,

Chairman of the Ex. Board.
Bloomington, June 8th, 1842.

Dear Br. Hill:

I just take my pen to say that the probability is that I shall not receive more than forty or fifty dollars the ensuing year for my services in the Territory, beyond what I receive in this place, yet, in view of the wants of the Valley, I do not ask the Board to give me more than \$100 the ensuing year. I shall forward my report in a few days.

EZRA FISHER.

Iowa Territory, Bloomington [Muscatine], June 10, 1842.
Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Socy.

Dear Br.:

By the providence of our Lord, I am called upon to make my last quarterly report of my labours in the service of the Home Mission Society. My labours during the past quarter have been devoted to Bloomington, Muscatine County, half the time, and to Parkhurst, Scott County, one-fourth of the time, with occasional visits to Davenport, Scott Co., Hickory Grove, Scott Co., Salem, ten miles above Bloomington, Muscatine Co., and Rochester, Cedar Co., on Cedar River, 20 miles from this place. I spent one week in Iowa City and on my way to and from the place, where I assisted in the organization of a General Association for the Territory, auxiliary to the A. B. H. M. Socy. A truly Christian spirit pervaded all the meetings.

I have preached thirty sermons, delivered eight addresses, attended eleven weekly prayer meetings, five church covenant meetings, one church meeting for business in Davenport, have ridden 372 miles to appointments and have devoted all my time to the ministry, except some five or six days.

I cannot report one case of hopeful conversions, although there appears rather an increase of attention to the subject of religion in this place and through this part of the Territory.

I have baptized none; have received five by letter to the church in this place. I have made seventy-two religious visits to families and individuals. We have not yet established the monthly concert in this place, but intend to soon. I have visited but one school during the quarter. I have received no signatures to the temperance pledge, but have attended four meetings and participated in the deliberations and committees for the furtherance of that cause, which is on the advance. . . .

On the subject of Missions, Bible Tracts and Education, the people cherish correct views, but as yet, having everything to do and just getting organized and the churches being but little handfuls and poor, we have not yet made a public call, but soon calculate to introduce the subject of taking up quarterly collections, at which time the claims of some one of the great benevolent enterprises shall be presented to the public mind.

I have received about \$47 toward my support the past quarter. Have received nothing from auxiliary societies. We have but one Sunday school connected with my congregations, and that a union school in this place. We have no Bible class, but contemplate making an effort soon for that object.

Our people contemplate making an effort to erect a house of worship the ensuing summer and fall, but are altogether unable without the liberal aid of the citizens and friends. . . . The church at Davenport are nearly through their series of difficulties and are about building a house; have a good lot donated. We are pleased with Br. Brown, and hope the door may be effectually opened for him to preach at least half the time at Davenport. He will preach there on the fourth Sab. of the present month. Lynn Co. is an interesting field, as well as Cedar, but is quite remote from the field of any Baptist preacher. There are about 6,000 souls in these two counties.

If the Board reappoint me to this place and vicinity, I shall probably spend a fourth of my time in Cedar County, and occasionally extend my labours down the river towards the mouth of the Iowa River between that and the Mississippi till we have more labourers enter the field.

On the reception of this, you will please forward me a draft for twenty-five dollars on your Treasurer, it being the sum due me for the last quarter of the present year as reported in this.

Yours in the service of our divine Master,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Bloomington.

N. B.—I did not understand your change in making drafts when I made my last till it was beyond my reach. I consequently deferred answering yours, as it would make you an additional charge in postage. I shall proceed to labour as though in the service of the Board till I hear from you. For the last three months I think I have had an increasing desire to make the glory of God and the salvation of men the ruling passion of my soul and have felt myself deeply humbled at the thought that I have been instrumental of so little good the past year and especially that so few souls have been converted in Iowa Territory. I trust that some of your missionaries have resolved that the prayer of Habbakuk shall be ours till the Lord revive his work with us.

Yours, E. F.

Bloomington [Muscatine], September 27, 1842.
To the Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br. Hill:

I take my pen, neglected by reason of my absence on the 15th and since by the sickness of my family, to make my report for the quarter ending the 15th of the present month.

Bloomington and Salem, Muscatine County, are the principal places of my Sabbath labour. I have visited Rochester, Cedar County, spent a Sabbath at Moscow, Cedar Co., twice,

and have visited Parkhurst, Scott County, speaking one Sabbath with the church at that place called Bath Church. The church in Bloomington is the only one in this county or Cedar.

This is my first quarter's report under the commission, dated June 15th, which was duly received. I have laboured twelve weeks the past quarter in my field. Have preached 28 sermons, attended six covenant meetings and two other church meetings, ten prayer meetings, two temperance meetings,⁴⁶ a temperance celebration on the 4th of July, two funerals, and ten other meetings, assisted in organizing a county temperance society and travelled 406 miles. There has been one hopeful conversion in my congregation. I have received into Bloomington church four interesting members by baptism and seven by letter. I have made one hundred and three pastoral visits. We have commenced the monthly concert in Bloomington the present month, hoping to be able to sustain them. I have visited but one common school the past quarter; have obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge. No young man within my field preparing for the ministry. No churches constituted or minister ordained. We have received nothing the past quarter for Missionary, Bible Publication or Education Societies, but we have resolved to take up a collection on the 2d Sab. of Oct. for foreign missions. Have received \$30 in provisions, and, at the organization of the association in Davenport on the 18th, a collection of six dollars was taken up in aid of the Home Mission cause, which I received and for convenience report it in this quarter, although received since the 15th.

I have received nothing else from auxiliary societies. No Bible class, but we have made some efforts for one. Three Sunday schools connected with my field of labour, but only one will continue in the winter. About 200 volumes, 14 teachers, 90 scholars, 8 teachers connected with Baptist fami-

⁴⁶ Rev. Jonathan Going, the first corresponding secretary of the B. H. M. S., was a pronounced temperance advocate, so, from the first, missionaries of the Society were active in temperance work.—*Bap. Home Missions in N. Am., 1832-1882*, p. 531.

lies, 30 scholars. Not yet commenced a house of worship, but have had three meetings on the subject. We fear that another year will not find the work begun. We organized an association, of seven churches north of the Iowa River, auxiliary to the General Association of Iowa Territory, and, as soon as our minutes are struck off, I will forward you a copy. Our little church has increased from five to 23 since the fourth Sabbath in October last.

The cause is generally advancing in all this region, although we have been blessed with no general revival. I feel more and more my dependence on God to bless, or all is unavailing in our labours.

Please forward me a draft for nineteen dollars, the sum due me for the last quarter's services, now reported, after deducting the six dollars received from the collection taken at the Davenport Association before named.

I remain,

Your brother and fellow laborer in the vineyard of our blessed Lord,

EZRA FISHER.

Missionary at Bloomington, I. T.

Iowa Ter., Bloomington [Muscatine], Dec. 21, 1842.

Dear Br. Hill.:

I sit down to make a report of my labours for the quarter ending the fifteenth of the present month. Were it not for the fact that the providences of God are beyond our control, I should have occasion to confess with shame that I have been squandering our Master's time. But afflictions in my family and in the families of our little church in Bloomington have prevented my doing much the past quarter. Suffice it to say that since the 12th of last Aug., till within the last week, we have not had a day but we have had at least one in the family confined to the bed and, at this time, a little daughter of 3½ years requires the attention of one all the time, having had a finger mashed in the door in Aug. and

inflammation ensuing in Sept.; in Oct. she lost the first joint by mortification and in Nov. it again inflamed and she lost the second joint and was brought almost to the grave with that and the whooping-cough. On Oct. 27th we lost an infant of two months with the whooping-cough. In addition to this, several of our members' families were so sick that little could be done by way of promoting the general objects of the Redeemer's kingdom, and, besides this, I commenced building a small house last June and hoped to be able to occupy it in the fall without performing any labour of consequence on it myself, but my help sickened and threw us so late that I have been obliged to spend some time in labour to enable us to stop our rent, which was not till the 14th of the present month. If I had been able to raise money to meet our rent, I should not have given my hands to labour, but, after consulting the brethren and commending my case to our heavenly Father, I have done what I have, and I suppose your Board and our patrons would justify me, if you felt all the privations of a new country which we are feeling in Iowa at this time. But, by the grace of God, we hope to be disincumbered for the future. Bloomington and Salem in Muscatine County and Parkhurst, Scott County, comprise my field of labour for the past quarter. I stately supply the two former places, but there is no church in Salem, only a few members ununited with any church.

I have performed the amount of three or four weeks' labor about my house; the rest of the time, except for sickness, has been devoted to the work.

Preached 22 sermons. I know of no cases of hopeful conversion within my field. Baptized none, attended two conference and eight prayer meetings; travelled 212 miles; have received none by letter the past quarter. Monthly concert has been observed at Bloomington, but sickness has compelled us to discontinue it; expect to revive it next month. . . . Sickness prevented organizing a church in Marion, Lynn Co. Nothing done for the benevolent objects, save \$6

collected for the cause of home missions at the organization of the Davenport Association reported last quarter. Received \$50 of my salary. No Bible class and at present but one Sunday school; 30 scholars, 7 teachers, three teachers and about 10 children among Baptist families, 150 volumes in the library. No meeting-house commenced. If, under the circumstances, your Board can allow me twenty-five dollars for the past quarter's services, you will please forward me the draft to that amount and it will relieve me from the debts unavoidably contracted to render my family even comfortable, and it will be gratefully received. Your Board may rest assured that it is my daily prayer that I may be enabled to devote my whole time and talents to the gospel ministry, and this to me is more than when the wine and the oil increase.

I subscribe myself yours in the love of the gospel,
EZRA FISHER.

Bloomington [Muscatine], Iowa Ter., Jan. 7, 1843.

Dear Br. Hill.:

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The Roman Catholics . . . are about erecting large houses of worship in Burlington, Bloomington, Davenport and Iowa City, while Dubuque is the residence of the Bishop;⁴⁷ each of the above-named places has a Roman priest.

We have in Bloomington an Episcopal priest, a Presbyterian minister, and a large Methodist class, with preaching half the time, and a congregation of Universalists with preaching once a month. We greatly need Baptist preaching in this place once each Sabbath at least, but as yet we have no place of worship. All our members are poor. Unless we can get up a small house the ensuing summer, to human appearance, we must fall in the rear. God knows, and will deliver his afflicted ones. With three or four hundred dollars beyond our abilities, we might get up a neat little

⁴⁷ The first Catholic church building in Iowa was built at Dubuque in 1836. The first Bishop of Dubuque was consecrated in 1837. The city was made the seat of an archbishop in 1893.—Catholic *Encyclopaedia*, VIII:95.

house. Thankless as the business may be, must we fail for the want of that sum? I have no desire to visit the East on a message like this, but I do desire a house for the worship of God, our Saviour, in B., where His ordinances and doctrines may be maintained in their original simplicity and purity.

Yours,

E. FISHER.

Iowa Territory, Bloomington [Muscatine], March 15, 1843.
Corresponding Secretary of the A. B. H. M. Soc., N. Y.

Dear Br.:

It becomes my duty to make a report of my labors for the third quarter ending this day, the year commencing June 15, 1842. I have devoted all the time to the ministry as far as my health and the extremely severe winter would admit. I have failed entirely of reaching one appointment on the Sabbath by reason of a severe storm, the thermometer ranging about 12 degrees below zero, and the appointment being in an open prairie 12 miles distant. My lungs have been sore most of the time during the last quarter so that I have seldom preached more than once on the Sabbath.⁴⁸ I have preached 17 sermons; no addresses; attended 4 covenant meetings; 11 weekly prayer meetings; traveled 246 miles. No hopeful conversions; cause of religion and temperance low in B.; yet our church enjoys a devotional frame of mind. . . . We have received 5 by letter and 2 to be under our watch-care. Have made more than 50 pastoral visits. Monthly concert is attended at but one place in B. I have visited and addressed three common schools. Obtained but five or six signatures to the temperance pledge. . . . We have one licentiate preacher in our church, a good deacon and a valuable brother. . . . Such is the extremely embarrassing circumstance of our feeble church that as yet we have done nothing for either of the benevolent institutions, although there is a willingness

⁴⁸ It will be recalled that the author's death was caused by pneumonia. Occasional references to sore lungs show a tendency in that direction.

and a promise to soon. No auxiliary society has aided me the past quarter. No Bible class; one S. school of 7 teachers, 4 Baptist, and about 45 scholars, 8 of whom are Baptists. No effort to build a house. I have received about \$70 for my support, mostly in produce.

The Church has invited me to continue with them the present calendar year. . . . and made an effort to raise \$200 in produce, but will not be able to raise more than about \$100, should I stay.

In view of the irritable state of my lungs every winter and of the soft and salubrious climate of Oregon Ter. and the amount of emigration annually passing over the Rocky Mountains, we are contemplating removing to the said Territory next year, if Providence smiles and we can raise the means.⁴⁹ As we have been almost eleven years in this Valley, we wish to visit our friends in New York, Vermont and Massachusetts before we make this removal. Our reasons are: First, the benefit of my lungs and health of my family. Second, it will probably be more difficult to persuade men to go to Oregon than to Iowa, especially at first, while the demands will be greater in three years. We hear of companies forming in various portions of our country to go out the present year and numbers of them are Baptists. Third, I have been a pioneer for more than ten years and have no desire ever to settle over a church in the old states, while the field is the world in the new and rising portions of our country. We shall probably leave this place as soon as the first of June for New York, and I wish, by the grace of God, to devote as much of my time to the service of the Messiah's Kingdom as I can during my journey with my family. . . . Our Board will meet in this place

⁴⁹ The first important immigration to Oregon was in 1842 when about one hundred accompanied Elijah White, newly appointed Indian agent of the United States, on his return to Oregon. This was merely the advance guard of an immigration of about a thousand in 1843. The immigrants of this year came largely from Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. The interest of Ezra Fisher in Oregon probably dates from the glowing reports of the country which were circulating all through the west in the winter of 1842-4.—See Bancroft, *Hist. of Oregon*, Vol. I, *passim*.

next week, and I shall present my views to them for consideration and counsel.

Please send me a draft of twenty-five dollars as soon as convenient, as I am owing for rents which were due last November and we cannot raise a dollar in money on my last year's subscription.

All which is submitted.

Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

EZRA FISHER.

Granville, Putnam County, Illinois, June 1st, 1843.

To the Corresponding Secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society:

Dear Br. Hill:

I take my pen to make a report of my services in Bloomington, Iowa, and vicinity, for the part of the quarter commencing March 15th and ending May the 23d.

According to my best calculation I have laboured eight weeks in the service of the Society and the church at Bloomington and vicinity.

I have preached 15 sermons, delivered one address on the subject of Bible instruction . . . Traveled one hundred and five miles to and from appointments. . . . Have visited and assisted in the revival in Davenport two days. . . . Our church has been peculiarly oppressed with pecuniary embarrassments and has paid nothing for any of the benevolent objects, but has paid about thirty dollars for my salary. I have received nothing from auxiliary societies. . . . You will please forward me a draft for fifteen dollars to Clinton Post Office, Oneida Co., New York, in the care of Timothy Taft, and I shall receive it on my arrival.

I feel convinced that I have not rendered the amount of profitable service directly to the cause of Bloomington that I should, had not the subject of the Oregon enterprise agitated my mind and called forth my anxious thoughts, and I trust humble prayers. As it relates to that subject, I have

endeavored to look at the privations and difficulties as well as to the beauties of nature,⁵⁰ and I can say with some degree of confidence that I desire to set aside all considerations but the will of God and the well being of man in this and all my undertakings. In considering the path of duty I see no field of labor which I can contemplate with so much satisfaction, or concerning which I have so little doubt of duty as an attempt to lay the foundation for an interest in Oregon. Our country-men will go, and they will go, too, without the Bible and the Sabbath, unless these are carried by the good and self-denying. Hundreds are crossing the mountains this year.⁵¹ Our Government is sending out a scientific corps⁵² of 50 mounted men to explore the country and, if possible, to return as soon as the early part of the next session of Congress. I am also informed that an English nobleman is hiring men and purchasing wagons and mules in St. Louis for an exploring expedition to that country, ostensibly a private expedition. . . .

We shall probably be at Buffalo as soon as the ninth of July, perhaps the second. May God direct.

I subscribe myself your unworthy brother in Christ,

EZRA FISHER, Missionary.

N. B.—The church in Bloomington will apply to the General Association to render them some temporary aid, but have not determined as yet to ask for assistance from your Board. Some two or three families will probably go with me to Oregon, if I am preserved and am permitted to go.

⁵⁰ This well reflects the information concerning Oregon which was current in the west at the time this was written. No large immigration had yet gotten into Oregon with wagons, and the journey was an extremely arduous and dangerous one of about six months. On the other hand, reports circulated by travelers and missionaries from the country, and by the debates in Congress of the past few winters, pictured Oregon as an earthly paradise.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Oregon*, Vol. I, passim.

⁵¹ The exact number of the immigration of 1843 is uncertain. It is variously estimated from 500 to 1000.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Oregon*, I: 395 ft.

⁵² The United States Government expedition was that headed by J. C. Fremont. It traveled just behind the immigrants as far as Soda Springs on the Bear River, and after a detour of the Great Salt Lake, arrived at The Dalles, Oregon, in November. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I: 420; C. A. Snowden, *Hist. of Wash.* II: 247. The English nobleman was Sir William Stewart, who was hunting in the Rocky Mountains with William Sublette, Overton Johnson and Wm. H. Winter of the immigration of 1843. *Route across the Rocky Mountains*, etc., reprinted in the *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, VII: 62 ff.; the reference is on page 68.

Syracuse, N. Y., Oct. 18th, 1843.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. S.

Beloved Br.:

It is with emotions of gratitude to our divine Master for the great kindness you have manifested to me in all your correspondence, and especially since our personal acquaintance, that I address you at this time. . . . May Heaven reward you, if indeed I am a disciple of Christ. I was driven to fear that the amount for my salary in Oregon would require my stay in this state so long that I should be driven to cross the wide prairies of the West with my young family in the dead of winter or fail of being ready to leave with the caravan in the spring. I also expected to be compelled to leave the ministry in part to teach through the intervening time, but, by your suggestion, cheerfully take this opportunity to request the Board through you to appoint me as one of their missionaries for the term of six months in Iowa, as I desire to devote that amount of time to preaching the gospel in that Ter. I shall probably find an important field of labor on the Mississippi River. I think it will require one hundred and fifty dollars to barely sustain my family six months, but think, with fifty dollars from your Board, I can live from the people. I have a wife and four children.⁵³ Should your Board think fit to make the appointment, you will please forward it to Br. Charles E. Brown, Davenport, Cor. Sec. of Iowa Bapt. Gen. Association.

I did not find the instructions to applicants for appointment, as your annual report is packed up in my boxes. I thought perhaps your Board would dispense with all the formality ordinarily requisite, as I intend going directly to Davenport and acting in concert with the Board of the Iowa Baptist General Association, located in that place.

Yours in grateful remembrance,

EZRA FISHER.

⁵³ The four children were Lucy Jane Gray (Latourette), Timothy Taft, Ann Eliza (Latourette) and Sarah Josephine (Henderson).

Davenport, Scott Co., Iowa Ter., Jan. 22, 1844.

Dear Br. Hill:

We arrived in this place on the 15th of December, and have delayed writing on account of the unfavorable reports respecting the road to Oregon, hoping to be able before this to learn something more satisfactory on the subject. But as yet we are involved in uncertainty. Five men from the emigrants' company returned, after they had proceeded as far as Fort Hall, who stated that the company were obliged to leave all their wagons and take the pack horses through the mountains a distance of 600 miles.⁵⁴ We have learned too by ten of Lieut. Fremont's men who returned that the company of emigrants were reduced to the necessity of eating horse flesh for meat.

We hope to learn more definitely and positively when Lieut. Fremont returns, which will probably be in two or three weeks. Should we learn that the distance from Fort Hall to the mouth of the Willamette is impassable by wagons, we feel that it will be more than our young family can encounter to take pack horses and provisions and necessary cooking utensils and clothing and bedding, and thus arrayed attempt to urge our way through the defiles of the mountains. We learn that a very large company from Platt County, Missouri,⁵⁵ are making arrangements to emigrate next spring for Oregon, some from this Territory and some from Ill. A Mr. Flint from Missouri writes that probably the emigrating camp will consist of 3000 men. We feel ourselves thrown into an uncomfortable suspense on the subject, but it is all right. Our disappointment was great. It is distressing to abandon the enterprise, and the thought of presumptuously hazarding the lives of my family is equally distressing, especially while so wide a door is open in this wide valley. Our friends here will none of them advise to

⁵⁴ The report was false. The Oregon party took their wagons with them. The California party left their wagons and went thence on horses. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I: 399, 400.

⁵⁵ Mr. George H. Himes, Assistant Secretary of the Oregon Historical Society, says that in his researches he has found that some went in this year from Platt County. See also note 67.

go, unless we receive more favorable reports of the way. Yet I have some reason to suspect them of selfishness. We trust the Lord will soon remove our doubts. I can truly say my mind is strongly inclined to preach the gospel in Oregon.

We came all the way (from New York) with our own conveyance, which was the cause of our reaching Iowa so late. I commenced my labours immediately on our arrival, and preach part of the time in this place and Rock Island, Illinois, and the remainder of the time in the surrounding country, where we hope there will be a church constituted before long.

The church at Rock Island appear solicitous to obtain my services the ensuing year, provided we do not cross the Rocky Mountains, and it may be my duty to comply with their request, yet the irritable state of my lungs admonishes me of the importance of finding a milder climate, and, as we are now broken up, we feel inclined to get as far south as we can, and be useful in a free state, if we shall find the way to Oregon closed. I shall write you immediately on learning the result of Lieut. Fremont's expedition. I subscribe myself your brother in Christ.

EZRA FISHER.

Davenport, Iowa Territory, March 15, 1844.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill.

Dear Br.:

The time has arrived when it becomes my duty to make my first quarter's report under the appointment made Nov. 1, 1843. I have preached about one-fourth of my time in this place, part of the time at the mouth of Pine creek, Muscatine County, one Sabbath in Bloomington, a part of my time in Hickory Grove and Attens Grove, Lott County, one Sabbath at Cordova,⁵⁶ Rock Island County, Ill., and the remainder of the time at Rock Island, directly across the river from this place.

⁵⁶ Cordova is a small town about twenty miles north and east of Rock Island.

Br. Seley organized the church at Cordova last winter; the church in this place Br. Brown supported half the time; the church at Bloomington I formerly supplied; the church at Rock Island has formerly had the fruit of Father Gillett's labors. All belong to Davenport Association. . . . I have labored the whole time in the field, have preached 34 sermons, delivered one temperance address, attended 24 other sermons in protracted meetings; 18 prayer meetings; 6 church meetings; visited one common day school,⁵⁷ 1 Sabbath school four times and addressed them each time, and traveled 428 miles. Eleven or twelve hopeful conversions have occurred in the field of my labors, all but one in Rock Island, in connection with a series of meetings carried on by Br. Thomas Powell and myself.

I have baptised 8 and received one by letter into Rock Island church. I have made 55 pastoral visits. No monthly concerts sustained at present. Have obtained three signatures to the temperance pledge. . . . Received \$22 from the people towards my support. Nothing paid for the various benevolent societies connected with our denomination.

No auxiliary society has contributed for my support. One Sunday school at Rock Island, 6 teachers, about 25 scholars, and about 50 volumes in the library. No meeting house commenced.

In consequence of the great uncertainty of being able to reach the American settlements in Oregon by wagons, the great destitution of ministerial labors in all this region, especially on the Upper Mississippi, the unsettled condition of Oregon and the late Indian depredations at the Walla Walla Mission station under the charge of Dr. Whitman,⁵⁸ we have concluded to defer going west this spring; yet not

⁵⁷ The public school system in the Mississippi Valley began early. In Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, there were enacted in the twenties school laws providing for public common school instruction. In Iowa it came some time later. E. G. Dexter, *A Hist. of Education in the United States*, pp. 103-116.

⁵⁸ This probably refers to the trouble with the Indians in the late autumn of 1842. Mrs. Whitman was insulted during Dr. Whitman's absence in the East, and fled to The Dalles. The mission mill at Waiilatpu, Whitman's station, was burned. The news of this, exaggerated and misdated by rumor, seems to have reached Ezra Fisher at this time.

without much reluctance and I trust attempting faithfully to commit our cause to Him whose we are and to whom we owe everything. Should the door be open so that duty shall appear plain, I now think I shall cheerfully undergo the privations of removing across the desert mountains to the Pacific Coast. May God direct and be it ours to obey.

By the invitation of the church at Rock Island, Ill., and by the advice of all the brethren in this vicinity, I have consented to take charge of that church and a small church in Henry County, 12 miles east from that place, the coming year. These churches will be able to give us about two-thirds of a support, and, by the advice of the members of the Board of the Iowa Baptist Gen. Association and Br. Powell, we shall apply to your Board for a reappointment when my present appointment expires.

In view of all the circumstances, should your Board censure the course which we have pursued respecting the Oregon mission, you will have the faithfulness to administer affectionate reproof as becomes the responsible station you occupy. The church in Rock Island formed themselves into a Sabbath school society on the 5th of March and resolved to make application to the American Sunday School Union for an appropriation of S. S. books from the special appropriation made for destitute Sunday schools in the Valley of the Mississippi. . . .

All of which is respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Rock Island, Ill., and vicinity.

N. B.—Br. Brown will probably move to Parkhurst in a few days. Br. Seley has gone to Ohio and Kentucky on a meeting house begging for Bloomington. Br. Carpenter leaves Dubuque for Vt. in a few days—Burlington, Bloomington, Davenport and Dubuque are each in great want of a Baptist minister and I suppose Galena⁵⁹ will be on the same list in a few months.

⁵⁹ Galena was an important center in the lead-mining district. It was laid out in 1827 and incorporated in 1839. By the census of 1850 it had a population of 6,004, but has since declined. *Am. Encyc.*, VII: 563.

O! I wish our wise men, and especially our Baptist ministers who talk of sacrificing for Christ, could survey the almost unbroken destitution on the Mississippi from Quincy to St. Anthony Falls⁶⁰ on both sides of the river, with all our flourishing villages, till they would heed the voice of the Spirit and separate at least a Paul and Barnabas for this work. The calls are imperious.

Tell the brethren to take their latest maps of the western states and look over the field by their fire sides and then ask God, Who is to give all this people the bread of life? The field is increasing in importance every day. Soon it will go into other hands, and well it will be, if it goes not into the hands of the Romans.⁶¹ Yours,

E. F.

Rock Island, Rock Island Co., Ill., April 27, 1844.
 Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.
 Dear Br.:

In behalf of the First Baptist Church in this place, and the Baptist church called Mount Pleasant,⁶² in Henry County, 12 miles southeast from this place, I am requested to solicit your aid for the support of my family one year from the time of the expiration of my present appointment. The above named churches wish me to devote my time entirely to the cause of Christ within their bounds and the immediate vicinity. My post office address is Rock Island, Rock Island County, Ill. Rock Island is situated at the foot of the Upper Rapids on the east shore of the Mississippi River; contains about 1200 inhabitants. Three miles above is a rapidly rising village of something like 300 souls, where al-

⁶⁰ St. Anthony's Falls are, of course, the water power which gave rise to Minneapolis. There was but the barest beginning of a settlement at this time in the vicinity of the present Minneapolis and St. Paul.

⁶¹ The extension of Roman Catholic work among the whites in the Upper Mississippi Valley first became prominent in the thirties. In 1841 the chapel giving the name to St. Paul, Minnesota, was built. A large German Catholic immigration into Illinois from 1841 on gave the church there an impetus. *Cath. Encyc.*, under Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin.

⁶² This Mount Pleasant church was apparently in a rural neighborhood. No town of that name exists.

most any amount of water power may be employed. Already two saws and two runs of stones are employed and four more stones are to go into operation next fall. Three miles south of this on Rock River another town is laid off at the foot of the falls of Rock River; they are just commencing to build at that place and six runs of stones will be put in operation next fall.⁶³ It is said that water power may be employed in these two places enough to drive 700 or 1000 runs of stones the entire year. The country in the vicinity is becoming thickly populated for a new country. The number of communicants in the church in Rock Island is forty-three; and the average number of attendants at public worship is about sixty. The number of my family is six. It is desirable that my reappointment should commence at the expiration of the present appointment. Mount Pleasant church numbers communicants and probably about fifty will be the average number of attendants. . . . We have other places of preaching through the week. The amount of salary necessary for the support of my family would not fall much short of four hundred dollars. The church in Rock Island will pledge one hundred and seventy-five dollars, and the Mount Pleasant church fifty dollars. If your Board will appropriate one hundred dollars to my support, I will try and supply the remaining deficiencies.

Rock Island is the seat of justice for the county and I am no enthusiast when I say it is destined in less than twenty years to be second to no other town on this river in Illinois.⁶⁴ The water power will eventually line the whole bank of the river with mills from Molein [Moline] to this place, a distance of three miles, and also the entire east shore of the Island itself the same distance, which terminates opposite the upper part of this town, and, if necessary, half the water of the Mississippi may be employed in driving machinery at a comparatively small expense. No other Bap-

⁶³ This village is the present Moline. The village south of Rock Island, on Rock River, is the present Milan.

⁶⁴ If the author includes Moline (the author's Molein) with Rock Island, this prophecy was fulfilled.

tist church in the place. The other churches are a large Methodist church and a pretty able Presbyterian church for a new country.

The surrounding country along the river and for ten or twelve miles back is capable of sustaining a dense population, being more than ordinarily well supplied with timber, abounding in coal of a good quality, and is fast settling with eastern emigrants.

We hope to sustain three Sabbath schools the present summer in connection with these churches. In behalf of the above named churches,

EZRA FISHER,

Pastor.

The First Baptist Church in Rock Island, county of Rock Island, and the Baptist Church at Mount Pleasant, Henry Co., concur in the foregoing application to the Executive Committee of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, to appoint Elder Ezra Fisher, as their Missionary.

Rock Island &

Mt. Pleasant, Ill.

May 3, 1844.

HARMAN G. REYNOLDS,

NATHAN W. WASHBURN,

Joint Committee of said Churches.

The Executive Board of the Baptist Con. of Iowa concur in the above and recommend the reappointment of Br. Fisher and the desired appropriation.

C. E. BROWN,

Cor. Sec.

Rock Island, Rock Island County, Ill., June 15, 1844.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br.:

I now proceed to make my report for the second and last quarter under the appointment Nov. 1, 1843.

I have labored the whole time in my appropriate field of labor except 9 days in which I was absent on private business and during that time I spent most of the time as profitably to the cause of Christ as I should have done in the field, being absent from none of my Sabbath appointments. It is with your Board to judge of the propriety of making a proportionate deduction from the sum appropriated.

I have preached 35 sermons during the quarter, delivered one temperance address, attended 24 weekly prayer meetings, 15 church and conference meetings and traveled 321 miles to and from my appointments. . . . Baptised one and received three by letter into the churches under my charge.

Have made 40 pastoral visits. We have no monthly concert yet established, but sustain two weekly prayer meetings in Rock Island churches. . . . Assisted in the examination of Br. Robb, at Mt. Pleasant, Henry Co., Iowa, for ordination at the meeting of the Iowa Baptist Convention. The church at Rock Island paid \$1 for the Home Missionary Society; nothing for the other benevolent societies. Have raised about five dollars for Sabbath school library and I have received about \$42 of my salary the past quarter. Mt. Pleasant church have pledged \$8 for Home Missions, to be paid next fall. I have received nothing towards my salary from any auxiliary society.

We have organized a Bible class of 12 scholars. We have two Sunday schools with our people, 12 teachers, about 50 scholars, and about 100 volumes in the library. We have bought at auction a mechanic's lien on a brick house 20 feet by 40, with the roof on and doors in, secured most of the company's rights to the house and lot and expect to secure the rest and fit it up as a place of worship during the coming year.

I attended the Iowa Baptist Convention with which our church cooperate. Session harmonious and deeply interesting to us in this new country. Collections were taken up in

aid of the Home and Foreign Missions and American and Foreign Bible Societies, in all amounting to \$21.

All which is respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

P. S.—I still feel impressed with the importance of establishing a mission in Oregon and, should the God of missions spare our lives and give us health and we learn that the way is practicable with wagons as far as the Walla Walla, we hope to be ready to go out next spring, if we can have assurance of being sustained till churches can be raised up to support the gospel in that new territory. Our journey last year, together with the expenses of the family for the present year, strongly reminds me that \$300 will be less than will sustain my family a year, should my services commence at the time of our departure from this place. Br. Johnson⁶⁵ and myself have had some conversation with Br. Brabrook, the Foreign Mission agent for this state and Missouri, and he thinks the mission would appropriately come under the cognizance of the F. Mission Society, as it would tend to facilitate the establishment of an Indian mission west of the mountains. It matters but little to us with which Board we stand connected, provided we are enabled to devote ourselves entirely to the work of the ministry and not leave our families to suffer. I greatly desire that Br. Johnson may be appointed and immediately encouraged to go. I know of no man in the West I would prefer to accompany me, should it please the Lord to open the way for me. The undertaking is great and we greatly need more than one, that, in the case of death, the work might not be entirely suspended, the labor, money and time lost. I have just learned that the company going this year would probably be about fifteen hundred. Please write me the wishes of the Board.

Yours,

E. F.

⁶⁵ Rev. Hezekiah Johnson, to whom frequent reference is made in the letters from now on, was born in Maryland in 1799. He moved to Ohio in 1816, and was ordained there in 1827. He moved to Iowa in 1838. In 1845 he went to Oregon as the author records. He died in Oregon in 1866. C. H. Mattoon, *Bap. Annals of Oregon*, I: 45.

Rock Island, Ill., Aug. 29, '44.

Dear Br. Hill:

Through the appointment of the Iowa Baptist Convention, at this late date I proceed to give you a brief outline of the wants of the Baptists in this growing Territory. . . . At this time the population of this Territory is but a fraction less than 90,000⁶⁶ souls, occupying a region of country about 120 miles from east to west, and from the mouth of the Des Moines to Prairedes Chien [Prairie du Chien], and soon the entire territory from the Mississippi to the Missouri will give place to civilization. Lee County contains 9900 souls, several flourishing villages on the rivers, two churches, and four preachers who work on their farms. Des Moines has 9109 souls; five or six openings for Baptist preaching. Burlington, with a population of 2000 souls and about 15 Baptist members, is wholly neglected. A Baptist church might here be easily collected. Louisa Co., 3238 souls, one church and one Baptist minister. Van Buren Co., 9,019; facilities for agriculture and manufactories are very great; at present two Baptist ministers. Keosauqua, an important point, has a church greatly needing a minister, and the ministers in this county have to spend a portion of their time in other counties. Henry County contains 6,017 souls. Elder Burnet has organized a church in the county seat in the midst of about 700 souls and preaches half of his time with this church. Most of this county is destitute of Baptist preaching. Jefferson County contains 5,694 souls almost entirely destitute of Baptist preaching, except occasionally, and that rarely, when a Baptist minister travels that way and preaches a sermon to a few scattered Baptists and others who gladly hear the Word. Two small churches were recently organized in this county, but the county town is entirely neglected by our ministers. Baptists have joined other churches temporarily (a bad business) because they have no Baptist

⁶⁶ A census of 1836 showed the counties of Demoiné and Dubuque, which included the present Iowa, to have a population of 10521. In 1838 Iowa Territory had a population of 21,859. William Salter, *Iowa*, pp. 208, 230.

In 1840 its population was 43,112, and in 1850, 192,214. *Am. Cyc.* IX:332.

preaching. Washington Co. contains 3,120 souls. Br. Elliott some time ago visited this county and baptized a few. A church, in a somewhat flourishing condition at the county seat, needs a pastor immediately. Muscatine County, 2,882 souls, with a church at Bloomington, is about to settle a pastor. In this county are several interesting openings for Baptist preaching. In the above named churches are two licensed preachers who might be rendered quite useful as preachers, but are obliged to pursue their ordinary occupations. Scott County has 2750 souls, two churches and one minister. Davenport, without Baptist preaching, has a population of 1000. Johnson and Cedar Counties, with a population of 5166, and Linn with a population of 2643, have four churches and a number of important settlements with but one ordained minister. Clinton and Jackson Cos., with a population of about 3000 souls and two organized churches and probably another soon to be constituted at De Witt, have no ordained minister and only the occasional labors of Elder Brown. DuBuque has 4052 souls, one church at the seat of justice and an ordained minister. The remaining counties, together with the new purchase, 50 miles in width, extending the entire length of the Ter. from north to south, the southern portion of which is becoming thickly settled, for a new country, with farms from 10 to 100 acres already under cultivation, contain a population of at least 22,000 souls, with but one Baptist minister and two small churches, although there are a very considerable number of brethren and sisters scattered through this region like sheep without a shepherd, anxiously desiring and praying that God send them the faithful missionary who will collect them into churches and administer to them the ordinances of the gospel. Now, dear brother, what does this Territory need? Do we not need one man in each of these counties, at least? Do we not need one minister in each of the important towns . . . who can devote himself entirely to the work to which the Head of the church has assigned him? Then, if we could have a few of our ministering brethren who would

like to settle their rising families on farms, so that they could devote a portion of their time to preaching the Word and gathering up churches and at the same time bless Zion, their own families and their own souls, the labors of such brethren would be appreciated. Perhaps more than all, we need wise lay brethren to move to our Territory for the sake of doing good—men of prayer, good works, and faith too, who are well established in the doctrines of the gospel, who know well how to sympathize with the ministry and devise and execute plans by which the ministry may be kept constantly employed in their peculiar calling. Now let us ask you, will our ministers and deacons and churches in the older and more favored portions of our land compare our destitution and prospects for usefulness with their own and then in the fear of God ask what they can do for us? By order of the convention.

EZRA FISHER,

Chairman of the Committee.

N. B.—I learn that 1500 souls have crossed the Rocky Mountains this summer for Oregon.⁶⁷ Please let me know if the Board will appoint Br. Johnson to go out with us next spring? We have a promising young brother in this place from Mass., by the name of Stone, whom I think this church will invite to become their pastor when we leave.

Yours, E. F.

Rock Island, Ill., Sept. 16, 1844.

Dear Br. Hill:

* * * * *

Should providence open the door, we expect to leave for Oregon early next spring with the companies that will then go out to Oregon and California. I should like to know whether the Board will be willing that the appointment shall

⁶⁷ McLoughlin placed the number of the immigrants of 1844 at 1,475. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:448.

George H. Himes, as a result of extensive researches, believes it to have been only 600 or 700. British officers in Oregon in 1845-6 placed it at about 1000. *Documents Relative to Warre and Vavasour's Military Reconnoissance in Oregon, 1845-6*, ed. by Joseph Schafer, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* X:11.

be so made that the services shall commence at the time of our departure.

You will allow me to repeat the earnest request that Br. Johnson be appointed, if practicable, to accompany me. My views of the importance of the enterprise are in no way diminished. A company will go to California next spring,⁶⁸ among which will be several valuable Baptist families, who will settle with the companies that have gone before them on the Sacramento River near San Francisco Bay. Is it not time that the Baptists had two missionaries west of the mountains to look after the rising interests on the Pacific? Our health is tolerably good, but sickness is becoming more frequent than it has been this season.

I shall forward my quarterly report by the next mail.

Yours truly,

EZRA FISHER.

P. S.—Please write me soon and let me know the wishes of the Board respecting the contemplated mission.

Yours, E. F.

Rock Island, Ill., Sept. 17, 1844.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br.:

I proceed to make my report for the first quarter under the appointment bearing date May 1st.

* * * * *

I have preached thirty-five sermons, attended sixteen prayer meetings, five conference meetings, seven covenant meetings and traveled three hundred and twenty-five miles. We have no conversions to record within our congregations. Baptized none. Received three by letter. Have made seventy-five pastoral visits and attended one funeral, a mem-

⁶⁸ The first important overland immigration to California from the United States was in 1841. Bancroft, *Hist. of California* IV:263.

The overland immigration of 1845, the preparations for which are here mentioned, numbered about 1500. *Ibid.* IV:571.

ber of this church. Monthly concert is attended with this church. Visited one common school. Obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge. We have one young brother fitting for college; as yet he has not avowed his intentions for the ministry. Organized no church. No minister ordained. Received sixty-five dollars toward my support (\$65.00). Received nothing for any of the missionary, educational or other benevolent societies. We have received nothing from any of the auxiliary societies towards my salary. One Bible class, about 15 scholars. Three Sunday schools, about 15 teachers, sixty-five scholars, and about 150 volumes in the libraries. Done nothing to the meeting house since my last report.

The Campbellites are making great efforts in this place and vicinity to draw off members of other denominations, and, in view of all the circumstances, I have thought it my duty to deliver a lecture each Sabbath on the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel; thus far they seem to awaken an interest by confirming the brethren and eliciting the attention of the community. Amid the flood of error with which we are surrounded, we greatly need the truths of God's Word exhibited in the spirit of meekness and zeal of the primitive Christians. Truly we need the wisdom of the serpent as well as the harmlessness of the dove. I have never witnessed in any place in the valley so much determined opposition to the Baptists, as such, as in Rock Island and vicinity. Perhaps I have never felt more forcibly the thought that the gospel, and the whole gospel, is God's appointed means of accomplishing His purposes in bringing sinners to repentance and establishing the churches in the truth than during the past quarter.

In the midst of our labors and trials, I have one great consolation, that I, in common with all the missionaries of your Society, have the prayers of hundreds of thousands of God's dear people.

Yours respectfully,
EZRA FISHER, Missionary.

I am waiting with some solicitude to hear from you relative to the subject of Oregon.

Cannot Br. Johnson be appointed to go out with us?

Yours, E. FISHER.

Rock Island, Ill., Nov. 5th, 1844.

Rev. B. M. Hill.

Dear Br.:

Yours of Sept. 27th was duly received and I now take pen to answer it, together with other communications which it becomes my duty to make in the same sheet. The Board of the Iowa Conv. understands the course your Board has pursued in relation to Br. Seeley's tour last spring and are satisfied, I believe.

On this subject of my going to Oregon next spring, I would state that my views have in no way altered as regards the importance of carrying the gospel of Christ there immediately, and, unless some special providence intervenes, we shall make our arrangements to leave this place some time in the month of April next. The question whether the time of our service shall commence when we leave this place or when we arrive at the field of our future labor will not be material with me farther than the settlement of the question whether the amount will enable me to devote myself to the work of the ministry unimpeded by secular labor. I trust my ruling desire is to render the greatest possible service to the cause of Christ; I feel perfectly willing to refer that matter to your Board.

I have never asked what were the views of the Board respecting the time of the transmission of the funds to me for my services during the year after our arrival. I suppose, however, that such would be the distance and difficulty of regular communication from Oregon to N. York and so long a time must necessarily intervene between the time of making my reports and that of receiving funds in answer to said reports, your Board would advance to me the amount agreed

upon for one year before taking our departure from this place. Your Board may possibly know of some convenient and safe way of transmitting drafts so that they may reach us seasonably to prevent us from being reduced to sufferings for the want of the common comforts of life.⁶⁹ I intended to have laid that subject before you personally while at Syracuse last fall, but it did not occur to my mind, when I could have an interview with you. Br. John Peck however advised me personally. He thought in this case it would be the pleasure of the Board to advance the year's salary before we left Iowa. I have just received a letter from Br. Johnson still expressing a strong desire to accompany me to Oregon, informing me that you say, if money can be raised, he can be appointed to go with me, provided he can receive a recommendation from the Executive Board of the Iowa Baptist Convention. This being the case, I laid the subject before said Board on the first instant, and the Board passed the following resolutions:

1st. Resolved that this Board cordially recommend Elder Hezekiah Johnson as a most suitable man for the A. B. H. M. Society's Board to appoint as a missionary to Oregon to accompany Elder Ezra Fisher to that field next spring.

2d. Resolved, that the Secretary be instructed to accompany this recommendation with a brief description of Elder Johnson's qualifications for a missionary in a new country.

In complying with these instructions, I will simply state that I am confident I give the sentiment of every faithful Baptist in Iowa who knows him when I say that Br. Johnson's uniform ardent piety, his strong perceptive and comparing powers, his originality of thought, his familiarity with Bible doctrines, the facility with which he defends them, exposes error in the spirit of the gospel, and the long experience he has had as a faithful pioneer of the West in planting and fostering churches, as well as enduring hardships and privations, render him eminently qualified for the work of

⁶⁹ See note 72.

a missionary in a new country, where error is rife and counsellors are few. Without detraction from the merits of all our worthy brethren, I speak the sentiments of all when I say he is regarded as one of the few fathers of our denomination in Iowa. I have long known him and taken great pleasure in his counsels. Your Board will not wonder then when I repeat the earnest request that Br. Johnson may be appointed to accompany me. Will you think of from 7000 to 10,000⁷⁰ souls in Oregon, within two days' ride from the mouth of the Willamette,⁷¹ speaking the English language, and that number fast increasing from the western, the eastern and middle states, without a single Baptist preacher, and will not your Board appoint this one more missionary, that we may follow the example set by our blessed Saviour of sending out His disciples by twos? If no other way can be devised, will your Board not encourage Br. Johnson to circulate in New England and raise the requisite funds during the winter? God knows what is best, and, if my importunity is too great, I know He will pardon and I trust you will do the same.

I attended the Davenport Association the second week in Oct. at Marion, the county seat of Lynn County, Iowa. The session was harmonious and one of more than usual interest and some tokens of divine favor were manifest. Collections were taken in aid of home and foreign missions. We trust a lasting blessing will follow. On Saturday before the fourth Sab. in Oct., we organized a new association in this place, known by the name of Rock Island Baptist Association, including but four churches, but an extent of territory more than 100 miles in length on the Mississippi.

⁷⁰ This number was largely over-estimated. In his letter of Feb. 27, 1846, written after he reached Oregon, the author places the population at five or six thousand, and this was after the population had been doubled by the immigration of 1845. Deducting this, the population in 1844 would be between two and three thousand. Bancroft places it at the latter figure. *Hist of Oregon*, 1:508. G. H. Himes thinks it was 1,200 or 1,500. Lieut. Piel gave it as 3,000 before the coming of the 1845 immigration, and Warre and Vavasour gave it as 6,000 after the immigration came. See J. Schafer in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.*, X:53.

⁷¹ The origin and the original form of the name Willamette are obscure. G. H. Himes finds the meaning of "Green Water," given it in two early, entirely independent sources. If these sources are reliable, it is an Indian name and the present spelling closely approximates the original sound. See also in the spelling: Bancroft, *Hist of N. W. Coast* 11:60, 61, where a summary of different authorities is given.

Although the weather was unfavorable, the scene was truly pleasing, and on Sab. a collection was taken in favor of home missions, amounting to four dollars and sixty cents. I will forward you the minutes of said Association when published. I have used the above named \$4.60 and will deduct the same from my next draft.

Your unworthy brother in Christ,

EZRA FISHER,

Sec. pro tem., Iowa Bapt. Con.

Rock Island, Ill., Dec. 16th, 1844.

Corresponding Sec. A. B. H. M. Socy.

Dear Br. Hill:

It becomes my duty in the order of God's providence to make my second quarterly report.

My time has been devoted almost exclusively to the work during the quarter, and more than an ordinary portion of my time has been spent in associations and convention. During the quarter I have preached twenty-eight sermons and participated in almost all the public discussions which have come before the public meetings of our denominations, such as home and foreign missions, Bible cause, publication cause, education, etc. Attended twenty weekly prayer and conference meetings, as the church in this place sustains both a weekly prayer meeting and conference meeting, which have been well sustained through the season. Attended four covenant meetings and two church meetings, four meetings of the Board of the Iowa Convention; traveled five hundred and forty miles. I have no evidence of any case of hopeful conversion during the quarter, yet we have had the satisfaction of seeing an increased attention in several instances in our congregations. I have baptised none. We have received three by letter during the quarter. I have made sixty-five (65) pastoral visits. We sustain the monthly concert in the church in this place instead of our weekly prayer meeting. I have visited two (2) common schools. Obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge. No young men preparing

for the ministry. Neither organized a church nor assisted in ordaining a minister. Assisted in the organization of an association in this place. Have received about fifty dollars toward my support; on the subscription for my salary, received four dollars and sixty cents, the amount of a collection taken up at the organization of the Rock Island Association for the cause of home missions, and nine (\$9) dollars for the Home Missionary Society in the Mt. Pleasant church, Henry County, where I preach once a month; have received nothing for the Foreign Mission, Bible Publication or Education Societies.

We have one Bible class of about fifteen scholars and three small Sabbath schools. The one in this place is quite small and quite interesting; about thirty-five children and ten teachers. The one with the Mt. Pleasant church comprises both young and old and is quite small. The other is sustained by a Br. Gillmore, twelve miles south of this. It has about thirty children. The church in this place are now making an effort, and I think it will be successful, to finish the house we purchased last summer. This has engaged part of my time the past week.

I have during the quarter attended the Davenport Association and the convention at Canton in this state. On the whole, although we have witnessed no marked tokens of divine favor, yet we think the churches are becoming more consistent, exercising a better discipline and evince a laudable growth in the Christian graces and I can but feel a degree of assurance that God will soon appear in answer to the prayers of His people to revive His work with us. . . .

All of which is respectfully submitted.

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Rock Island.

N. B.—Yours of Nov. 29th came to hand today informing me of the appointment of Br. H. Johnson to accompany me to Oregon. The intelligence rejoiced my soul. May God favour the decision of your Board and greatly bless the enter-

prise. We are making every arrangement to leave as early as the tenth of April, should the All Wise permit.

I will answer partly your proposed questions. I verily believe the enterprise is of God and trust he will prosper it and fondly hope the time is not distant when we shall see churches in Oregon able and ready to sustain the gospel and even carry it to others. Your Board will readily see that I can give you no definite answer. I am willing to confide that matter to the wisdom and integrity of the Board, when they shall have learned the true state of the cause by an actual survey of the field.

I should hope never to encumber the cause of missions with any obligation to support my family while my labours are unprofitable. As soon as we can open the way for our support in Oregon, it will be our greatest pleasure to see the Board directing their aid to other and more destitute fields. As it relates to remittance after the expiration of the first year, should your Board think it for the honour of the cause to continue my services, I think, were you to permit us to make drafts at the expiration of each semi-annual report on your treasurer, or on yourself, we could sell those drafts by endorsing them ourselves, as I understand there is a merchant from Boston doing business at Oregon City at the falls of the Willamette.⁷²

Yours, E. F.

Rock Island, Ill., Jan. 10, 1845.

Rev. B. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

In my quarterly report of December 16th I promised to write you soon and give the Board in brief my views of the plan of our future operations in Oregon, should God graciously permit us to labor in that field.

⁷² This is possibly a reference to F. W. Pettygrove, the Oregon City agent of A. G. and A. W. Benson. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:417, 422.

Money could also have been sent by Hudsons Bay Company's drafts.

We expect to find our field of labor, so far as our denomination is concerned, in an entirely new and unformed state; we shall consequently find everything to do or things will be left undone. We know some Baptist members have emigrated to that country ⁷³ and others are going, but it is reasonable to suppose they are scattered. Should Br. Johnson accept of the appointment, which I trust he will, I would suppose we should select two of the most favorable positions to reach the greatest amount of inhabitants, on or near the navigable waters and as near each other as circumstances will admit, so as to enjoy each other's counsels and, as circumstances permit, labor in public, and in these places make it our great business to establish churches in the apostolic order.

I presume we shall find, in exploring the field, more points of importance that we shall be able to visit monthly on the Sabbaths. I think it probable we may find it our duty to establish something like circuits which we may reach periodically, while others more remote may demand occasional visits. I trust we shall feel that our great business will be preaching the Word both publicly and from house to house. Yet in a country where education is unprovided for by law,⁷⁴ and where every false religionist is propagating his dogmas through the medium of schools, it seems almost indispensable to the greatest and most permanent usefulness of the gospel minister that he become the guardian of youth and patron of moral and religious education. The Pope of Rome has already appointed a Bishop of Oregon and has sent out two ecclesiastics, and with these fathers are to be sent seven fe-

⁷³ A number of Baptists, prominent among whom was David T. Lenox, had come to Oregon with the immigration of 1843. Lenox and a number of others settled on Tualatin plains and there organized in May, 1845, a Baptist church. This was the only Baptist church in Oregon until 1846. The Rev. Vincent Snelling, a Baptist minister, came with the immigration of 1844, and was, as far as is known, the first Baptist clergyman in Oregon. C. H. Mattoon, *Baptist Annals of Oregon* I:1, 2, 39, 43. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:421, 466.

⁷⁴ The author was right as to the absence of public state instruction. This did not come until much later. The first school in Oregon supported by a public tax was opened in Milton, near St. Helens, Columbia County, September 15, 1851. G. H. Himes; Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:35; I:201, 325.

male missionaries and a number of priests.⁷⁵ I therefore think that at an early period schools should be established under pious teachers, and, as soon as practicable, one should be founded on liberal principles, adapted to the wants of the country and especially to the demands of our own denomination, which should rise with the demands of the people till it shall eventually furnish the means for a complete education. Should congress pass the land bill, which has so long been before both branches of our national legislature,⁷⁶ I trust we shall find friends to the Baptist cause sufficient to carry out such a plan, without materially detracting from our ministerial usefulness.

While other denominations are directing their energies to evangelize the natives and half-breeds,⁷⁷ I think Baptist missionaries should not look on with indifference in this work of blessing the remnants of these once numerous tribes. If anything more can be done, a way may be opened for the successful introduction of missionaries in the most favored positions and thereby effect a great saving of time and expense to the cause of missions. I will not multiply. But you will allow me to say that Upper California is becoming a place of great attraction to western emigrants, and among them are Baptists who will ever pray for the ordinances as they were delivered. I am personally acquainted with some of these, who are inquiring whether the Home Missionary Society will not appoint them as missionaries. We shall become acquainted with these brethren in our journey, and a correspondence at least may be kept up with them by which we may learn the wants of that country.

⁷⁵ The first Catholic priests came to Oregon in 1838. One of these, Blanchet, was created Archbishop of Oregon in 1843. In 1844 a company of five priests, a number of lay brothers, and six sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, came from Europe. The "two ecclesiastics" referred to by the author were possibly Fathers Blanchet and Demers, who had come in 1838. Several others, notably Rev. P. J. De Smet, came to the country between 1838 and the arrival of the party of 1844. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:315, 327.

⁷⁶ There had been at several times bills before Congress providing for grants of lands to settlers in Oregon. The reference here must be to the Atchison bill in the Senate, and possibly to an Oregon bill in the House—neither carried. No Oregon donation land grant act was passed until the famous act of 1850. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:379, 384, 386, 388; II:260.

⁷⁷ The reference here is, of course, to the earlier Protestant missions in Oregon—those of the Methodists and of the American Board. He seems here not to be thinking of the Roman Catholic missions to the Indians.

We hope soon to form churches which will relieve your Board in part at least in sustaining us, and it shall be one part of our duty to teach the brethren that the gospel is a sacrificing system. As to the amount it may require from your Board to enable us to live the second year, so far as I am concerned it shall be left to your Board and myself to decide, when God shall in His wisdom make known to us our duty. I expect, if I am faithful to God, you will appreciate it; if not, your aid in my support must necessarily cease. Your Board will give me their instructions and make known their wishes.

We are making preparations for the journey. The winter yields us the hope at least that we shall have an early spring. We must be ready to leave this place as soon as the first day in April. It would be desirable that the draft of which you speak in yours of Nov. 29 should be here by the first of March.

Yours as ever,

EZRA FISHER.

P. S.—I made my last quarterly report on the 16th of Dec. and requested you to forward me a draft of thirty-six dollars and forty cents (\$36.40) for the two last quarters, after deducting \$13.60 which I have received in this region.

N. B.—I have one farther request. Will your Board forward me a draft for my services with this people up to the first of April when the other draft is forwarded and let me mail my report just before I leave? I will here say that my time will be necessarily somewhat interrupted in making preparations for the journey, but I hope to be able to spend most of the time in the ministry.

Yours, E. F.

Rock Island, Ill., March 14, 1845.

Dear Br. Hill:

I proceed in brief to make out my quarterly report for the quarter ending this day, being the third quarter of the year.

I have labored all the time except so much as has been necessary for me to make preparations for our journey to Oregon; and these labors have made much larger drafts on my time than they would in N. Y., where everything can be readily obtained and every brother is ready to give timely assistance. I have spent no time in my private business beyond the above named labors, and they probably have cost me 135 miles' travel and three weeks' time, yet I have met all my regular preaching appointments and most of the prayer meeting appointments, but my pastoral visits have been neglected to my grief. But such must be, or I must abandon the desired enterprise. Preached 21 sermons and have been assisted by several visiting brethren on Sabbaths; 12 prayer meetings, 8 conference meetings, 5 covenant meetings and traveled 124 miles; no hopeful conversions among my people; none baptised; received none by letter. Monthly concert is attended at one place, Rock Island church. Made 48 religious visits. . . . Assisted in the organization of the Pine Bluffs Church in the south part of this county on the first Sabbath in February, and in the ordination of Br. Cyrus G. Clarke as their pastor. Addressed the church on the occasion and gave the charge to the candidate. . . . Received nothing from any auxiliary society toward my support, but about \$30 from subscriptions. Have one Bible class and about 12 scholars, two Sabbath schools and about 50 scholars and 7 teachers. The church at Rock Island are making arrangements to finish the house they purchased last summer and will probably be able to occupy it by June next.

I wrote you about two months ago requesting you to forward in advance of the report the amount of my salary up to the first of April in a draft in connection with the advance draft for my salary next year. But as yet I have received neither. Will you forward me the draft immediately, if you have not done it?

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Rock Island.

N. B.—I have received no letter from you since the 29th of Nov. In a letter of the 4th of Nov. you informed me that my salary would be paid in advance about the month of Feb. or March and in one you requested me to make every preparation necessary [for the Oregon journey]. I have done so as far as my means will allow and am now waiting with great anxiety to receive the drafts to enable me to finish the outfit. The little property I had I sold at a great sacrifice and the outfit is more expensive than I anticipated, but, if the draft or drafts reach this place in season, we can be ready in ten or twelve days for the journey. We are anxiously expecting them every mail. We ought to be on the way as soon as two or three weeks from this at farthest, but must stay till your instructions reach me here.⁷⁸ The 4th of April is the day fixed upon for our departure from this place. We feel that we need greatly the prayers of your Board, especially that Heaven may bless the mission. I am more and more convinced of the importance of the enterprise and that God only can sustain and give us success. You will forgive my importunity. I know not how to lay over on suspense another year. I fear I am too solicitous; if so, may God forgive. Br. Johnson is probably on his way at this time to Independence, Missouri, where I hope to join him, God permitting.

Your unworthy brother in Christ,

EZRA FISHER.

March 14, Evening. Just received my commission and regret that I had not known three weeks ago that in this case your Board would not have violated their usual rule. I shall stay in this place till you forward me the order, or order N. B. Stanford to receive the draft for me and order it paid, which I think he will do. In this case, I shall write you to that effect before leaving.

Yours in the gospel,

EZRA FISHER.

⁷⁸ The emigrants for Oregon left as early in the Spring as possible to reach Oregon before the winter rains. Some left as early as March, others as late as May. See Johnson and Winter, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* VII:68.

Rock Island, Ill., March 22d, 1845.

Dear Br. Hill:

I received the commission, dated Feb. 1st and 28th, and read it with mingled emotions of pleasure and regret.

By that it appears there is some little misunderstanding between you and me relative to the time when my quarterly report becomes due. I know the commission under which I have been laboring the last nine months was dated the 1st of May; but my time of service under the former appointment of six months not having expired till the fifteenth of June, I have made all my quarterly reports to correspond with that date. Hence my quarterly report which you expected to be due the first of Feb. was not due till the 15th of March. Yet, not having heard from you after my inquiry of January 10th, I prepared my report one day before the time in order to get it into the mail at as early a date as practicable, and on that evening the commission appointing me a missionary to Oregon arrived, in which you stated that you would hold back the draft of \$300 a few days. I greatly hope that I shall find it in the office on the arrival of the next mail as the time has now arrived that traveling is tolerably good and I have exhausted all my pecuniary means in the preparation for the journey at a great sacrifice of my property, and that cheerfully, and have already incurred as many debts as I dare till the draft arrives; yet I have to buy all my flour, some clothing and other articles which must be procured before we start. You may judge what my anxiety must be on the arrival of every mail when I find that it contains nothing for me. I wrote a letter and put it in the hands of Br. Byron of Dubuque, which you have undoubtedly received before this.

I forgot to state the sum which will be due me on the first of April, but you will see that it will be \$29.00, by a reference to my report. I have made arrangements with Mr. Napoleon B. Buford to take the draft out of the post office and order it paid in his own name instead of mine. When

you receive an order from me to pay \$29 to N. B. Buford on a draft given for my services up to the first day of April, you will please pay the said \$29 and take the draft, whatever may be the face of the draft, without any power of attorney from me to said Buford.

Yours under date of Nov. 14th, 1844, says: "Yours of 16th of Sept. was laid before our Ex. Board at their last meeting and your request to have your salary commence at the time of your starting for Oregon was agreed to." But in the commission you state, "for the period of twelve months to receive three hundred dollars from the said Board, or at that rate per annum, the time to commence as soon as you reach the Territory, the above sum to cover traveling expenses and salary and you to derive the remainder of your support from the people among whom you labor."

Now I have sacrificed at least \$300 in preparation for the journey and my pecuniary means are so reduced that I must break at least \$100 or \$150 on the salary to be ready to start, and then we have a wilderness of 2500 miles to cross, with not a single church organization to receive us and provide even our bread. Now I leave your Board to say whether of the two letters shall define the time in which my salary shall commence. The sacrifice is made and I shall go, God being my helper, and do what I can. I do not faint or feel discouraged. It is not absolutely certain whether we go by Council Bluffs or Independence, Missouri.⁷⁹ You will do well to address me one letter to Independence to the care of Eld. Hezekiah Johnson, and another to Council Bluffs, immediately on the reception of this. I suppose you are advised that Mr. Zuron [Jason] Lee⁸⁰ has been at Washington the

⁷⁹ These were convenient points on the frontier for reaching the Platte River Valley, along which was the first part of the trail to Oregon. Independence had for some years been the rendezvous for those starting west on the Santa Fe trail, and in fact to all points in the Rocky Mountain region and beyond. Overton Johnson and W. H. Winter, *Route Across the Rocky Mountains*, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* VII:65. Bancroft, *Hist. of Arizona and New Mexico*, 329.

⁸⁰ Jason Lee, prominent in the Methodist mission in Oregon, had been in the East since May, 1844, on business connected with Oregon and the mission. He died March 12, 1845. The Methodist Institute, the forerunner of Willamette University, was organized in February, 1842. Wm. D. Fenton and H. W. Scott, on Jason Lee, in *Oregon Hist. Soc. Quar.* VII:237, 239, 263. See also note 95.

past winter for the purpose of obtaining a grant of land in Oregon for an Oregon Institute—Methodist, of course. You will be let into the secret by turning to the President's message, with the accompanying documents, from page 492 to page 495 inclusive. Please be at the trouble to obtain it from some of the political printing offices in your city and read it. Then ask the Baptists of the United States if it is not time for Baptists to look to Oregon.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER

Rock Island, Ill., March 31st, 1845.

Dear Br. Hill:

At the request of the members of the Board of the Iowa Convention, I now sit down in great haste and in the midst of confusion and a little anxiety to write you a private letter, presenting in brief the views of the members of the local Board in Davenport relative to the future operations of your Board in Iowa. We have been contemplating our field of labor with a prayerful interest, but we cannot do less than feel emotions of gratitude for the liberal patronage your Board has extended to it. Yet we feel convinced that all your funds are not the most judiciously appropriated. . . . We believe that the present year you will expend from \$1300 to \$1700 in the bounds of our convention, including Rock Island Association, and yet numbers of the most important fields of labor are entirely unreached—Burlington, and at present Iowa City, Fort Madison and the entire county of Lee, with a population falling but little short of 10,000 souls. It is the decided opinion of the brethren of the Board that some changes ought to take place, so that these points may effectually be reached and the cause sustained in them.

We think there is another defect, although we are far from charging your Board as being in any measure the cause, yet we think you may be the cause when the defect is pointed out. The appropriation of just \$100 per annum to your missionaries irrespective of the place they occupy and

other contingencies, with a few exceptions, we think, might be improved upon. We cannot find it in our hearts to disapprove of the appointments of your missionaries except, perhaps, one or two instances. Yet we feel that more regard should in future be had to the position the missionary occupies. Setting aside the ability to sustain the more important fields, we know of instances where we think \$50 would afford as much relief to a missionary's family as \$100 or \$150 would, were the same man to occupy another and more important field. We then would say that we would recommend the appointment of missionaries with appropriations varying in proportion to circumstances. If a minister is to sustain the cause in Burlington or Fort Madison or Galena or Bloomington, he must have more than \$100 from your Board, or we think little that is permanent will be effected and you will retain in the older states those very men for the want of whom the cause must suffer in our Territory. We think in a few cases appointments might be made with an appropriation of but \$50 from your Board, and through that medium you might be enabled to do more towards fully sustaining men in more important points. Could you visit our prairie country and see its peculiarities, you would feel the force of these views. The great amount of labor must be performed in the populous points and from these reach less populous places.

We hope at our next anniversary to effect another object, to-wit: That the convention will be prepared to instruct her Board not to recommend the appointment of ministers to labor in the bounds of any church who will not pledge themselves to raise, over and above the amount they pledge for the support of their minister direct, a sum equal to 25 cents for each member to aid the Society.

We have now two applications pending which are not approved, either for want of information relative to the applicant or from informality in the application, which may soon be in your hands. You understand this is a private letter and will not therefore publish it.

One word respecting myself. I received the commission more than two weeks since, but as yet the draft has not reached me, and tomorrow companies from this state will commence their journey and we have fixed on next Thursday to leave this place, but must wait till the draft reaches us. We have disposed of all our little possessions and all our furniture at about half their value to be ready and are still in suspense whether we shall be able to enter upon our anticipated field of labor. We sometimes fear the draft is in the bottom of the lake, or has miscarried. You may imagine with what anxiety we wait each returning mail and what are our feelings of disappointment as we return from the office unprovided for. We try to feel that the hand of the Lord is in all this. Sometimes I feel to say "Thy Will, O Lord, be done." Yet our constant prayer is, "If it please Thee O Lord, grant us the desire of our hearts and give us seasonably the means necessary to the prosecution of our journey." Should the next mail bring the draft, we must be delayed a few days beyond the appointed time. You have undoubtedly forwarded the draft before this.

Yours truly,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Perhaps it is not the will of the Lord that I should go; if so, I should submit, yet my heart is in the work and it will be time enough for me to learn that fact when I find the door is shut. Till then, I am bound to act up to a conviction of duty, in view of the importance of the field before me. Should the draft go back to you with my name on its back, you will not pay it till you hear from me by letter, as I shall write you immediately on the receipt of the draft that you may learn the time of our departure.

E. FISHER.

Rock Island, April 5th, 1845.

Dear Br. Brabrook:

At the request of Dr. Witherwax and others, I take my pen to address you a line in great haste. The church in

Davenport are still destitute and perhaps have been rather difficult to please as a whole, yet they greatly need a minister, and the Territory as much need a leading mind in the denomination who may exercise a father's care and kindness toward our esteemed young brethren in the ministry. Now I hardly know what to write you. I would not draw you away from a very responsible and important post to occupy a less important one. Yet, should you determine to settle as a pastor, I feel greatly desirous that an effectual door may be opened for you in Iowa. The church at Davenport and in this place cannot unite in the support of one man; each would claim the services and residence of the minister. And the field is so wide in this vicinity that our brethren feel that they must have a man all the time on this side the river. Perhaps they judge correctly. I have no doubt from the acquaintance I have with the brethren in Davenport that they are prepared to give you a unanimous call to settle with them, provided they can raise the means for your support.

The church in Bloomington will probably be left destitute before long, at longest in the month of June. It is the object of this letter to elicit from you a reply to a few questions. Are you determined to continue in your present agency? If not, would you regard it duty to settle in Iowa, provided you could be supported at a commanding point? Should the churches of Davenport and Bloomington unite in giving you a call, could you consent to supply the two churches thirty miles asunder, but with an excellent road on the bank of the river? Dr. Witherwax says their church would wait six months, if they knew you would settle with them at the expiration of that time. He also thinks your support might be raised by adopting that plan. Please write Dr. W. in answer to this as I shall probably be on our long journey before you will be able to have a letter reach this place. We are only waiting a draft from N. Y., which we are expecting every mail. Do not fail to attend our convention at Bloomington the first of June. May God direct you according to His holy will. Pray for us that our enterprise may be under

the fostering care of the Almighty and be greatly blessed of the Lord.

Yours in gospel bonds,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Please stir up Brs. Bailey, Sherwood, Rogers and Crane to attend our convention.

Done by request of those who love the cause of Christ in Iowa.

Davenport, April 12th.

Dear Br.:

We are now here on our way for Oregon. We feel alone, as Br. Johnson does not go this spring in consequence of the ill health of his wife. But, if God is with us, all will be well. You see by Br. Witherwax's letter the state of feelings of this church in relation to you. I trust God will direct you. You will not fail to attend the convention at least. I failed of taking up the collection for the magazine, as I expected, through a variety of causes, but will leave the money with Dr. W. for the two volumes. I would be glad to have it hereafter sent to me to Oregon, if you can direct; if not, it must be discontinued at present. Should you finally think it your duty to come to this Territory, perhaps you will do well not to expect anything positively from Bloomington.

Yours truly,

EZRA FISHER.

P. S.—The brethren here wish to have you come to this place and devote your labors entirely to this place and the immediate vicinity.

Yours, E. FISHER.

Address on back:

Elder Brabrook,
Upper Alton,
Ill.

Rock Island, Ill., April 11th, 1845.

Dear Br. Hill:

Yours of March 29th came to hand the last mail. I had made arrangements with Br. E. F. Calkins to advance the funds on the drafts and consequently we were almost ready for our long and laborious journey. Our clothing and provisions are all loaded and we expect to cross the river early in the morning. I am almost worn down by the fatigue of preparation, but trust with common blessings to improve when once on our journey. We hope to be able to reach Independence before the last company leaves for Oregon.⁸¹

I will make the report up to the present from March the 14th in brief. I have preached eleven sermons. Spent most of my time in preparation for my journey. Delivered one public address at the request of the citizens of Davenport on the subject "Agricultural and Commercial and Moral Prospects of Oregon." Attended six prayer and two conference meetings. Visited six families. Attended Sabbath school twice and addressed the school once. Received three dollars towards my salary. All the remaining, I am pained to say, my press of business obliges me to leave unattended to. I regret exceedingly that I should have been the cause of the slightest disquietude, either to yourself or [to] the Board. I trust I have the soul of a Christian and would not willingly wound the feelings of an enemy, much less those of the guardians of the cause of American Baptist missions. If I know my own heart, I have only sought explanations, and the farthest possible would I be from censuring either you or the Board. You say we do not find any memorandum of a letter of the 4th of Nov. I have a letter now in my hand dated the 4th of Nov., 1844, and in the one under date of Nov. 29 you state: "I wrote you on the 2d instant, etc." Now I think you may find your memorandum by referring to the 2nd of Nov. instead of the 4th. After leaving Syracuse, where I last parted with you personally, I did not

⁸¹ See note 78.

reach Iowa so soon by some weeks as I expected in consequence of the extremely bad traveling. Your appointment was here some time before my arrival. I consequently reported from the time I commenced labor in the Territory and not from the time of the date of the commission, and, when I received the commission of the 1st of May, I finished the six months' service before I commenced reporting under that commission, and I suppose there is the place where originated all our misunderstanding. I supposed my former reports had been acceptable, hence I supposed you would not expect a quarterly report before the 15th of March. Had I known your expectations, I should most cheerfully have reported the 1st of February. You sent me a draft of \$41.67, yet, according to my calculation, but \$31.70 would be my due up to the present date and but \$29 up to the 1st of April. As the expense of my outfit has been much greater than I expected and the sum I will have to take with me after the making of the outfit is so small, I concluded to order the whole paid and will be willing to make the deduction from the next appointment's salary, should your Board request it. I shall start from this place with about \$240.00 and we shall be at about \$50 charges in getting to Independence. In view of my pecuniary situation, the friends in this place gave me a collection for my personal benefit amounting to \$8.70, after preaching a sermon on the subject of the Oregon Mission, and after a similar manner the people in Davenport raised me about \$11.60, as a token of sympathy for me in the sacrifice they regard me now making. I name this that you may see that our friends here approve of our undertaking and bid us God speed. I regret exceedingly that Br. Johnson will not go this year.

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—I trust I shall soon have a fellow laborer and that I now have the prayers of all the members of the Board. I feel often greatly to distrust my adaptation to so important an enterprise, yet I trust God is my helper, and only through

His strength shall I prove a blessing to the cause of our precious Redeemer.

Yours, E. F.

St. Joseph,⁸² Missouri, on the East Bank of Missouri River,
May 14, 1845.

Dear Br. Hill:

We left Rock Island on the 5th of April. Spent the Sabbath in Davenport, where I preached twice. Were affectionately received by the brethren, and on the 7th commenced our journey, after singing a missionary hymn and publicly commending ourselves and the mission we anticipate to the care of Him who rules the hearts of men, being accompanied on our way two miles by three brethren and seven miles by another. Rested and preached [on the Sabbaths] except the last, when we were obliged to pitch our tent on the preceding evening two miles from timber in the midst of a broad prairie. Our journey has been fatiguing, yet on the whole our health has improved. We have now 14 wagons in company and suppose there are at least 50 behind; yet, lest we may be disappointed in falling in with their company, we have judged it prudent to move over into the Indian territory immediately. And now, while I am writing in my tent, some of the teams are crossing the Missouri River. We find our route will be something more than 100 miles nearer and, at the same time, impeded with less water courses than it would have been by Independence. Therefore I suppose I have failed of receiving an important letter from you. I trust, however, that you will forward me a letter to Oregon City, Oregon Territory, by ship, through the medium of the Methodist Mission Agency in your city, so that I may receive it on my arrival at that place.

The spirit of immigration is great this year, yet it is impracticable to tell exactly the number of souls which will

⁸² St. Joseph and other points along the Missouri in this vicinity, such as Independence, Liberty and Westport, were frequent points of rendezvous, as they were convenient places from which to start up the Platte Valley, the emigrant route. See also note 79.

cross the mountains this summer.⁸³ 200 wagons have already passed this place and the immediate vicinity, and probably twice that number have passed Independence. It is judged that from 5000 to 15,000 souls will pass the mountains this summer. Br. Johnson probably will not go this summer, yet I trust that he will next spring. If not, I think your Board will not delay to have a missionary ready next spring for Oregon. I am more and more convinced of the importance of the enterprise and desire to become more like our Divine Master in temper and activity in His cause. But God must bless, or all is in vain. The care of the camp at this particular time urges brevity. When we arrive at Fort Laramie I will probably write you again. I hope to be able to keep a journal through my journey.

Yours in great haste,

EZRA FISHER.

Indian Territory, Nemaha Agency, 25 miles west of St. Joseph, Mo., May 23, 1845.

Dear Br. Hill:

At the suggestion of Br. Johnson, I submit to you the proceedings of the meeting of the New London Emigration Company for Oregon, of which Br. Johnson and myself, with our families, form a part.

At a meeting of the emigrants convened at this place, on motion Elder E. Fisher was called to the chair and J. H. Rinearson was appointed secretary.

On motion a committee of seven were appointed to draft a constitution and rules for the government of the company on their way to Oregon, to-wit: Ezra Fisher, A. Hackelman, Eckenburg, Knox, Gallaheir, Hezekiah Johnson and Wm. Bruck. Adjourned to 2 o'clock P. M.

⁸³ The immigration to Oregon in 1845 was the largest up to that time. Bancroft says that it numbered about 3,000. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:508. About 150 more went to California. Bancroft, *Hist. of Cal.* IV:571. British officers in Oregon in 1845-1846 estimated the immigration at 2,000. Warre and Vavasour, ed. by J. Schafer, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* X:50.

2 o'clock P. M. company convened; the chairman called to order. The committee submitted the following constitution and rules, which were unanimously adopted:⁸⁴

CONSTITUTION.

Article 1st. This Company shall be called the New London Emigrating Company for Oregon.

Art. 2d. All persons uniting with the company shall be bound by the regulations hereinafter provided.

Art. 3d. All male members over the age of sixteen years shall have the right to vote in the business transactions of the company.

Art. 4th. The officers of this company shall consist of a Captain, Lieutenant, Orderly Lieutenant, Sergeant of the Guard, Engineer and a Committee of Five, who shall be elected each four weeks, except the Engineer and Sergeant of the Guard, who shall be appointed by the Captain.

Art. 5th. Captain to maintain good order and strict discipline and to enforce all rules adopted by this company. It shall be the duty of the Lieutenant to take charge of the cattle and to call out a sufficient number of men and boys not engaged in driving teams to drive and take care of the loose cattle, and he shall be subject to the order of the Captain. It shall be the duty of the Orderly Sergeant to keep a fair roll of the names of all the men subject to duty. It shall be the duty of the Engineer to remove any obstruction in the road and select the most suitable places for encampment. It shall be the duty of the Committee to settle all matters of difference between two or more persons in said company, according to the evidence in the case. Any person or persons that may feel themselves aggrieved at the decision of the Committee shall have the right of appeal to the company, provided that parties in dispute shall not be allowed to vote,

⁸⁴ It was customary for the emigrant parties to adopt constitutions. One of the emigration of 1844, for instance, was published in the *New York Herald* in January, 1845, and the author may have seen it, for the two constitutions resemble each other in many ways. *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* III:407.

and a decision of a majority of the voters shall be final except in criminal cases, which shall require a vote of two-thirds.

Art. 6th. Those who have loose cattle shall provide hands to drive in proportion to the number owned.

Art. 7th. Any person attaching himself to his company shall be bound not to take more than one quart of ardent spirits to each person in his family, and in no case shall any individual let it be known to the Indians that there is any in the company; and it shall be the duty of the Judicial Committee to examine each wagon to see that this article is not violated.

Art. 8th. When the company may have opportunity to hold religious assemblies, any person violating the rules of decorum or disturbing such worshipping congregation shall be taken into custody by the Judicial Committee and shall be dealt with according to its decision; and it shall be the duty of the company to rest on each Sabbath, except in cases of emergency.

Art. 9th. This constitution may be altered or amended at any regular meeting of the company by a vote of two-thirds of the legal voters.

Br. Johnson and family are here and our company will move forward tomorrow.

Our company consists of 50 wagons, 214 souls and about 666 head of cattle. 275 wagons have already passed this point before us, and about 1000 souls. It is uncertain how many have left Independence. We have heard of one company which left that place with 500 wagons and another which have left, the number not yet learned at this place.

We have in our company 30 Baptist professors, including Br. Johnson's family and my own, 5 Methodists, 2 Presbyterians, 2 Cumberland Presbyterians, 5 Associate Reformed Presbyterians, 2 Seceders, 1 Anti-missionary Baptist, 1 Campbellite Baptist and 1 Dunkard Baptist.

Last year an Elder Snelling from the Platte country moved to Oregon with a small organized Baptist church.⁸⁵

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Will you publish this entire in the Baptist Advocate? I suppose our company is the first that ever observed the Lord's day in crossing the Rocky Mountains. We feel that we need your prayers.

The Indian Agent, Major Wm. P. Richardson, has rendered us every facility and has invited us to participate in the hospitality of his family. His wife is an excellent Methodist lady. We have been here one week. In about 150 miles we shall probably find a hard gravel road and short buffalo grass, salt enough for our stock. You will probably hear from us when we reach Fort Laramie, 650 miles from this.

Yours truly,

EZRA FISHER.

We are all in good health and the company in fine spirits. I spent last Sabbath with the Presbyterian Mission at this place and preached once, and, on Wednesday last, attended prayer meeting at this place and we had an affecting scene. I addressed the meeting about twenty minutes. Mr. Hamilton, the superintendent, is a godly man.

Fort Laramie,⁸⁶ Indian Territory, July 10, 1845.

Dear Br.:

By the grace of God we have been preserved through dangers and fatigues about 1000 miles on our journey and we are now in comfortable health, although Mrs. Fisher has had a slight attack of the fever, occasioned no doubt from exposure and excessive fatigues on the Platte River. The multiplied labors of the camp and the great anxiety of the emigrants to progress on their journey almost entirely preclude

⁸⁵ See note on letter of Jan. 10, 1845. This was either incorrect information, or the church disbanded on or before reaching Oregon, as the first Baptist church in Oregon was organized in May, 1844. The next two were organized in 1846.

⁸⁶ Fort Laramie was not the present city of Laramie, but was a fur traders' post on the south side of the Platte, near its junction with the Laramie fork.

the opportunity of performing anything like missionary labor on our way. In this respect we are somewhat disappointed, yet we hope to exert in some measure a restraint over them which will be salutary hereafter. When we left the Nimaha Agency, we hoped to be able to influence the company in which we then were to rest on the Lord's day, but we soon found that every circumstance was construed into a case of emergency, except those manifest providences in which it became impracticable to move. You have no conception of the influence such a journey exerts for the time being upon the character of moral, and even professedly Christian men. Every man's interest seems to conflict with that of his neighbor, and still they must live in a community to a certain extent. We have preached but three Sabbaths since we left the Nimaha Agency, and been constrained, notwithstanding every remonstrance, to travel a few miles, sufficient to throw the camp in confusion every other Sabbath. But the days of this pilgrimage are comparatively short and we hope and trust the trials will the better fit us for faithfully serving our common Lord in the land to which we are directing our steps. May Almighty God grant us the desire of our hearts.

Our roads since we crossed the Missouri River have been the best we ever saw in any country and at present our greatest fears are that the long season of drought will render the feed so poor and scarce that our cattle will suffer. We have suffered but little for want of water as yet, and we are now approaching a region of springs and perpetual snow, so that we have but little to fear from that score. We expect it will be at least twelve or thirteen weeks more before we reach the field of our future labors, and we know not whether we shall be able to write you again till that time. I am now writing, seated on a buffalo robe in the open air under a scorching sun (I would suppose the thermometer would range between 86 and 96 degrees), with the bottom of a fallen wash tub in my lap for a table and in the midst of the confusion of the camp. You must therefore tax your patience in deciphering these hieroglyphics. Our wagons are

now undergoing repairs, having become shrunk almost beyond your conception by protracted and excessive heat from the sun and sand. Probably in two days we shall be on our line of march. As near as we can calculate, about 600 wagons are in advance of us and probably about 100 are behind us, and it will be almost a fair estimate to reckon 425 souls to every hundred wagons.⁸⁷

Yours in haste,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Br. Johnson and family are with us and in good health. He requests me to say that, as he is preparing a letter for the Cross and Journal and his time is all employed in that and the multiplied cares of the camp, he cannot write at this time. He sends his respects to yourself and Board.

Yours, E. F.

Snake River, 7 miles above the Salmon Falls, Oregon Territory, Sept. 12th, 1845.

Dear Br. Hill:

I this day am happy to meet Dr. White,⁸⁸ the Indian agent for Oregon, on his way to your city and Washington. It affords us peculiar pleasure to state to you and your Board that by the abounding grace of the All Wise God, Br. Johnson, myself and our families have been preserved through a fatiguing journey of about 2000 miles by ox team and that we are now in health and within about 670 miles of our journey's end. The fatigues of our journey perpetually pressing upon us forbid our doing much directly by preaching the word of God, yet we hope soon to be placed where we may labor directly for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the new and rising colony with whom our interests are soon to be identified. We feel as much as ever interested in the enterprise and our hopes are as high, although we feel

⁸⁷ This estimate was apparently nearly correct. See note 83.

⁸⁸ Elijah White, M. D., had arrived in Oregon in 1837 as a member of the Methodist mission. He was appointed United States sub-Indian agent for the Oregon Country in 1842. He was now on his way to Washington bearing to Congress a memorial of the Legislature of the Provisional Oregon Government, and on business concerning his office. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:155, 254, 481-6.

convinced that we will have to meet all the peculiarities of a new country.

May God give us grace to acquit ourselves faithfully in His fear. Dr. White gives a flattering account of the colony, as you will learn by a personal interview with him, which you will doubtless have. I have but a moment's time to write, as our camps are on the eve of moving and Dr. W. is in the same condition.

We hope to reach the place of our destination in about 8 weeks, if God will give us a share in your petitions to the Father of all our blessings, that we may have grace to plant and water churches in the true apostolic spirit.

I have not time to write to our relatives in the state of N. York. You will confer a favor on us and them, should you insert a note in the Baptist Register stating that we are all in health.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., February 26th, 1846.

Dear Brother:

After a protracted journey of more than seven and a half months and a distance of more than 2500 miles,⁸⁹ we now find ourselves situated in the lower part of Oregon in the midst of an extremely interesting country, but in all the rudeness of nature. Consequently you will not be disappointed when you learn the true state of society as it ex-

⁸⁹ A quotation from a letter of a fellow immigrant of the same train as the author throws an interesting sidelight on the trip.

"Another trial that one has often to meet on the way is disregard for the Sabbath. I suppose there was about as much contention on that subject in the company in which I came as any other. A good part of the company cared nothing about that, or any other religious question, and if it suited them they wished to travel on that day as well as any other. And even then when they did stop on that day it was only to mend their wagons or wash their clothes. I do not say that all did this, for there were some of our company that were devotedly pious. There were three ministers in the company; one a Seceder minister from about Burlington [this was T. J. Kendall, D. D.]. The other two were Baptist ministers, one from Iowa, the other from Rock Island County, Illinois, whose name was Fisher. . . . He manifested more of the true spirit of Christ while on the road than any other man with whom I was acquainted. . . . The company in which I came traveled, maybe, half of the Sabbaths on the way. We had preaching most of the days on which we stopped."—Letters of Andrew Rodgers, Jr., April 22, 1846, quoted in "The United Presbyterian" (Vol. 46, No. 2), Jan. 13, 1898, p. 10.

ists in this place and the surrounding country. I arrived with my family at the Tuallity Plains⁹⁰ about the 6th of December last, after traveling in the rains about 15 days and having occasional rains for the preceding month. When you learn that I walked further than would cover the whole distance of the journey, bearing my full proportional part of the services of the company, and that neither myself nor family laid off our clothing more than four or five nights during the whole journey, always sleeping in our tent on the ground, you will not be surprised that we were worn down with protracted fatigue and care. But a merciful Providence has sustained us all the way through the wilderness and blessed us with more than a usual measure of health and strength. Yet the last month I found my strength gradually yielding. On our arrival, although we were greeted with kindness by the few brethren we met, we did not find our lot cast in the midst of wealthy churches who were participating in the fruits of centuries of labours in civilization and Christianity. We were, however, kindly received into the cabin of Br. Lenox,⁹¹ where we have resided up to the present, and, although his house contains but one room, about 18 feet by 22, without a single pane of glass, and his family consists of 13 souls, besides, almost every night, one, two or three travelers, and my family consists of six souls, we have passed the winter thus far quite as pleasantly as you would imagine in view of the circumstances, and probably more so than a large portion of the last emigration, although perhaps a little more straitened for room.

With the exception of the last two weeks, our health, as a family, has been very good since our arrival. . . . The

⁹⁰ There is much obscurity surrounding the origin of the names Tualatin and Tuallaty. George H. Himes, from his investigations, believes Tualatin probably to be an Indian name meaning "a land without trees," describing the natural prairies of what is now Washington County; and Tuallaty (the accent on the penult) to be an Indian name meaning "a lazy man," describing the sluggish river. If this is true, Tualatin was the name applied to the plains, and Tuallaty to the river; but a confusion of the two early took place which ultimately resulted in applying Tualatin to both river and prairie. The plains had begun to be settled at least as early as 1840. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:244. They had at this time about 150 families, Canadians, half-breeds and Americans. Warre and Vavasour, ed. by J. Schafer, *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* X:75

⁹¹ See note 73.

amount of ministerial labor that I have been able to perform since our arrival would seem to a minister in the eastern or middle states to be trifling indeed. But were you in an entirely new country not reclaimed from the savages, with only one settler on each mile square and that only in the open plains, in the dead of winter, with the rains almost daily falling till all the small streams are swollen to swimming, and numbers of bridges, of which there are as yet but few, swept away, with all the cares of a family to be met, after eight months' consumption of provisions and clothing, where supplies are to be procured at distances of from ten to thirty miles,⁹² it will appear less strange. I have visited but little, have preached every Sabbath but three, and then my place was supplied by others, except once when journeying, the rains and the distance from neighbors prevented. Yet I am almost daily having intercourse with citizens from various parts of the country and, through that means, hope the way is opening for more extended labors in the opening of the spring, which is now beginning to make its appearance. I have established an evening spelling school for children of the family and one of the neighbors and a Bible class on Sabbath evenings in the same families. About twelve children attend regularly. . . .

As it relates to my views of the importance of the field we are now just entering, I am by no means discouraged, but on the whole have a growing conviction that I never in my life was placed in a more responsible relation; yet at the same time I feel borne down with the surrounding and opponent obstacles to extended usefulness. If you will not regard me desponding, I will name a few of them: First, we have but one church in Oregon⁹³ and only two of the mem-

⁹² The nearest points where supplies could be purchased were Oregon City and Portland. Pettygrove had established a store in the latter place in 1845 and Lovejoy had cut out a road to the Tualatin plains. They may also have been able to get a few supplies at Linnton. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:9.

Oregon City was begun in 1829-30 by Dr. McLoughlin and by 1845-6 had 300 inhabitants, two church buildings, about 100 dwelling houses and stores, a grist mill, and several sawmills. Warre and Vavasour, ed. by J. Schafer in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* X:47-51.

⁹³ The West Union Church on Tualatin Plains. See note 73.

bers living within 25 miles of the place, so that all efficiency by church organization is lost; and those that have emigrated the past season are generally poor and but just able to provide for their immediate wants. The forty or fifty Baptist members are scattered over an extent of country, perhaps 90 miles in length and 50 in breadth. Again, we are destitute of juvenile books and periodicals and books peculiar to the wants of our denomination. And then, the settlements are fast extending south and west and northwest to points which soon must rise to very considerable importance, and here are Br. Johnson and myself, with exhausted funds and beyond the reach of your aid for more than a year (and we must necessarily apply ourselves in part to procuring the means of present sustenance), with the labor of five or six men before us in the ministry, and that, too, at a time which most of all is the most favorable to give permanence and character to a rising nation. Do you ask how our means are exhausted so soon? We answer, that when we arrived at The Dalles exhausted of provisions, we paid \$8 per hundred for flour and \$6 for beef; at the Cascades, from \$6 to \$10 for flour and \$6 for beef, and on our arrival in the Plains we found flour worth from \$4 to \$5, and beef \$6 and pork \$10, fresh; sale shoes, coarse, \$3 per pair and custom work \$6; axes, \$4 each; nails, 16c per pound; coffee, 33½c per pound; common calico, from 25c to 62½c per yard; a common cast bake kettle, with a lid, from \$3 to \$6, when to be had at any price, and most of our wearing apparel is somewhat in the same proportion; school books cannot be had at any price.⁹⁴ Now, could our able brethren and pious, too, see and feel as we do the great reluctance with which we must leave the work in part to serve the present urgent wants of our families (and these wants must be still more urgent before we can get any remittances from your Board) would they not esteem it a pleasure to make up a box of common clothing, or clothes, laid in by their families, which will cover nakedness and ren-

⁹⁴ The first school books to be brought into Oregon in any quantity were by Dr. G. H. Atkinson in 1848.—Geo. H. Himes.

der the appearance of our children in the house of worship decent in Oregon? We are sure we do not covet the softest raiment for ourselves or families, but we do greatly desire to be able to give ourselves wholly to the work, and something in this way might lighten the expense of our support and add greatly to our usefulness.

The subject of education, too, allow me to say, rests with great weight on my mind. Judging charitably, with all the laudable efforts of our citizens, it is beyond their power to do much by way of educating their children while they have so much to provide for present animal wants, and are placed beyond the reach of books. Besides this, the greatest efforts made are those by Romans⁹⁵ and the Methodists. Now could we obtain a few school books so as to enable us to operate a common school, they would be of great service. I hope to be able to organize two or three churches, by the aid of Br. Snelling, and to explore generally the settlements above and visit the mouth of the Columbia and Puget Sound during the coming dry season, should Providence give us and our families life and health. We are often strengthened and encouraged by the reflection that we have the prayers and sympathies of many, very many, personal and dear Christian friends, as well as of many whom we shall never know till we see as we are seen and bow together around the throne of our exalted Redeemer.

Yours, E. F

Received July 22.

Oregon City, Feb 27th, 1846.

Dear Br. Hill:

The haste in which I write and the circumstances will be the only apology for the want of order in which the subjects

⁹⁵ A Catholic school for boys, "St. Joseph's College," was opened in 1843 at St. Paul, on French Prairie. The Sisters of Notre Dame opened a school for girls on French Prairie in 1844 and in Oregon City in 1848. E. V. O'Hara, *Pioneer Catholic History of Oregon*, pp. 123-125.

The boys' school at St. Paul's was closed in 1849, the girls' school in 1852, and the school at Oregon City in 1853. *Ibid.* pp. 129, 130.

The Methodist "Oregon Institute" (the precursor of Willamette University) was organized in 1842. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:201, 203.

are thrown together. What, however, you publish, you will cull out and arrange, as I would, had I paper and time before the return party leave this place.

I was upon the subject of education last night and I cannot leave it till I have still further urged its claim upon our churches at home. And here I will say that, with few exceptions, we have had very few schools in Oregon and most of those of a character such as might reasonably be expected in so new and remote a settlement. Our Methodist friends have a school in operation about 60 miles above this, in which are taught the branches usually taught in common schools in the States, with a male teacher part of the year, a female teacher through the year, about 40 scholars, and a spacious edifice completed. About 30 miles above this, the Roman Catholics are making a strong effort and this year they are erecting a large edifice to be devoted to the purposes of education and have a school in operation,⁹⁶ and I am credibly informed that they contemplate a similar institution on the Cowlitz. In both of these they propose to teach all the branches essential to a thorough education, without directly inculcating their peculiar religious tenets. The influence of this sect is becoming strong in this territory. I am informed by indubitable authority that there is not a place in the whole territory where the higher branches can be acquired except by a private teacher or in a Catholic school. We then need extremely a series of elementary books, geography, grammar, arithmetic, natural philosophy and other school books, but we have not the means of compensation except by exchanges. They would be purchased were they here, if wheat would buy them. Can we not have them? Again we are in perishing need of juvenile reading, such as the publications of the Am. Bap. Pub. Soc., and the religious periodicals of our denomination, both for young and old. We are almost in a heathen land so far as relates to the circulation of religious

⁹⁶ In March, 1846, Vavasour described the Roman Catholic Mission on French Prairie, as having "several large wooden buildings, two churches, dwelling houses and a nunnery." On the Cowlitz he mentioned the Catholic church as being near the settlement of about 19 families. *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* X:91, 93.

intelligence, while there is a readiness and eagerness on the part of citizens generally to read anything late from the States. Some of our numerous brethren in New York and Boston could easily send to Br. Johnson and myself the files of their own religious periodicals, after reading, without increasing their expenses. I know of no country where religious tracts would be read with more interest than in Oregon. I know Br. J. M. Peck to be emphatically a western pioneer, and through his influence and yours, may we not expect immediately an appropriation of the Am. Bap. Pub. Soc.'s publications for Oregon, a proportion of them advocating our denominational views and exhibiting the true character of popery? Should a box of clothing be made up for the relief of our families, allow me to state that common calico, shirting, any woolen clothing, either for men or women, or children between the size of infancy and manhood, shoes, half hose, or any articles of bedclothes would be very acceptable; our hats and shoes are literally worn out and Br. Johnson's boys have been barefooted, and little girls, too, all winter, and mine are candidates for the same treatment unless we get returns from New York or supply them and varied other demands by the labor of our hands.

Should your Board continue us in their employ, I shall need a large portion of the appropriation in clothing and books purchased by you in New York as I may designate in my reports, one of which I shall make and forward by the next return party after this, which will leave in April or May. I had forgotten to mention in the catalogue of our wants writing paper, an article not now in this city. Please send me a few reams and charge it to me from the next appropriation.

Hitherto I have but barely alluded to the field before us. The present population from the States is estimated at about five or six thousand souls, and, when once settled in their homes, will extend up the river about 120 miles above this and up the varied tributaries, and from this downward to the

lower mouth of the Willamette.⁹⁷ At the mouth of the Columbia a strong settlement is being made, and another on Pugette Sound. Our country below the Cascade Mountains is not extensive; yet, as far as I have seen, I think the fertility of the soil generally will exceed the description given by Lieutenant Wilkes and Mr. Townsend.⁹⁸

The truth is, it is in a great measure an unexplored country, except by trappers who have probably but little interest in judging of the fertility of the soil and still less in publishing it to the world. I have traveled down the north bank of the Columbia on foot from The Dalles to Vancouver; from Vancouver to the Tuallity Plains; through the Plains four times; from the Plains through the Chahalum Valley, across the Yam Hill River and up the Willamette Valley across the Rickreall about half the distance to the Luckymac,⁹⁹ making a distance from the Plains of about 80 miles; from the Tuallity Plains to this place twice, a distance of about 28 miles, and I think I hazard nothing when I give it as my opinion that its fertility is scarcely excelled by the same extent in the Mississippi Valley. In wheat it far exceeds in yield any part of the United States. The crop never fails by winter killing, by blight or by insects, and produces from ten to more than fifty bushels to the acre of the best wheat I ever saw. All the small grains and vegetables do well as far as tried and turnips excel anything I ever saw. The climate is remarkably mild during the winter, although rainy, and is said to be extremely fine during the spring, summer and autumn. It is ascertained that there is a large extent of country north of

⁹⁷ This estimate of the American population of Oregon seems about correct. See F. G. Young, *The Oregon Trail, Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* 1:370.

The history of the settlement at Astoria is well known. The Methodists occupied Clatsop plains in 1840. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:185, 188. It was rather optimistic, however, to call the settlements here and on Puget Sound "strong." The American settlement at the latter point had only just begun, and was very small. Bancroft, *Hist. of Wash., Idaho and Montana*, pp. 1-5.

⁹⁸ Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, commander of the U. S. Exploring Expedition of 1838-42, was in Oregon in 1841. His "Narrative" was published in five volumes in Philadelphia in 1844. A "Synopsis of the U. S. Exploring Expedition during the years 1838-41," appeared earlier. Bancroft, *Hist. of N. W. Coast*, pp. 670-683.

John K. Townsend was a naturalist who was in Oregon in 1834-6. His "Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River" appeared in Philadelphia in 1839. *Ibid.* p. 577.

⁹⁹ Probably the Luckiamute, a stream in Polk County.

the mouth of the Columbia reaching to the Sound and back perhaps more than a hundred miles, much of which is open and fertile, susceptible of immediate settlement. The country of the Umpqua, the Rogue and the Clamet¹⁰⁰ is represented as remarkably fertile and somewhat extensive. New towns must soon rise up on the river, both above and below us. At the mouth of the Columbia and on the Puget Sound there must soon spring up small cities whose extent and importance will in a great measure be determined by the intelligence, virtue and enterprise of the people of the tributary country. Our climate, our soil, our timber and our water power conspire to render our resources, when developed, great, for the extent of the territory, beyond that of any country I ever saw. But with all these facilities, we greatly need a few discreet young brethren, with perhaps families, who love our Lord and His cause, who can teach and operate upon the mind of the rising generation in bringing them to adopt correct views in all the social and moral relations of man. We also greatly need brethren, with families, who know how to feel and act for the wants of the church, with whom ministers may counsel and execute.

In truth the door is fast opening for business men on the coast as well as in the interior, and the facilities for emigrating from the eastern states are about as good, if not better, by water than by land. Five hundred dollars invested in clothing or mechanics' tools in New York or Boston is better than the same amount in cattle and wagons in Missouri, and then emigrants might sail in the fall and arrive in the spring in time to make a crop.

You can forward any papers or boxes from New York or Boston or other port by any ship bound to the mouth of the Columbia. The firm of Cushing, Newbury Port, will prob-

¹⁰⁰ The Klamath. For the different spellings of the name, see Frederick V. Holman, *History of the Counties of Oregon*, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* XI:55. Clamet was the spelling given in Elijah White's "Ten Years in Oregon."

ably send out one vessel each year.¹⁰¹ The firm of A. G. & A. W. Benson, No. 19 Old Slip, New York, will probably send one vessel each six months. Should you send by any vessel direct to either Br. Johnson or myself, Oregon City, Oregon Territory, to the care of E. O. Hall, Financier of the A. B. C. F. M., Honolulu, Oahu Island, and pay the freight, he will forward such packages or boxes to us.

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—It is due to Br. Johnson to state that his family has suffered much with the camp fever¹⁰² since their arrival in this place, but through a kind Providence their lives are all spared and their health is gradually returning. Sister J. is beginning to take the charge of the family. We design fixing our families near this place the coming season, sustaining preaching regularly each Sabbath, traveling as much as we can and searching out the scattered sheep.

Tuallity Plains, Tuallity Co., Oregon, April 17, 1846.

Dear Br. Hill:

I have just learned that the return party to the States will leave Oregon City on Monday. It is now late at night, and my last chance for sending is early tomorrow morning. I can therefore do nothing more than sketch a few lines in the greatest haste. The mercies of God are still passing before us, giving us life and health as a family. We find presented almost daily opportunities of contributing to the formation of the moral character of the people of our Territory. Yet we find everything so dissimilar to anything we ever experienced that we often feel placed almost beyond religious privileges as you are wont to enjoy them in the States.

¹⁰¹ F. W. Pettygrove, at Oregon City, had come out as agent of A. G. and A. W. Benson in 1842. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:422. The firm of John and Caleb Cushing of Newburyport had sent a ship to Oregon City as early as 1839 (it arrived in 1840) and in 1846 another of their ships appeared in Oregon. H. W. Scott (ed), *Hist. of Portland*, p. 86.

¹⁰² Camp fever was much like dysentery or typhoid fever. It was sometimes called mountain fever.—George H. Himes.

The population as yet must, from the nature of the case, be very sparse and, as the settlements are somewhat remote from each other, it renders the labors of a missionary difficult, situated as we are at this time many thousands of miles from home and with exhausted funds. We cannot reasonably expect any supplies from your Board for at least twelve months. With these obstacles before us we do not despair, but must be pained while we are obliged to minister to our temporal wants temporarily, and hence limit greatly our field of labour. I have pretty nearly concluded to teach a school a few months, as soon as we get settled, as the most convenient method of promoting the moral and religious condition of the people. I have just returned from the mouth of the Columbia River. I find it an interesting part of the country, and to all probability, should the emigration continue as we have reason to anticipate, the commercial point for the Willamette Valley and a great portion of the Territory must be located either where Astoria once stood or between that and the mouth of the river. I found about thirty or forty log cabins in this vicinity occupied by families and bachelors. On the south side of the river about the mouth is a tract of rich land large enough for a small county, susceptible of cultivation, but mostly timbered. That portion now occupied is mostly plains, and portions of the timbered land would be more easily cleared and put under cultivation than most of the timbered land in New York.¹⁰³ The climate is remarkably salubrious. Nothing but the small number of people and the distance of this point from the present populous part of Oregon will prevent me from fixing my family in this vicinity and labouring from this point. Even now my convictions are so strong of the relative importance of this point and of the probable future character of its population, that I may in a few months deem it my duty to take my family to that place.

¹⁰³ The history of Astoria is too well known to need repetition here. The Clatsop Plains were apparently first settled by whites in 1840 when the Methodist Mission established a station there. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:185.

This station was ordered sold out in 1844. *Ibid.* I:221.

I still preach on Sabbaths and visit only as I travel from place to place.

Your Board may be desirous of knowing what will be necessary to enable us to devote ourselves to the ministry. I think that after fixing our location we can support the family, should the Board see fit to make an appropriation of \$150 or \$200 the first year, and hope we may be blessed with favor of the people so that we can afterward live on a less sum. Should your Board make an appropriation for another year, we wish you to put us up a box of the following articles and pay for the same from the appropriation: 1 pair no. 9 thick calf-skin boots; 1 pair of calf-skin shoes no. 4, women's; 2 pair of no. 3 shoes, boys'; 2 pair of children's shoes for a girl 7 years old, and 2 pair for a girl 4 years; 2 bolts of common calico, dark coloured, worth 12 or 15 cents per yd; 10 yards of Kentucky janes and 4 yards of black cassimere; 20 yards of woolen linsey, plaid, for children's dresses; 25 spools of common sewing thread; 8 pounds of cotton batting; 1 cast bake kettle, with lid, that will hold about ten quarts; 1 large octavo Bible and five or six spelling books. We are in an entirely new country and have little or no crockery or cooking utensils at any price. You will probably get the box on board Mr. Benson's ship bound for the mouth of the Columbia; if not, direct to me as one of your missionaries, Oregon City, Oregon Territory, to the care of E. A. Hall, Financier of the A. B. C. F. M. at Honolulu, Oahu, one of the Sandwich Islands, and it will probably come safe.

Yours truly,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Aug. 19, 1846.

Oregon City, Oregon Territory, Aug. 15th, 1846.

Dear Br. Hill:

I am at this time on a visit to this place with Mrs. Fisher and to spend the Sabbath, and have just learned that Mr.

Stark, supercargo of the *Tulon*,¹⁰⁴ leaves this place on Monday morning, and I have but an hour to write and that too in a visiting circle. I have many things to write, which I intend to do before winter, but must dispense with order at this time. We are all in tolerable health and presume Br. Johnson's family are, although we have not yet seen them since coming in town. You can have but little conception of our feelings at the present. We find Oregon emphatically presenting a most interesting field for missionary labor, but quite dissimilar to any we have formerly occupied, and our circumstances widely different. I wish you to be assured that we are not at all inclined to complain of the allotments of Providence. They are all in mercy. And it becomes us to rejoice that we may endure hardness for the cause of Christ so long as duty and necessity demand it. But rest assured, dear brother, I tell you the sentiments of my inmost soul when I say I have no desire to become secular when I see a civilized nation (shall I say) bursting into existence on the dark side of the globe, with a character entirely unformed and less elevated than that of Iowa or Missouri, and removed thousands of miles from the moral and religious influence of old and established institutions of morality and religion. Your means of communication are easy and direct throughout the entire states and territories drained by the waters of the Mississippi, and even through Texas; but here we are, separated by great mountain and desert barriers, or a voyage of more than 20,000 miles by sea, surrounded by heathen near at hand, by Romans all along the southern coast line, with the isles of the sea waiting for the law of God and some in the very act of receiving it. What can be done must be done or our opportunities for doing as a denomination will be largely lost. A country is now settled, at favoured points, about as large as half the state of Illinois, and we are expecting large accessions the coming fall. Then the most import-

¹⁰⁴ The "*Tulon*," Captain Nathaniel Crosby, first came to Oregon from New York in 1845. For a number of years beginning with 1846, it made trips from Oregon to the Hawaiian Islands. Benjamin Stark, Jr., was supercargo. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 11:16, 48.

ant points will be seized upon with great eagerness, if it is true, as we fondly hope, that the notice bill¹⁰⁵ is passed by both branches of our national legislature and become a law. We see Romanism taking root in our soil and special effort being made to secure the influence of the leading men in our colony and to establish schools for the education of our children and youth. We have already three churches, if they may be called churches,¹⁰⁶ and members favourably located to organize two or three more; besides, we must soon look after more important interests than any already brought into existence, or entirely leave the seaboard to others. My heart bleeds at this view of things, while I find myself confined in school as the best way temporarily to exert a limited influence while I provide my family with the present necessities of life. With this state of things before us, we have but three Baptist ministers in good standing in the churches,¹⁰⁷ and the other two are more confined than myself. We know your Board does not expect we will exhaust our physical powers for the bread that perishes, and, were you here to view things as they are, you would lift up your voice in the churches till we were liberated from the necessity of serving tables, or say, We will leave you to your ways, but appoint more faithful laborers in this vineyard of our common Lord. You know what we have to expect from the first emigrants from Missouri and Iowa. It is too much to expect to be thrown into the bosom of affectionate churches who sympathize with the faithful ministry and study to make his labors delightful.¹⁰⁸ Men do not rejoice at the sound of the gospel even here; but we feel strongly assured that the time is not far distant when all the discouragements peculiar to

105 The bill provided for twelve months' notice to Great Britain of the termination of the joint occupancy of the Oregon agreement of 1818. The news of the passage of the notice bill did not reach Oregon until a number of days after this letter was written. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:589.

106 These three Baptist churches were at West Union (Tualatin Plains), La Creole (Polk County), and Yamhill (South Yamhill). Mattoon, *Bapt. Annals of Ore.* I:1-4.

107 The three Baptist ministers were Rev. Vincent Snelling, Rev. Hezekiah Johnson, and the author. Mattoon, *Bapt. Annals of Ore.* I:43-50.

108 Baptists from these western states and territories were not yet accustomed to supporting the ministry of the church.

a new country and an extremely fluctuating population will give place to the order and efficiency which the gospel of Christ so forcibly inculcates. At present I am teaching school, as I have intimated, in Tuallity Plains, 25 or 26 miles N. W. from this place, but greatly fear that my lungs will not allow me to continue in that employment. I preach and superintend a Sabbath school on the Sabbath, or preach and visit abroad Saturdays and Sabbaths. Two weeks today and tomorrow I assisted in organizing a small church near the mouth of the Yam Hill River,¹⁰⁹ and on Sabbath presented to the public the peculiarities of our denomination in a sermon of about an hour and at the close baptized a brother of some talent who wished to prepare for the ministry. The three churches now organized are most favorably located, being organized so that their future place of worship must unavoidably be at the county seats of three important counties on the Willamette River. But our brethren are in a new country and have everything to do to render their families comfortable, and have not been formerly trained to the principles so happily carried out by our Pilgrim fathers in the settlements of Plymouth and Boston. I preach every Sabbath. We have a Sabbath school, in connection with other denominations, and Bible class consisting in all of about 25 scholars and 5 teachers; ten of the children are of Baptist families, and three teachers. I superintend the school when at home. Four days in June I attended a camp-meeting of the Congregational Church in the upper plain ten miles from my present residence and participated as much as my strength would admit. Our labors were blessed, and it is hoped that some ten or twelve souls were truly converted. . . .

Tell our brethren that tracts and Sunday school books are greatly needed, and we feel that we cannot be denied this request as soon as a package can be made up and sent. Our brethren will not forget to send us files of religious periodi-

¹⁰⁹ This was the church at South Yamhill, twelve miles or so from the mouth of the river. Mattoon fails to mention the author's part in this organization, giving only the names of Snelling and Johnson. Mattoon, *Bapt Annals of Ore.* 1:5.

icals. We have now been cut off from all the blessings of religious periodicals and literally shut out of the religious world for 17 months except that we find occasionally an angel visitor of this kind in a Pedo-baptist paper. We trust it is our love for the cause of Christ in Oregon which has led us to forego, with our young families, all these privileges. Shall our wants meet with a response from the hearts and hands of our brethren in the Atlantic states? We maintain a weekly prayer meeting and Mrs. Fisher and our little daughter, with two other young females not yet baptized, sustain a weekly prayer meeting. I visit but little as a minister, but embrace every opportunity I can for that purpose. I must close this for want of paper and time, but hope I shall be able to fill another sheet before the Tulon leaves the mouth of the Columbia. If possible, we must have two good Baptist teachers sent out from east of the Alleghany Mountains immediately and I think they will find support. Remember us affectionately to our dear brethren in New York.

Yours truly,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Feb. 5, 1847.

Tuallity Plains, Tuallity County, Oregon Ter.,
Aug. 19th, 1846.

Dear Br. Hill:

Since last writing, learning that the Tulon may be delayed a few days at the mouth of the Columbia and being about to visit Clatsop and the coast immediately north of the mouth of the Columbia, I hope to be in time to forward you another sheet. Consequently, I hasten to communicate another letter. We returned from Oregon City on the 17th. Found our family in usual health. . . .As it relates to the character of our Baptist brethren with whom we have to co-operate, they are mostly from the upper part of Missouri, with a very considerable number of Baptists from Iowa. . . . We have some few who have been accustomed to work in prayer meetings and Sabbath schools and would like to

see the ministry devoted to their appropriate calling, but as yet very little can be realized by way of ministerial support. Yet I think the time is near at hand when the brethren will take a gospel view of the subject and carry out the gospel plan. We greatly need a few working brethren located at favoured points for business and influence in Oregon. It is not difficult to see where those points will be. Such brethren as could engage in farming, lumbering, mechanic arts, such as are indispensable to a new country, and in the salmon fisheries will find that a small capital judiciously invested, with industry, would soon enable them to rise to competency and probably to affluence. I have never seen a country where, at so early a period in its history, so many avenues are opened to reward the industrious as are found in Oregon. . . . We greatly need a few efficient brethren who have formed their habits east of the Alleghany Range. It is as easy for brethren to come by water direct to the mouth of the Columbia, to Vancouvers Island or Pugets Sound, which are certainly among the most favored points in our country, as for the inhabitants of Missouri to cross the Rocky Mountains by ox teams. The time has already come when money or merchandise will buy neat stock at no very extravagant prices in New York or Massachusetts. Whoever can reach the Sandwich Islands will be able soon to find a passage to the mouth of the Columbia.

I wrote you in my last that we greatly needed two good teachers. My reasons are these: 1. I think they will undoubtedly be able to sustain themselves. 2. The Romans are now very industrious in attempting to occupy every important point with a school. I was credibly informed that a proposition was recently made by a priest to the proprietors of Portland, the highest point which merchant vessels reach on the Willamette, to build a church and establish a permanent school in the place, if the proprietors would give the site and pledge their attendance on the services of the

Roman Church.¹¹⁰ A somewhat similar proffer has been made to some of the settlers of the Clatsop Plains south of the mouth of the Columbia, if my informant, a resident of said Plains, is to be relied upon, and I think him a man of veracity.

I have taught one quarter and probably I shall teach another, commencing about the first of October, if my lungs will allow me to teach and preach: if not, I must abandon teaching and find some other employment sufficient to sustain my family till relief comes from your Board, should it decide that a mission must be sustained here. Our Pedobaptist friends have very freely expressed to me the opinion that I ought to have gone to Oregon City. But as the circumstances are and Br. Johnson seems desirous of remaining, I have for months been decidedly of the opinion that I should hold myself in readiness to make my home at or near the mouth of the Columbia, as soon as our brethren in this region will give their consent and Providence opens the door. I rejoice to be able to say that quite unexpectedly to me our brethren are now adopting my views, and the probability is that by next summer settlements will become sufficiently extended on the coast to justify my removal to that point. . . . We need men in Oregon who desire to magnify the office of the ministry and love it more than all pursuits. We need more ministers, but we shall doubtless be better able to say what the character and qualifications should be after the arrival of the forth-coming emigration; volunteer ministers will probably come then and we shall then probably have an opportunity of writing you by way of the Sandwich Islands. We shall probably need one more at least in the Willamette Valley, one at Vancouver and one in the neighborhood of Pugets Sound before you can commission and send them out. The coast and Vancouver will probably be peopled with an enterprising and intelligent people.

¹¹⁰ There seems to be no other record of this offer. If it was ever made it was not accepted. The first Catholic chapel was not erected in Portland until 1851, and not until 1859 was the first Catholic school opened in Portland. *Hist. of Portland, Ore.*, ed. by H. W. Scott, pp. 348, 394.

I think Br. Johnson and myself will need \$200 cash another year to enable us to devote ourselves to the work, and, should we place ourselves so as to stop our rents and keep a little stock, perhaps we can live with that by subjecting our families to taking charge of our little temporals. Probably one half of that in such goods as families need in wearing apparel and articles of furniture would be as convenient for us as the money, and, by this means, your Board may sustain its missionaries by the assistance of friends who would cheerfully contribute wearing apparel when money is out of the question.

Received Feb. 5, 1847.

Astoria, Clatsop County, Oregon Ter., Jan 4th, 1847.

Dear Brother Hill:

Being in daily expectation that the ship Tulon will leave the mouth of the river for the Sandwich Islands, I embrace this as the only opportunity I shall have till spring to address you by letter, and this will not reach you for eight or ten months, if ever.

Through the tender mercies of God, we are all in good health, except that I am confined to the house with a wound received from an axe in my foot last week. The wound, however, is doing well and will probably heal in two or three weeks. I will here remark that we probably have one of the most salubrious as well as mild climates in the world. But I have taken my pen for other purposes than to give a description of climate and soil and the beauties of the scenery. We have chosen this as our field of labor, should God graciously please to spare our unprofitable lives, although at present the population of the place and vicinity is small. This I have done from a strong conviction that the coast must soon become the most important part of the country and that, too, probably as soon as we shall be so situated as to be able to do much permanently for the cause. We feel a strong assurance that we shall soon enjoy a stability of

government which will give an impulse to emigration and commerce, and we trust that in the emigration we shall find some who care for the cause of Christianity and will cooperate with us for the promotion of the Kingdom of Christ on these shores. We have three Baptist sisters about ten miles from us on the Clatsop Plains, who have moved there since we came to this place, with whom we had a slight acquaintance in the States.¹¹¹ We are in expectation of other members in the spring or summer, and hope by that time to constitute a feeble church in this county. If we shall be able to do this, and to awaken in the community an interest in substituting religious order on the Sabbath for visiting, hunting and transacting worldly business, we shall feel that we have not lived in vain in Oregon. We feel the strongest conviction that ours is a very important position, although at present we labour under the greatest inconveniences of any of your missionaries. Your Board is my witness that I have not in years past made the privations of a missionary the burden of my communications with you. The duty I owe to Him who bought us with His own blood and ever lives to intercede in our behalf, as well as the relation I sustain to the Home Board of Missions and to our new and promising Territory, demands of me, however humiliating the task, a disclosure of facts. Before I proceed, I will state that to me, and I doubt not to the other two Baptist ministers labouring in Oregon, the work of the ministry is desirable above all other works, and I know of no field for which I have any desire to abandon Oregon. But what can a man do without his bread and his tools? To be sure, under the most adverse circumstances, something may be done for God every day, but we know it is not God's plan that Zion's teachers shall be removed into a corner, but that they shall be brought into sight and hearing, that she may hear the word: "This is the way, walk ye in it." We are all, as Baptist ministers, driven to the necessity of going to secular

¹¹¹ These were Mrs. Robinson and her two daughters, Mrs. Motley and Mrs. Thompson.

pursuits to give our families food, and but very insufficient raiment.

As a people, we are a colony removed far from all civilization and commerce, except what the small surplus products of our country attract. The consequence is a monopoly in commerce very oppressive to the community. Our settlers are generally industrious, and, should the Government grant them their lands, they are laying the foundation for wealth despite the temporary monopoly in trade with which they are oppressed.¹¹² As before stated, we have very few Baptist brethren who have been accustomed to see a minister sustained by the church, and those few are scattered so as to prevent anything like a systematic effort to aid in the support of the ministry. They love the gospel sound and delight in its ordinances, but ministers must travel far from settlement to settlement to preach. This creates a large tax on the time of the man who must leave the word of God and serve tables. Added to this, the rainy season five or six months in the year renders the roads in this new country very difficult to travel, and, when we travel by water, we have to go in open boats and sleep in the open air, perhaps in wet blankets, after rowing all day in the rain. These difficulties might and would be overcome were our hands liberated and our family cares abated. With the improvement of the country, the difficulties of traveling will soon be overcome, and are now probably as few as might reasonably be expected. . . . Our white American population now numbers nine or ten thousand souls scattered over a territory more than two hundred miles from Pugets Sound and this place to the headwaters of the Willamette, and is aided in science, religion and morals by only one printing press, and that issues a semi-monthly half sheet.¹¹³ Its proprietors

¹¹² Probably a reference to the Hudson Bay Company, which did most of the shipping at this time.—George H. Himes.

¹¹³ This was the Oregon Spectator which first appeared Feb. 5, 1846, under the editorship of W. G. T'Vault. H. S. Lyman, *Hist. of Ore.* IV:279. The spelling book was published Feb. 1, 1847. There were 800 copies, none of which are known to be extant in their complete form. The book was an abridgment of Webster's Elementary Spelling Book, about two-thirds the size of the original. Geo. H. Himes, *Hist. of the Press in Oregon*, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* 111:347.

have lately resolved to strike off 200 copies of Webster's elementary spelling-book somewhat abridged. You can form some estimate of our poverty and want. Probably not one family in three in the Territory has a spelling-book. I have no doubt men would gladly have paid one dollar per copy for spelling books for their children in the school which I taught last summer, but there was not a spelling-book at any price. We have a few Sunday school books sent out from New York. I suppose by Messrs. Benson and Co., or by benevolent friends, which have been of great value to the children and youth as far as enjoyed; and we have a few volumes of the publications of the American Tract Society and some tracts sent to Rev. Mr. Griffen, a Congregationalist.¹¹⁴

Our Methodist brethren are doing something towards supplying some of the children with juvenile books, their Sunday School Advocate, their hymn books, and some Bibles and Testaments; but all this is a very small fraction of what is greatly needed. I have not seen a Baptist periodical from the States for more than 20 months. I have omitted to mention that the country is almost destitute of all suitable elementary school-books and juvenile reading. It would do your heart good to see the eagerness with which a periodical, a tract or Sunday school book is seized upon and read by a large portion of our citizens. For example, when our eldest daughter of fifteen years, being engaged to teach a quarter, was sent for,¹¹⁵ a request came for hymn-books and any other suitable books so that they could have a Sunday school during her stay, and I had nothing but a few copies of the Divine Songs and a few tracts to send. Cannot our request be responded to, so that as missionaries we may be supplied with suitable tracts and juvenile books of the American Baptist Publication Society, with a fair proportion of the former exposing the evils of Romanism, and others vindicating our denominational peculiarities; also some Bibles and Testaments.

¹¹⁴ This was probably Rev. J. S. Griffen, who came to Oregon in 1839 (Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:238), sent by the North Litchfield Association of Connecticut.

¹¹⁵ This school was at Skipanon, near Warrenton, in Clatsop County.—Geo. H. Himes.

ments? I know there would be an effort made, if our brethren in the States were to feel our wants as we daily feel them. Imagine yourself and family of children surrounded by heathen and daily under their influence, and at the same time Romanism uniting its influence with heathenism to bring into disrepute the simplicity of the gospel in a new and isolated republic rising on the western borders of America. Would you not plead for help?

Our brethren will not forget to send us files of some of the religious periodicals, as well as the annual reports of the missionary and other benevolent societies. So far as these auxiliaries are concerned, we famish in a dry and barren land. When I left the Western states I sold and gave away a large portion of the few books which composed my library because they were too heavy to transport across the Rocky Mountains, so that now when I would consult a commentary or some of the standard writers of the last and present century on the great truths of the gospel, I seriously feel my need. My library consists principally of Mosheim's Church History, Horne's Introduction, Buck's Theological Dictionary, Butterworth's Concordance, a Greek Testament and Lexicon and Wayland's Moral Science. One of our ministering brethren on the Willamette has Fuller's Works and McKnight on the Epistles. As ministers we greatly need a few books, and, could any valuable ones be sent, they would be thankfully received. De Aubin's History of the Reformation¹¹⁶ would probably be an invaluable work here. We have consumed most of our available means, and find ourselves placed in the strait of involving ourselves in debt or providing with our hands the bare necessities of life, not knowing how soon we shall get any communications from you. I have received a few presents from two of our brethren here and a few from some friend, amounting perhaps in all to thirty dollars.

We are living, and have lived ever since we came to the country, except for about five weeks, in a rude log cabin

¹¹⁶ Not De Aubin, but D'Aubigne (1794-1872).

without a single pane of glass. Our furniture consists of three chairs, three stools, a small pine table about two feet by three, two old trunks which have traveled with us about 20 years, and a very few cooking utensils which we have brought with us or obtained at exorbitant prices. We have two tea cups and four saucers; more are not to be obtained in the country at any price. Most articles of clothing and furniture, when they can be obtained, are three or four times the price they are in the States. We have neither fire shovel, tongs nor andirons, but a common barn shovel. We often think, if we had a few of the most commonly indispensable articles of household furniture and could provide our children with the most coarse but comfortable apparel so that we could meet the many pressing and important calls for ministerial labor all over the country in all the varied relations of our calling, we should be happy.

Our Territory is needing the labors of at least five or six devoted Baptist missionaries. The time has come when we, as a denomination, must have men in the field, or other men will gather the harvest. Our Methodist brethren are now sustaining five or six missionaries in the settlements, and at this very moment, had we the men and means, our denominational views are as favorably received as any other. Brother Snelling is a worthy brother, and would gladly wear himself out in the ministry, but for the pressing cares of his family. Brother Johnson is doing what he can at Oregon City and vicinity. My labors will be principally confined to this county, unless we are so liberated from secular cares as to enable me to spend a portion of the time in traveling through the settlements now forming on the Chehalis and at Puget Sound,¹¹⁷ as well as the upper settlements. Should the settlement of the Oregon question be what we anticipate, we shall greatly need a missionary stationed at Puget Sound before you can commission a suitable man and send him to the field. And should Upper California remain under the United

¹¹⁷ See note 220 for the early settlements on Puget Sound. The upper settlements were probably those in the Willamette Valley.

States government, a missionary will be greatly needed at San Francisco Bay immediately upon the settlement of the Mexican War. It is my deliberate opinion that missionaries in whom your Board can confide should be appointed and sustained till by God's blessing an interest shall be awakened sufficient to sustain itself, and can afford assistance to the surrounding country. This whole country and Upper California are emphatically missionary grounds, and our relation to the whole Pacific Coast and the half of the globe in our front demands prompt and faithful action. If our position excites so much interest in the political and commercial world, ought not the churches to turn the eye in this direction and ask: Have we no interest in all these movements? Whatever God has in store for our majestic River and our spacious and safe harbors on the Pacific, one thing is now reduced to a demonstration: We must become a part of the great North American Republic. It remains for the Christian churches of that Republic to say whether our territory shall prove a blessing or a sore curse to the nation. Shall the needed help be denied us? As a people, we are in the most helpless infancy; the power of the gospel of our ever blessed Saviour must be exerted to bind this legion and drive it into our mighty Pacific, or we shall be abandoned, the prey of the worst of spirits and the basest of passions. Dear brother, it is far beyond the power of language to describe the blessings of the gospel. While we, almost isolated and faint, pray and labor and look with longing eyes toward the parent land, shall we not see this bow of promise hanging over our eastern skies: "The Lord will send deliverance out of Zion"? No doubt the time is near at hand when the facilities of communication will be greatly multiplied and a direct mail route will enable us to correspond directly two or three times a year,¹¹⁸ and vessels will be monthly leaving this place for the States and bearing cargoes directly from the States in return. We wait with patience for these

¹¹⁸ For a time in 1846 direct mail service had been established with Weston, Mo., at the rate of fifty cents a single sheet, but this was discontinued after nine months. Geo. H. Himes, *History of the Press in Ore.*, Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar. III:343.

changes. We feel that we are passing through a crisis in the history of the country, and ask God for grace that we may be brought through without repining at His providences. We feel a strong conviction that the time is near at hand when God will enlarge Zion on these shores, and we shall enjoy all the blessings of civilization and Christianity for ourselves and our children.

I preach every Sabbath, although the number living in our place is as yet very small. I shall probably divide my labors between this place and Clatsop Plains, in the opening of the spring. I have spent most of my time the last two months in building a small frame house, and have it now almost enclosed, and shall probably soon move into it.¹¹⁹ We shall then open a small Sunday school of the few children we have in the place. We feel pretty strong convictions that we shall make this region the field of our future labors, should God permit, and this become the commercial point on this river, which is very probable. We are waiting with anxiety, however, to learn what the Government will do for this country; you probably know at this time, or will before the rising of congress.¹²⁰ I have written you five or six times since our arrival in the country, and two or three times on our way, but have not yet had a single line from you. Will not a box of clothing be sent to aid Brother Johnson and myself in clothing our families? Second-handed clothing and coarse, too, will be very valuable to us. You can have no conception of how thankfully it would be received, or of the difficulty of obtaining clothing in this country. I know positively that our families would rejoice exceedingly, if they had the old clothes which are regarded useless by hundreds of our brethren in the old States.

I have repeated the request for books and clothing through fear that any former letters may have never reached you. I

¹¹⁹ This house was used as a post office by John M. Shively, who was one of the first two U. S. postmasters appointed for Oregon (1847). Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:614. A picture of the house was in the *Oregon Daily Journal*, Dec. 31, 1909.

¹²⁰ It may be that the author had not yet heard of the final settlement of the Oregon boundary, which was made in the summer of 1846.

know it will afford many a sister pleasure to collect a few comforts for those of us who are laboring in these ends of the earth. We make not these appeals because we think we could not meet the wants of our families, should we give ourselves entirely to secular pursuits. But this we cannot do. God will have His ministers feel a necessity laid upon them and a woe too, if they preach not the gospel. We very much expect to hear from you in the spring, so that we can feel relieved in spending the dry season strictly as missionaries. We ought to visit every large settlement and hold a meeting of two, three or more days, and gather up the scattered sheep and feed the lambs. But I must desist. My heart is full of the wants of our country. May God give us grace to do His will. You can send any boxes or letters on board any vessel that passes the Sandwich Islands, directing all such packages to me at this place to the care of E. O. Hall, Financier of the A. B. C. F. Missions at Honolulu, Oahu or Wahoo.

Your unworthy brother and fellow laborer in the gospel field,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Let us have an interest in your prayers and the prayers of all those who mourn over the desolations of sin, that the richest blessings of the gospel may be poured out upon Oregon.

Received July 13.

Astoria, Oregon Territory, April 2nd, 1847.

Dear Brother Hill:

I wrote you three sheets by the Tulon in January, making known in some measure the wants of our country west of the mountains, and directed it by way of the Islands, but after writing, Captain Crosby determined to take a cargo of flour to the American squadron at San Francisco Bay.¹²¹ The package may be a year in reaching you, and it may be that

¹²¹ This was, of course, the Pacific squadron which had helped in the American occupation of California in this and the preceding year. Bancroft, *Hist. of Cal.* V, passim. Captain N. Crosby was prominent in the history of early Oregon shipping. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:26.

he made over his letters for the States to the war ship which was dispatched to take Captain Howison to the States to account for the loss of the Schooner Shark.¹²² It is possible that you will receive it in two or three months, but, through fear of a long delay, I shall repeat some of our obstacles in the promotion of the cause of Christ in Oregon. By the abounding grace of God we are alive and in good bodily health; yet our remote situation from the seat of operations of American churches, together with our temporal embarrassments, and the inconvenience of reaching the remote settlements, both as it relates to the time employed and the expense of traveling, has compelled me to confine my labors to the few people in Clatsop County. The winter has been extremely severe, and to human appearances Providence has frowned upon my attempts temporal.

We moved to this place last fall, as probably possessing the most favorable indications of future usefulness, and with pretty strong encouragement that we should be joined by other Baptist friends this spring. But the severity of the winter, which has been destructive to cattle in this place and to the wheat already in the barns, probably determined our Baptist friends otherwise. My cattle, which were more than twenty head in the fall, are now reduced to two, and I feel myself compelled to remove to Clatsop Plains on the coast immediately south of the mouth of the Columbia, but cut off from this place by Young's Bay, three miles in width, as the most probable place of sustaining my family by my own hands and at the same time sustaining a small congregation; our daughter Lucy Jane Gray can have a small school part of the time, and a small Sabbath school may probably be sustained during the year. In the meantime we hope that the day is not far distant when we shall have such relief sent us from your Board as will enable me to reach more remote portions of the settlements and devote my whole time to the appropriate duties of a gospel minister.

¹²² The "Shark" was wrecked at the mouth of the Columbia, Oct. 10, 1846. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:587.

In the abstract, I think this county presents as much present prospect of permanent usefulness as any part of the country, if we except the immediate vicinity of Oregon City and the country accessible from that point. We feel a strong confidence that the first national work by way of fortification and the facilitation of navigation must be done at this great outlet of travel and commerce, and but a few months will be sufficient to decide this.¹²³ I cannot therefore think of leaving this point, unless the seat of commerce should be fixed at another point and Providence should plainly indicate a more advantageous situation. We have three Baptist sisters [married] in Clatsop Plains and there is a general desire manifested that we shall remove there for the present. I learned by Captain Kilborn of the Brig Henry that he had sent a letter for me to the Willamette Falls (Oregon City). I suppose it is from your pen, but have not had the satisfaction of seeing it. Rest assured we wait with great anxiety some communication from you. At present we have here only two American families besides my own, and a few bachelors, and besides the Hudson Bay Company's servants, and it is not probable towns will improve much in Oregon beyond the absolute necessities in business transactions, should our Government make grants of lands to the first settlers and require each family to reside for a term of years on his land to perfect his title.

I have received no direct communication from Brother Johnson since I left Tuality Plains, but occasionally hear from him. I can assure you that to all human appearances our usefulness would be increased ten fold were we only placed in such circumstances as we were in the Great Western Valley, and yet our labors as ministers are as greatly needed as they ever were in the Mississippi Valley. O, how blighting to the Christian graces is this secularizing of the ministry! Surely no minister who values holiness of heart

¹²³ The first defensive works at the mouth of the Columbia were begun in 1863. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:510. No work on the channel was done until much later.

and desires the enlargement of the Redeemer's Kingdom on the borders of idolatry and Romanism, can do otherwise than exercise the deepest regret at the necessity of consuming his precious time and attention in providing but partially for animals wants. Such at present must unavoidably be our condition unless aid come from some quarter. Our few churches are but partially organized and need frequent visiting and instructing, and to see practically demonstrated the utility of a devoted ministry, that they may appreciate it and put forth laudable efforts to sustain it. We feel a strong confidence that all necessary relief would be forthcoming with many and prevailing prayers, could our liberal brethren stand by and see us as we go to our daily labor with almost all the spiritual needs in their pressing importance urging themselves upon us, yet neglected. I do trust that another summer will not leave Brother Johnson and myself in a still more straitened condition than we were the past, but this must be the case with myself, unless some kind providence shall bring relief from your Board. Were we placed in other circumstances, where religious knowledge is generally diffused through the press and adapted to all, from the child of two years to the hoary-headed saint and the veteran sinner, I might be justified in being less importunate. . . . but where all depends upon the efficiency of the ministry to bring before the infant churches the doctrines, the ordinances, the precepts and examples of the gospel, we ought to be given wholly to the work. We covet not this spiritual exile because it is to be preferred to all those pleasing associations which daily bring to your door the triumphs of the gospel from the four quarters of the globe, and that habitual enjoyment of elevated Christian society which is to be enjoyed in all the older parts of our country. But we have chosen our position and chose the sacrifice with the hope that under the blessing of God and by the aid of those more highly blessed with temporal and spiritual gifts, we might become both His servants and their servants in shedding abroad God's gifts in these benighted ends of the earth. It

will be two years the twelfth of the present month since we left the field of our former labors. With it we cheerfully relinquished the prospect of enjoying those almost inestimable privileges of religious publications of all description, as we supposed, for one year, hoping that a few months after our arrival we should occasionally be greeted by those welcome visitors. But Alas! the Mexican war and the infrequency of arrivals by water direct from our eastern ports has held us in banishment up to this present. When I look to the people and see them left in ignorance of all the great religious movements in the world, except for a few packages sent to the Methodist and Presbyterian missions, my feelings are often left to wander between despair and that indifference occasioned by the care and fatigue incident to meeting our temporal needs. Our whole country is oppressed by an excessive monopoly of our merchants, so that most of the people are unable to meet the pressing wants of their families. If they could sit down at night as they come in from their daily labor, take up a religious periodical and read their half-clad families some interesting accounts of the triumphs of grace over depravity instead of meditating and teaching the principle of revenge, how would the family circle be cheered and the lowering cloud of our Western solitude be dissipated! The question is settled that Oregon is destined to be numbered among the states of our great American Republic; the scenes of our early sufferings and privations will soon be known only as they are engraved on the memory of the sufferers, or recorded on the pages of history. A brighter day is before us and we fancy that we already descry the first dawning light breaking over the tops of the eastern mountains. We must look to the older and more gifted states to aid in giving us a religious as well as a political and commercial character. Will not our Baptist churches aid in this work? Romanism is making strong attempts at planting deep its root in Oregon soil and availing itself of every inefficient effort of Protestantism to bring into disrepute the vital godliness of both it and its ministry. So long as our min-

isters are unsustainable, the priests herald the stereotyped reproach through the community, both savage and civilized: "These men are not ministers. See, they work and trade and live like other men. We are the founders of schools and are always ready to minister to your afflictions and care for your souls."

Can there be some method devised whereby we can have forwarded several numbers of some good religious periodicals of our own denomination, and some of the publications of the A. B. Publication Society adapted to Sunday schools and to vindicating our own denominational peculiarities and breathing a spirit of devotion and Christian philanthropy? Books of all kinds are eagerly sought for and Sunday schools can easily be sustained where ten or twelve children can be found sufficiently contiguous. I have several times written relative to the best and cheapest way of sustaining your missionaries in Oregon. Such is the feeble and scattered condition of the settlements that your missionaries must be sustained principally from your Board, or they must sustain themselves. Yet there is great hope that a few years will change the aspect of things in this respect. When the people once see the happy effects of a devoted ministry, they will cheerfully contribute to its support, and be blessed in so doing. When the time comes that a fair competition in trade takes the place of oppressive monopoly, industry will probably be as amply rewarded in this as in any other part of the nation, and we all hope that day is near. None but those who have experienced it can tell the inconveniences and privations of a new country so far removed from civilization. But really our early settlers have performed their part nobly, and are still contending undismayed with obstacles which would be regarded almost unsurmountable in the old states. On arriving here the few people of this country were all poor and for the past three years they have brought almost all their breadstuff 125 miles in canoes and open boats, making a trip in 10 or 15 days and camping out in the open air through all their

journey;¹²⁴ these journeys are often performed in the dead of winter while the rain is falling every day; all groceries and store goods are obtained in this way, except such as are purchased off of ships. The people have just put in operation a mill sufficient to meet the home demand, and the days of privation are fast passing by. Now the actual expense of living in Oregon, with half the comforts of life, is twice as great as it is in the western states, and how to meet these expenses of your missionaries is the question to be considered. Articles of clothing are exceedingly difficult to be obtained here. Sisters of the churches could make up clothing or send the articles unmade, or even half-worn clothing, such as is laid by, and would contribute largely to our wants. They would probably thus provide for us with great cheerfulness; at the same time it would not at all diminish the annual cash contributions. You can have no conception of the manner in which we are clad in our ordinary business. We are still wearing old clothes which we had laid aside as unfit for use in the Western states, and have purchased but a few of the most common articles, and those of the coarse and substantial kind, when they could be obtained. We still prefer to practice this kind of self-denial to the abandonment of our enterprise, while we have the hope left that we may be made instrumental in laying the foundation of the cause of Christian civilization where it is so much needed. We wish not to make the gospel an item of merchandise, and I think both Brother Johnson and myself are willing to practice the most rigid economy for the sake of carrying out the great object of our mission. As to the amount necessary to sustain our families, you will be able to judge by referring to the Methodist Board to find what it costs them to sustain the families of their ministers in this field. It may be proper to write a few lines relative to the sufferings of the late emigration, which in far too many cases have been great, and in some cases perhaps with-

¹²⁴ These were probably brought from Vancouver or Oregon City, and possibly also from Portland.

out parallel in American history, and I fear it will be read to the prejudice of future emigration. I believe all the emigrants who followed the usual roads to Oregon and California arrived in good season and with good health and no serious loss. It was only those companies who were either desirous of finding a new and better route, or were induced to follow imprudent and self-interested guides, who reaped so bitterly disappointment and disaster and even starvation. The greatest sufferers were probably a party who, before crossing the Sierra Nevada range of mountains, left Mr. Hastings who was conducting a part of the California emigration. After travelling till all hopes of reaching the lower company failed, a party of fifteen of the strongest, in attempting to cross the snowy mountains, were compelled to leave their animals and travel on foot almost destitute of clothing and food. Such was their extremity before reaching San Francisco Bay that eight perished, and the survivors subsisted on the flesh and blood of those that perished, some upon their own relatives. Five of the seven who reached the settlements were women, and when they arrived they were reduced to a perfect state of nudity. May these sufferings prove an effectual warning to all successive emigrants to follow none but explored and opened roads.¹²⁵ A practical wagon road is now opened from the States to the settlements on the Willamette River, terminating at Oregon City, where plenty of provisions can always be had at the ordinary prices of the country. We trust we shall soon have regular mails, at least quarterly, from this to the States; and then we can rely with some certainty on our packages being safely carried to the place of destination. I have written you every opportunity since I arrived in the Territory, but as yet have had no letter from you.

¹²⁵ There is also probably a reference here to the party which in 1846 came to Oregon via the southern route from Ft. Hall. This party suffered great hardships while getting into the Willamette Valley from the Rogue and the Umpqua Valleys. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:556-565.

For the hardships of the California party, which are here not exaggerated, see Bancroft, *Hist. of Cali.* V:529-542. The author mentions only the party called the "forlorn hope," but a much larger party suffered somewhat similarly.

You may judge by this that we are greatly discouraged, but you may rely upon it that we entered this field expecting to meet many privations. Our greatest embarrassment is that we are doing so little for Him who has bought us with His blood and we trust clothed us with His righteousness. As ever yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Sept. 6, 1847.

Clatsop Plains, Clatsop County, Ore., July 23, 1847.

Dear Brother Hill:

Your favors of October 26th and November 13th were received June the 20th, and read with great pleasure, they being the first communications I have received from your pen since I left Rock Island, Ill., although I have written about half a quire of paper to you. One letter, however, of yours reached Oregon City; but our letters are all forwarded by private conveyance, and it was lost. It was the one which came on board the Brig Henry, Captain Kilburn, from Newberryport.¹²⁶ The pamphlets and papers, which were sent on board that ship, were also lost. But Brother Johnson received his letter sent at the same time. The boxes of goods which you forwarded on board the Bark Whiton, Captain Geleston,¹²⁷ will probably be here in two or three weeks, and will be very gladly received, as we are brought to rather straitened circumstances. In view of the small number of inhabitants at Astoria and the difficulty of sustaining my family there, we moved to these plains (Clatsop) about the first of May last. This I did by the advice of our Baptist friends in the Territory. Yet here we are compelled to devote most of the week providing the bread that perishes. Yet I think our position is as favorable to the promotion of the cause of truth as any I could have taken in Oregon after the one which Brother Johnson occupies. The future commerce of the country must pass within a few miles of us,

¹²⁶ This was William K. Kilborn. The "Henry" is a familiar figure in Oregon history of this time. See Bancroft, *Hist of Ore.* I:414, 679-80; II:24, 43, 48.

¹²⁷ Galston, not Geleston. For the return voyage of the "Whiton" see Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:620.

and we feel strongly confident that a port of entry will be established near the mouth of this majestic Columbia, and other public works must necessarily go forward in our county as soon as we have a territorial government organized by the United States Congress. At present we have but a small population in this county. In view of the time being so near at hand when this must probably become a commanding point, I think you and the Board would approve of my course, were you in Oregon to see and judge for me. I am building a temporary log cabin this summer, which, together with raising my provisions, confines me at home. Yet I intend by the help of God to spend four or five weeks in the Willamette Valley the coming fall. When once we get into our house, I could probably support my family with two hundred dollars a year, with the industry of the family and what I should receive from the people, and be able to devote myself entirely to the ministry of the Word, should there be any way opened whereby you can with certainty make remittances principally in articles of clothing and furniture such as will be indispensable to our comfort. We trust the time is near when the present difficulties under which we labor will be obviated by the establishing of a regular mail route across the mountains and by a frequent communication by shipping from this place to New York and other Atlantic ports. I trust before this the terms of a permanent peace are negotiated between our nation and Mexico. O, when will the adorable Prince of Peace forever terminate the horrors of war! I trust that tolerance to the gospel will be gained to all the country which our nation may acquire, but there is efficacy in our gospel to gain this victory at incomparably less expense, both of money and sufferings.

It is greatly to be regretted that we are situated so far from your relief that we are obliged to leave our appropriate calling to procure our daily bread, and I have often asked the question why our hands must be bound when there is so much to do for the cause of our Redeemer in Oregon. It is not because the people refuse to hear the gospel from our

lips; and God is my witness that it is not because I delight in secular pursuits, at least while on every hand we see so much need of the undivided, unremitted labors of a devoted gospel ministry. But while we lie in this situation, other denominations of Christians are beginning to lay a foundation for future influence, and among them the Roman Catholics are the most numerous and the best sustained by far.

We are in daily expectation of the arrival of a vessel freighted with Roman missionaries, priests, teachers, nuns and missionary funds to the amount, it is said, of \$130,000 to be expended in Oregon. Can we, must we labor five or six days with our hands and then, when the Sabbath returns, go worn down in body (and shall I say in spirit?) and but half prepared to the place where God is to be publicly worshipped and there meet the congregations and proclaim to them the words of Eternal Life? But God is our helper, and His promise does not fail. Even in these trying circumstances we often feel an assurance of the Divine presence in the little groups to which we preach.

You request me to be specific in making my reports according to the instructions contained in our appointments. I must be honest in this matter. For the last six months my labors have been principally confined to the Sabbath; my visits of a pastoral kind have been few. In our county we have not sustained a prayer-meeting; but we are beginning to make an effort to sustain the monthly concert. On our removal to these plains we immediately organized a Sabbath school and Bible class in connection with the Presbyterians. There are about twenty-five Sabbath school children and I have a Bible class of about ten middle-aged and young men. Mrs. Fisher and our daughter have each a class. We have a small library of about thirty volumes and expect to obtain an addition from books sent out by the Massachusetts S. S. Society. We have made this temporary arrangement and addressed the Corresponding Secretary of the A. S. S. Union, soliciting a donation of books. Our Sabbath exercises are conducted as follows: Preaching at 11 o'clock A. M; inter-

mission: Sunday school, after which we spend about an hour in singing.

Our plains extend from the mouth of the Columbia River along the beach south about fifteen miles, and for the sake of our Sabbath school, we have deemed it expedient to meet and preach with the Presbyterians, the Presbyterian minister occupying one Sabbath and I the next, alternately.¹²⁸ I preached a few Sabbaths at 5 P. M. in the south part of the plains, but it was soon found that a want of time compelled us to abandon the evening preaching.

Our congregations are about fifty, on an average. We have not yet taken any measures to organize a Baptist church in this place, there being no male members but myself, yet we think we shall do something on that subject this season. We meet in a little log school house, about 16 feet square, in which my daughter teaches a small day school of about 15 children. I have obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge in the form in which you published it,¹²⁹ but the frequent instances of violation of the laws by introducing ardent spirits among the Indians and selling to the Whites without license induced the settlers to call a meeting, which resulted in every man but two or three signing a pledge that we would hold our persons and property in readiness to prevent the unlawful introduction and sale of intoxicating spirits into our county. Little is drunk in the county except by the Indians and a few Whites who are as regardless of principle as the savages themselves. Perhaps I can say with certainty that for the last four weeks we have had more than usual attention to the preaching of the Word, although we learn of no instances of hopeful conversion. We feel a strong assurance that a great change externally has taken place among the inhabitants of these plains within the

¹²⁸ This Presbyterian minister was probably Lewis Thompson, a native of Kentucky, who came to the Pacific Coast in 1846 and settled on Clatsop Plains. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:680.

¹²⁹ Temperance sentiment was strong in early Oregon. There was a prohibition law from 1844 to 1846 and a large proportion of the population was in favor of prohibition even after there was no law on the statute book to that effect.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:281, 437, 537-9; II:37.

last six months. A general desire to maintain good order in society is apparent.

The people generally have not been accustomed to aid in the support of the gospel, and as yet they have everything to do to open their farms and provide their families with clothing which would be regarded very indifferent, even on the frontier territories east of the mountains. I find neighbors kind, but it will require years to place them in even comfortable circumstances. Consequently we cannot expect much support immediately from the people. We have one sister who has furnished us with more than half our butter this summer. The people help me some in building my house.

On the subject of education our citizens manifest a very laudable spirit. We should have erected a school house suitable for a school and meeting house this summer but for the extreme pressure of business to prepare for the coming winter.

July 26.—I have just learned that the Brutus is to leave the first favorable wind and Elder Geo. Gary¹³⁰ is to return to New York on board with his wife. I therefore have but a few minutes more to write, and much to write. I must therefore close this package in a few minutes and carry them ten miles, deliver today and return.

I have several times stated to you the sum with which we could be sustained by taxing every power of economy, and even parsimony, within our reach. But were we to be liberated to devote ourselves as freely to the ministry as our brethren in New England and New York, with all their aid of deacons, deaconesses and pious, devoted lay members, it would require a sum not less than from \$400 to \$600 per year. And why should we not give ourselves wholly to the work? Is it because the labors of a missionary in Oregon are less important than those of a local pastor in the

¹³⁰ Rev. George Gary came to Oregon in 1844 and was superintendent of the Methodist Mission in Oregon, 1844-7. Bancroft. *Hist. of Ore.* I: 39, 218; II: 677.

churches at home? Your Board and the churches wish to hear the most cheering news of our success as ministers. You wish our pens ably wielded in the description of the country as it relates to its geography, physical resources, natural history, manners and customs of the people, and in short everything which will contribute to scatter light and awaken an interest on the subject of our new territory, and all this is right. But how can this be done by men loaded with secular cares and worn by daily labor to procure what would be a poor subsistence in the States. If I have one object for which I desire to live more than all others, it is to see the cause for which Christ empoverished Himself making the people of Oregon rich. That this may be done, we must labor in every moral department which relates to the well being of a new republic where vice rolls in like the waves of the ocean.

I hope to be able to write a few more sheets which will reach Elder Gary at the Sandwich Islands.

I wish you to forward me most of the amount appropriated for my support in such articles of clothing as we shall order, as far as practicable. A few dollars in money seem indispensable, perhaps twenty, which you will probably send in gold or silver in the box of goods you send. Hereafter direct all boxes and packages for me to Astoria.

Please send us the following articles, as far as practicable and in accordance with the directions of the Board:

Two bolts of good common sheeting, unbleached;

Twelve yards of good bed ticking;

Two webs of good common calico, dark colored;

Twenty yards of linsey for children's winter dresses:

Two pairs of women's calfskin shoes, suitable for an Oregon winter, No. 4;

Two pairs of good slippers, No. 4;

Two pairs of stout calfskin shoes, men's, No. 9, suitable for winter rains;

Two pairs of boys' shoes, stout, Nos. 3 and 4;

Two pairs girls' shoes, Nos. 1 and 2;

Two pairs of girls' shoes, Nos. 12 and 13, little children's numbers;

Twenty or twenty-five yards of Kentucky Janes;

One dark shawl of worsted, or some kind of woolen texture, adapting the price somewhat to our income;

One dress coat black cloth; I think no doubt that one which would fit you will fit me, but guard against expenses;¹³¹ let it be substantial, but it may be much coarser than would be called for in your city;

Ten yards of satinnet;

One dollar's worth of good spool thread;

One card of shirt buttons;

Hooks and eyes, pins, sewing needles;

Two fine combs;

50 cents' worth of tape, sewing silk, pants and vest buttons;

1 pair of cheap fire shovel and tongs;

1 pair of plain andirons;

One cheap set of teacups and saucers;

Six common dining plates, four bowls;

One spider, called skillet in the West, for frying meat;

One pair of silver set spectacles;

15 or 20 pounds of coffee;

One two-quart pitcher, plain;

Two cheap linen table cloths, white.

Give my thanks to Br. Everts for the Bible Manual. Br. Johnson has received his.

I am now on board the Brutus and in great haste. Elder Gary has engaged to deliver these sheets in person and will probably give you some interesting descriptions of the state of things generally in Oregon.

I will just say that I have received a letter from a Brother

¹³¹ It was the frequent custom of the author, in ordering from the East, to specify that the clothes should fit Rev. Benjamin Hill, as the two were about the same size.

Ross,¹³² a member of Br. Evert's church, who is in California. He is engaged in a Sabbath school at San Francisco Bay, and strongly solicits ministerial aid. From all the information I can receive, I am of the opinion that a faithful missionary or two should be sent to California immediately on the receipt of the intelligence that it is added to the United States. I am,

Yours as ever,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at the Mouth of the Columbia River.

Should you have opportunity to forward any boxes or packages to the Islands and not directly to this place, you can direct to me to the care of E. O. Hall, Financier for the A. B. C. F. Missions at Honolulu, Oahu, and pay the freight and they will probably reach me in safety.

Received Jan. 17, 1848.

Clatsop Plains, Oregon, Oct. 20th, 1847.

Rev. and Dear Br. Hill:

The Bark Whiton being about to sail for N. Y. in a day or two, I take this opportunity to address you a line, which I trust will reach you in three months, as Captain Gelston proposes crossing the Isthmus and sending his ship around the Cape.

The two boxes of goods which you forwarded me on the Whiton were duly received, and the accompanying letters. I have delivered half the Bibles and Testaments, pamphlets and periodicals, and half of the goods which you forwarded to me, without my order, to Br. Johnson. . . .

The Bibles, Testaments, periodicals and reports were most gladly received and read with eagerness not only by myself and family, but by the surrounding community. They seemed to transport us to the shores of civilization and the regions of Christian enterprise, after years of seclusion. I

¹³² This was Charles L. Ross, who came by sea to California in 1847. He was prominent in San Francisco for a number of years as a merchant, landowner, and public-spirited man. Bancroft, *Hist. of Cal.* V:704.

carry with me a few tracts and religious periodicals each Sabbath, and give away the tracts and request the periodicals to be returned for further circulation. I give away no tract without enjoining upon the receiver the importance of reading it.

Your letter of January 19th and 24th was received last week, but the periodicals are still behind; probably lost. I have just returned from a tour of four weeks in the Willamette Valley. I found rather an interesting state of things in Tualatin Plains. A gradual work of grace has been in progress in those Plains since last June. Since last January, Brother Vincent Snelling has baptized fifteen into the fellowship of the church in that place, two of whom were the fruits of a series of meetings held last year during my residence there. Some three or four more will be baptized next month. Religious interests are wearing a more favorable appearance on Yam Hill River and on the Rickreal. Two have been added to the former church and others will probably unite soon with each of the above named churches. The Methodists and Congregationalists in the Willamette Valley have received some accessions. The Campbellites are industriously engaged in making proselytes. We have no unusual interest in this place and our congregations are good for the number of people in the community; and a marked attention is given to the preaching of the Word. O, that God would give me more of the spirit of my station! We have not yet constituted a church in this place, and shall probably delay organizing until spring, unless we should see that the time has come to arise and build before that time. We are having some accessions to our population on the coast by the present emigration now arriving, and somewhat expect one or more Baptist families to settle with us.

Since the first of last August I have labored about half of the time directly in the appropriate duties of the ministry, and the remainder of the time in providing for the immediate wants of my family; preached 13 sermons: delivered two

lectures; attended one prayer-meeting; one covenant meeting; visited religiously 20 families and 12 individuals; visited no common schools; baptized none; obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge; neither assisted at the organization of a church nor the ordination of a minister; have taught regularly a Bible class of 10 scholars, except four Sabbaths of my absence; distributed about 500 pages of tracts, 10 Bibles and 20 Testaments; traveled 450 miles to and from my appointments; received no person either by letter or experience; no cases of conversion in the field of my labor; no young men preparing for the ministry. The monthly concert is not sustained in Oregon. My people have paid nothing for missions, Bible societies or other societies; for my support \$5. Connected with my labors is one Sunday school conducted by Baptists and Presbyterians; 30 scholars and six teachers, two of whom are Baptists; and about 40 volumes in our library. As soon as the opening of the spring we design establishing our preaching meetings and Sabbath school separate.

I have repeatedly explained to you the reason of fixing my location at the mouth of the Columbia at so early a date in the history of the country. It is simply from its local importance and not because we have a large population in our vicinity at present. But our population is increasing gradually and are among the most intelligent and enterprising of Oregon, and I am greatly mistaken if our population and enterprise do not rapidly increase after next summer. I think the commercial mart of our Territory must be at Astoria, or near the mouth of the Columbia. My present plan of operation is to spend the rainy season in this vicinity and, during the best part of the year for traveling and collecting congregations, spend two or three months in traveling and preaching in the Willamette Valley till they are better supplied with preachers, and, if time permits, to visit Puget Sound during the summer and, should our brethren settle there, which they probably will the coming season, raise an interest there, with the blessing of Him without whom we

can do nothing. This point and the Sound must become the great commercial points in Oregon. We have now four Baptist ministers in the Territory besides Br. Johnson and myself who will probably settle in the Willamette Valley above Oregon City¹³³ and, although they have not enjoyed great advantages, they will probably be able to preach to the churches now formed and sustain the religious interests, with the assistance which Br. J. and myself can render them, till other ministers shall arrive, if God goes with them. A large portion of our Baptist members are from the upper part of Missouri and have not been much accustomed to exercise themselves in Christian enterprises, consequently it is too much to expect that they immediately engage in Sabbath schools and other benevolent efforts with the facility and perseverance of men trained from their youth in this kind of work. Besides, many of them were just able to raise means sufficient to bring their families across the mountains and they have everything to do to give their families a competent living. Yet we have some happy exceptions; may God greatly multiply this class. We have fixed upon the third week in next June to organize an association and trust by that time we shall have seven or eight churches to go into that organization. I think Br. Vincent Snelling ought to receive an appointment with a salary of \$100 or \$150. He is a faithful, worthy brother. I informed him that it would be expected that the churches which he supplied would request the Home Missionary Society to assist them in sustaining him and specify the amount they were able to do. He manifested a reluctance to lay the subject before the churches, lest it might arouse some prejudice, as the churches were not altogether missionary in their views. I replied that I should be unwilling to constitute churches which would be likely to excommunicate me for carrying out the great principles of the gospel plan of salvation. Yet I

133 There are records of only three ministers—Rev. Vincent Snelling, Wm. Porter, and Richard Miller—besides the author and Mr. Johnson. The fourth was possibly James Bond, who was licensed but not ordained. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:43, 58, 59. Minutes of Willamette Bap. Assn. of Oregon, for 1848.

thought he was unnecessarily timid, and I should apprehend no unpleasant consequences in presenting the subject in a mild and affectionate manner. I leave the subject with your Board, hoping on the whole that Br. Snelling may receive your patronage. I can assure you he is a zealous, worthy brother.

As it relates to California, I think our Board should spare no time in finding a judicious, practical preacher to locate at the most favorable point on San Francisco Bay. Our whaling vessels and merchant and war ships are almost constantly entering and leaving that Bay and, should our Government retain Upper California, there must be places of importance immediately springing up on that spacious harbor. Br. Ross, a member of Br. Ewart's church of your city, is there, and perhaps he has already applied to you for a minister.

Baptist peculiarities must be vindicated in Oregon. Our Pedo-baptist and Campbellite neighbors are mooted the subject of baptism, and especially of communion. May we have grace to present these subjects as gospel truths in the love of the gospel of the Blessed Saviour.

Brother Johnson received a letter from you informing us that the Board had voted to increase our salaries to \$200 each, which I hope will enable us to give ourselves entirely to the work, after three or four weeks which must be spent, on my part, in rendering my house tolerable for the winter.

I wrote you in July by Elder Gary, on his return to New York. (He will probably deliver the package in person.) In those letters I ordered you to forward me some articles of clothing and other articles. Should you receive this in season to forward a few other articles with the box before ordered, you will please put up twelve yards of Canton flannel; fifteen yards of red woolen flannel; six or eight pounds of saleratus or pearlash—put it up in a box or jar; four pounds of candle wicking; a tin reflector for baking bread; a hat, cheap, substantial, 23½ inches around the outside under

the band; one set of Fuller's works bound in sheep.¹³⁴ I very much need a commentary of the Bible, having disposed of both of mine before leaving the States on account of the transportation across the mountains, but I do not know but I shall make my orders exceed my income. Put up also one additional web of substantial dark calico. We hope the Baptist Publication Society will forward us a few of their publications, such as exhibit the peculiarities of the denomination and others of a devotional character, such as memoirs of eminent Christians, as a donation, if they can. The people here need religious reading. Probably some books of the above named character might be sold. Can you not obtain and forward us more tracts, as our stock will be exhausted before we shall get returns from this?

My family are in good health. Indeed, we have had no sickness on the coast with the whites since the settlement of the country. Providence has given us one of the most salubrious climes on earth. No doubt the whole Territory is more healthy than any portion of the United States of the same extent of territory. Although we have small districts contiguous to inundated lands somewhat subject to bilious attacks in the summer, yet no New Englander, or even any person east of the Alleghany Mountains, has anything to lose in point of health in emigrating to Oregon.

I design spending some time next winter in giving you a general description of the country—its physical resources, the manners and customs of the people and the improvements of the country in manufactures and commerce. At present, however, I will only repeat substantially what I have more than once written to my friends in the States, that, although the face of the country below the Cascade range of mountains is generally broken, except on the valleys of the rivers, yet I think there is less waste land than is found in the same extent of country in New England, and the soil will not suf-

¹³⁴ The works of Andrew Fuller (1754-1815), a famous Baptist (English) theologian. McClintock and Strong, *Cys. of Bibl. Theol. and Eccl. Lit.* III:62. The edition asked for was probably that published in Philadelphia, edited by Joseph Belcher. O. A. Roorbach, *Bibliotheca Americana*, p. 209.

fer in comparison with that of New York, and portions of this district probably equal the finest parts of the great Western valley. Almost all our hill and mountain lands are rich and almost entirely free from stone and it is generally believed that the timbered land will produce better than the prairies when once it is cleared. The timber, although of an enormous growth, is generally so filled with balsam or pitch that when green it is fallen by fire and, with comparatively little chopping or piling, the fire consumes it; so that land may be cleared fit for the plough as easily in Oregon as in New York.

As far as my observation has extended, the lands bordering upon the coast possess the richest, deepest soil and produce the most abundantly where they are sufficiently level to be cultivated. Few countries can be found in the world which will produce vegetables in greater abundance, or of a more delicious flavor, than the lands on the coast of Oregon so far as they have been tested. Although little is known in the state of Oregon except the far-famed Willamette Valley, yet it is my opinion that the soil on the coast, wherever it is sufficiently level for cultivation, will by far surpass that valley in producing every kind of vegetable, and perhaps will not be inferior to it in the growth of wheat. Oats and barley flourish remarkably well on the poorest lands on the coast. The whole coast country will undoubtedly become one of the finest countries in the world for rearing cattle, horses and sheep, when once its forests are removed and the grasses are introduced. We only want our coast to be occupied with the industrious, enterprising farmers of N. Y. and N. England to make it one of the most desirable countries in the world. The whole coast region is so tempered with ocean spray and timely showers during the whole of the summer months that it is almost entirely exempt from the severe droughts to which the country is so much subject east of the Coast Range of mountains.

The general impression has been made abroad that there is little good land susceptible of settlement near the sea board.

But I think it will be found that there is about as much good land suited to farming purposes in the vicinity of the mouth of the Columbia as there is in the vicinity of the Hudson River. And bordering Pugets Sound, including Whitby's and other islands, are many fine tracts of very rich land well adapted to agricultural purposes. And perhaps a very considerable tract of the finest, richest land in Oregon may be found on the coast between the mouth of the Umpqua River and the southern boundary of the Territory. Indeed, I am informed by those who have traveled the coast that there is not a stream putting into the ocean south of the mouth of the Columbia but affords some good land for settlement.

I have given you these brief facts, hoping and praying that they may come under the eye of many a pious brother, and sister too, whose spirit may be moved to come over and labor with us in the glorious work of giving a moral and religious character to the thousands of our own countrymen who now people Oregon and the millions who will soon people the Pacific shores. Cannot some of our excellent deacons and praying, working, young married brothers and sisters be induced to come and become our fellow laborers in this delightful clime and in this most delightful and important work? Is not the great Head of the church now pressing the question to the very heart of numbers of our lay brethren? Will they not go and plant the seed and cultivate the tender plants in the garden of the Lord? How important the position in relation to half the globe, and that yet unevangelized! How important the position in relation to the commercial world, if the half is even realized which our national government anticipates! Will not many of our praying brethren heed the call and come and work with us in the morning of our existence in Oregon? Everything is to be done, if this part of our country is to be saved from the reign of idolatry, the tyranny of skepticism and the dominion of the Beast. I must close this and hasten to write a few lines to our private friends.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—We shall establish the monthly concert in these Plains next month. Romans are sparing no pains to secure the influence and wealth of Oregon to their church; their priests are all Jesuits. May all our brethren in the States pray for God's blessings to rest on our labours. Will you not use your influence in encouraging our lay brethren to come and settle with us? I can almost assure them that they will never regret the sacrifice they must make at the first, if they will first count the cost, in the fear of the Lord, and wait on Him after their arrival before they get disheartened. Many on their arrival, seeing things so new and different from the more improved parts of the country they have left, become soon dissatisfied, before they have tried a winter and a summer in Oregon. But few, very few, remain dissatisfied more than six or eight months. When once they feel the bracing salubrious atmosphere of the summer and see the generous returns for their labor, they soon form a strong attachment to the country, and nothing but the want of improved society and a love of relatives and friends left behind will induce them to look back with desire to the land of their youth. These inconveniences must be remedied by the habitual efforts of every philanthropist and Christian.

Yours truly, E. F.

Received May 6, 1848.

October 31, 1847.

Dear Br. Hill:

We are all in health. Winter rains are just commencing. Crop of wheat in the upper country is light by means of an unusually dry summer, but on the coast all crops are usually good, droughts seldom affecting the coast seriously. The present immigration is numerous, the number of wagons being generally estimated at about 1,000 and about 4,000 souls.¹³⁵ Perhaps they have had more than a usual share of

¹³⁵ Bancroft says the number of persons was between 4000 and 5000. *Hist. of Ore.* I:623.

sickness and suffering on the road. Hundreds are yet on the last part of the journey. More than 1,200 or 1,500 wagons should never attempt to cross the mountains in one year; and they should not be incumbered with more loose cattle than is necessary for ample teams and milch cows. Sheep stand the journey best of all domestic animals and are the most useful when here. Emigrants from the eastern and middle states should come by water, if they can submit to a long sea voyage. Please enter the enclosed letters in the post office immediately upon reception of this. I send you a package of three sheets by Captain Gelston containing my report from August first. Shall spend some time during the rainy season in writing you.

Our general prospects in Oregon are brightening. Commerce is increasing rapidly and a general impulse is given to every branch of business. We earnestly hope the U. S. Congress will provide for us a government the coming session.¹³⁶ I trust your Board will provide for California immediately on the U. S. securing that territory to her jurisdiction. A colporter preacher jointly sustained by the A. Bapt. Publication Society and the H. Mission Board, with a supply of books and tracts, would be an invaluable accession to Oregon. I have written Br. Malcom on that subject. Oregon is in perishing need of this very kind of instrumentality. Will not our Eastern Baptists give this Ter. the first colporter, with his supply of books adapted to every age and condition of man in the formation of a moral and religious character? You may think me enthusiastic. Well, be it so, I am quite sure you could not be less so, were you here to see and feel our wants as I do. We must have the Psalmist¹³⁷ here; a few dozen would sell and these would prepare the way for hundreds more.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received May 6, 1848.

¹³⁶ Oregon was given a territorial government in 1848.

¹³⁷ The "Psalmist" was a Baptist Hymnal by Baron Stow and S. F. Smith. McClintock and Strong, Cyc. of Bibl. Theol. and Eccl. Lit. VIII:745.

Clatsop Plains, March the 8th, 1848.

Dear Br. Hill:

The last communications I received from you were under date of October 2nd and 31st and Nov. 13th, 1846, per Bark Whiton, and I reported by the same bark up to November 1st, 1847. I also saw a letter to Br. Johnson, which I think was brought through by the immigration of 1847, in which was stated the fact that the Executive Board had voted to increase our salary to \$200 each, which fact I acknowledged in my last. The Bibles and Testaments appropriated by the City Bible Society have been of essential service in supplying the destitute and relieving the wants of our Sabbath schools and Bible class. The tracts have been earnestly sought and read with much interest, both by parents and children, and no doubt they have been blessed of God as an efficient auxiliary to the ministry of the Word and Sabbath school instruction. My portion of this stock of tracts is more than half gone and I have promised Brother Vincent Snelling some. By the blessing of the All Wise, I propose spending about two months of the approaching summer in the Willamette Valley. I am therefore using them sparingly that I may take a package along with me. I earnestly hope you will not fail to have more forwarded, at least yearly. I made a feeble appeal to the Corresponding Sec. A. B. P. Society in behalf of books, both for Sab. schools and the ministry, and also recommended the appointment of a colporter for Oregon who should be a preacher. I trust that appeal will be heeded and call forth a hearty response, not simply from that Society, but from the churches. After last writing I found a note from you on the margin of a pamphlet informing me for the first time of my being made a life member of the A. and F. Bible Society. Assure Br. Allen that it would afford me great pleasure to receive a line from him informing me through what medium my name has been enrolled in that list of worthy names which have contributed so much to publish that blessed Book unadulterated for the nations of the earth. The Bible is above all

price. May God grant the unknown donor a disciple's reward and bless the offering to the everlasting joy of many souls. As for myself, I am utterly unworthy this token of respect. As I expect to forward this by the return party who will probably leave early next month, and it is somewhat uncertain whether it will reach you, I must defer writing much that would be interesting and proceed to state a few of the most important facts.

I send you herein a report of my labor from the first of Nov. last up to the present date. My labors have been confined to Clatsop County. Since my last report I have thought best to divide my labors on the Sabbath. Accordingly I preach one Sabbath at my own house (a log cabin 18 feet by 24) in the south half of these plains and the alternate one in the north half of the plains. I have labored nineteen weeks, but part of my time I am compelled to devote to the immediate wants of my family. I preached 20 sermons, delivered no lectures, attended four prayer meetings and two religious conferences preparatory to the constitution of a church. Visited religiously forty families and persons, two common schools. Baptized none. Obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge. Have assisted in organizing no church nor the ordination of any minister. Traveled 147 miles to and from my appointments. None received by letter, none by experience and we know of no cases of conversion. We have one young married brother licensed to preach by a church in Iowa.¹³⁸ The monthly concert of prayer is observed at my house. My people have paid nothing for missions, foreign, home or domestic. Nothing for the Bible cause. Publication Soc. nothing. Education Soc. nothing. For my salary, fourteen dollars. Connected with my stations are two Sunday schools, 42 scholars and ten teachers and in one school 100 volumes recently donated by a friend; and in the other 20 volumes. I have also a Bible class with eight pupils. We have commenced building a hewed log house for

¹³⁸ This was James Bond, who lost his life by an accident in 1849. He had come to Oregon in 1847. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:8.

a school and meeting house, 18 feet by 24, and will be able to use it as a place of worship within six or eight weeks. This may appear to your Board too trifling and unimportant to be named in a report, but, could you experience all the privations of a new country as I am doing, you would look upon this effort as a valuable acquisition to our spiritual comforts and an important monument to the progress of civilization within the deafening roar of the Pacific's surf. I have regarded it an object so desirable to be accomplished that I have already devoted more than two weeks' time in laborious efforts through rain and shine in this work. May God be graciously pleased to make it a nursery of science, a fountain of morals, a birthplace of souls and a spiritual lighthouse to guide the pilgrims to the haven of rest. We have appointed the 13th and the 19th of the present month to meet for the constitution of a church in the plains and have invited our sister churches to send us their delegates to sit in council with us on the occasion. We hope a foundation is being laid here for future lasting usefulness. God only knows. Our congregations have been usually good through the entire winter and Sabbath schools well attended and, although we can record no signal display of Divine grace, our apparent changes seem to indicate the Divine favor. I have seldom felt a deeper sense of the responsibility of the ministry and the importance of establishing correct moral and religious principles in a new and rising community than during the last winter. We greatly need the prayers of the churches that we may reap ere long a gracious harvest. Our communities are surrounded by heathen and no one can tell the excessively immoral influence which the heathen exert on a civilized community. And then the number of professors are few, consequently but few restraints are imposed on the impenitent. Added to this, the fact that we are at present involved in an unpleasant Indian war with the Cayuse tribe inhabiting the country along the foot of the Blue Mountains, south of the Columbia River, keeps the people in a state of excitement unfavorable to the cultivation of the

Christian graces. The apparent cause of the difficulty seems to have originated in the fact of the last year's immigrants having brought the measles among the Cayuse Indians. Many sickened and died with them and the flux. The Indians, ever jealous and credulous, suspicioned Dr. Whitman of poisoning them. It seems a treacherous half-breed who had been educated by the missionaries and residing in Dr. Whitman's family circulated the report that he had overheard the doctor and Mr. Spaulding discussing the subject of the best method of exterminating the Indians. Finally, about the 30th of November, one of the most inhuman tragedies which the history of savage cruelty has ever recorded was perpetrated in open day. Dr. Whitman, his excellent wife, Mr. Rodgers, a young man of unblemished character and engaging manner studying for the ministry, and ten other persons were brutally butchered by the very chiefs who had long manifested great confidence in the Dr., and for whom he has so long labored and sacrificed almost all the blessings of civilization to ameliorate their conditions and direct their whole tribe to the glories of Heaven through a crucified Saviour. About thirty men, women and children were then taken captive and reduced to Indian slaves and the females suffered the most revolting acts of savage violence in the presence of their own husbands and fathers and mothers, against which no entreaties or remonstrances were of any avail for more than a month till Mr. Ogden, one of the chief factors of the Hudson Bay Co., proceeded with twenty-two men from Fort Vancouver and redeemed the captives and brought them to Oregon City. Mr. Spaulding and family have been rescued from imminent danger and are now in the Willamette Valley. Messrs. Eels and Walker have not yet been heard from. Fears are entertained that they, with their families, may be cut off. Yet, as they are in the Spokane country, it is hoped they will find a place of refuge at Fort Hall in case of imminent danger.¹³⁹ Our legislature

¹³⁹ This account of the Whitman massacre is on the whole correct. The date was November 29th, not 30th. Walker and Eells stayed in the Spokane Country until spring, protected by the Indian chief. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:66. Cornelius Gilliam, not Gillham, was the commander of the territorial troops. *Ibid.* I:676.

was in session at the time the news of the horrid massacre reached the settlements, and one company of about fifty men was immediately sent to The Dalles above the Cascade Mountains to secure the friendly relations of the Indians in that vicinity, and early in January five more companies were raised, put under the command of General Gillham and marched into the Cayuse country. Our troops have had two engagements with the Indians before reaching the Cayuse country, in which some fifteen or twenty Indians were killed and one of our men wounded.¹⁴⁰ Probably before this time there has been a general battle, if the Indians will risk an engagement in the open fields. It is generally hoped that we shall escape a general Indian war. The Hudson Bay Company exerts a great influence with the Indians, most of the officers and servants having taken Indian wives, and their interests and influence will be of a pacific character. Yet we do not feel ourselves altogether safe, living as we do in the midst of small tribes. We feel that our only confidence is in God and in His hands we surrender ourselves and our little ones daily. We are waiting with great anxiety to see one or more U. S. war vessels come into our river. Our governor has dispatched an express to California,¹⁴¹ hoping that the bearer of dispatches will find part of our Pacific squadron in San Francisco Bay, who may afford us protection till an express shall reach Washington and our hitherto too tardy government may give us security in the midst of the heathen. It is feared by many that the Jesuit priests were obsequious to the horrid massacre of Dr. Whitman and family.¹⁴² I hope to be able to send you the whole correspondence relative to this subject. By this unexpected providence, it is feared that every Protestant mission to the Indians west of the Rocky Mountains will be broken up. At least they must be discontinued for the present, while Ro-

140 The one wounded was Wm. Berry. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:703.

141 The overland messengers did not succeed in getting through to California. The letters to California were finally forwarded via the brig "Henry," which sailed after the above was written. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:679.

142 The long and unfortunate debate over the question of Catholic influence in the Whitman massacre is here reflected.

manism holds undisputed sway over all those savage minds. Should not this fact furnish an argument sufficiently powerful to arouse the sympathies of the friends of missions to new efforts in behalf of the degraded sons of the western plains and mountains, and especially as we trust the time is at the door when our national government will give protection to the lives of the missionaries of the churches? I will assure you, dear brother, as a philanthropist and a Christian minister, I earnestly desire and devoutly pray that our national government will lose no time in extending her excellent laws over our Territory.¹⁴³ Our laws, although as much respected as could reasonably be expected, are inefficient in the punishment of crime. The public mind is unsettled constantly, hoping for a better and more complete code of laws; difficulties in relation to land claims will be multiplying and afford fruitful sources of litigation and our relations to the savages will be subject to repeated discontent till our government treats with them for their lands. They have long been told that the Boston Hy-as Tyee (Chief) will come next year and pay them for their lands till they say their tum-tum (heart) is sick and they do not know but they shall mimmelus (die) before the Boston Hy-as Tyee comes. Our Indian neighbors like to have the Bostons settle among them and give them two or three blankets, a gun or a horse for a section of land and are fond of trading with the Whites, yet they are like children in their tradings with the Whites. They have generally great confidence in the honesty of the Whites till they are aroused to jealousy by some designing person.

March 24th.—You will probably learn the state of our Indian relations to a later date than this through the medium of the return party who will leave the settlements for the States about the 20th of April, and will probably pass sufficiently near the Cayuse nation to learn the state of the war.

¹⁴³ The reference is here, of course, to the laws passed by the provisional government organized in Oregon pending the extension of the protection of the United States over the colony.

I have just received yours under date of April 1st, 1847, which came to the Islands on board the Medora, and will just state that it affords me great pleasure to learn that God still reigns in your anniversaries. May you ever be able truthfully to adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." I sometimes almost envy you those heavenly entertainments, yet our Heavenly Father has otherwise ordered it and I would not challenge the wisdom of His counsels. Since I commenced this package God has been graciously pleased to give us more than usual intimations that He has not entirely withdrawn His favors from us. Last Lord's day we organized a little feeble church in Clatsop Plains consisting of seven members, three males and four females,¹⁴⁴ and on Monday one of my neighbors sent for me to call and see him. I found him laboring under a deep sense of his condemned condition and he said, "I tell you, Mr. Fisher, I am a miserable, wretched sinner." The work of grace appeared most distinctly marked, from a conviction of his exceeding sinfulness in the sight of God to that of a full surrender of himself to God and the exercise of faith in a crucified Redeemer. Tuesday, about 5 P. M., hope sprang up in his soul and immediately he arose from his bed, which he had scarcely left for twenty minutes after Sabbath night, and bowed in the presence of his family and a few Christian friends in prayer. He still enjoys the consolation of a hope which fills the minds of his neighbors with surprise. . . . May God give me grace to improve this providence to His glory. All I will now say on this subject is that I find numbers of our impenitent fellow citizens acknowledging that they have been unusually affected under the preaching of the Word the past winter. We can but feel an additional assurance that the Spirit's silent, yet powerful influence has attended the preached Word the past winter. We feel greatly the need of grace, lest these indications of divine favor pass away unimproved. Pray for us in Clatsop and in Ore-

¹⁴⁴ This church became extinct in a few years. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:8.

gon that we may quit ourselves as missionaries of Jesus Christ as well as missionaries of the churches.

I wrote you a large package by the Brutus and entrusted it to the care of Elder Gary. I also wrote in November by the bark Whiton, Captain Getston,¹⁴⁵ a package of three sheets in which I made a regular report from August to November. But I have recently learned that that ship is chartered for a transport to the Pacific squadron and I fear the letter will be miscarried or be long delayed. We suffer great inconvenience in rendering the amount your Board appropriate to our support available when needed, but hope to have a regular mail direct from this place to New York as soon as next winter. We shall then be able to make our reports and receive remittances from you timely so as to obviate the necessity of the too frequent interruptions of our missionary labors by the imperious demands of our families for the bare comforts of life. I know your Board cannot call in question our earnest desire to labor exclusively in the appropriate duties of a minister, but, if you will just advert to your books and count up the amount of remittances and then reflect that we have been already in the field two years, you will not wonder that we are compelled to be by far more secular than is desirable. I have received in these two years only about \$70 from your Board. Could I have been in Illinois and received remittances quarterly, I should have been enabled to devote myself wholly to the work. These are unavoidable providences which will soon be succeeded by a direct and certain communication. I do not complain, but regret that your Board must be driven to the necessity of feeling that your missionaries are doing comparatively little in Oregon.

Anything that our brethren or sisters can send us as articles of clothing, and especially in cloth, either woolen or cotton, will greatly assist us. I shall make a request that you forward articles of clothing and common household furn-

¹⁴⁵ Galston, not "Getston." Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:620.

iture and books to the amount of my salary, or nearly so, up to this time the first opportunity after this. I have purposed to write you on the subject of the manners and customs and the general character of the people and, from time to time, give a general description of the various detached portions of the country, and the present embarrassments which our colony have to encounter, but this I cannot do at this time. I will simply give my testimony in general terms to the climate. After having spent two years and a half below the Cascade Mountains, I think I have never experienced so salubrious a climate, even in Vermont or Massachusetts, and never in my life have I seen so few persons suffering under the influence of disease, in proportion to the number of population. This remark holds emphatically true on the coast. Slight colds seem to be the only prevailing disease, except it be contagious diseases. The measles have prevailed among us this winter and have swept off a very considerable number of the natives, who have suffered long from the venereal. Our soil is generally productive and yields a generous return to the labors of the husbandman. Yet it is not to be forgotten that we are far removed from the civilized world and consequently the few merchants in Oregon sell their goods of a very ordinary quality at very exorbitant prices, often one, two and three hundred per cent and, in some instances, more than a thousand per cent in advance of the first cost, among which I will name castings, edged tools, nails and all iron wares, coffee, cotton, cloth, leather boots and shoes, hats, cotton and woolen cloth. As yet there is no competition in trade. Much has been said and written of the changes of the mouth of the Columbia. I will venture to remark, upon the best authority, that the harbor within the mouth of the Columbia is one of the easiest of access and the safest in all North America. The last fifty times the bar has been crossed with no other accident than the loss of the anchor of the brig Henry. For further proof on this subject, I would refer you to Mr. Blain's letter to Honorable Thomas Benton, published in his three days'

speech in the U. S. Senate on the subject, "The United States' Title to Oregon in 1846." The publishing of that letter in the commercial periodicals in our Atlantic cities would contribute something to the encouraging of commerce in Oregon.

We hope to organize an association in June next in the Willamette Valley.¹⁴⁶ We are beginning to need one or two more efficient missionaries in the Willamette Valley. I have chosen my position as advantageously as I could near the mouth of the Columbia and promise seems to indicate that it is too important to be abandoned. The population is gradually, but constantly, increasing. We have no doubt but the government will make the first national improvements at the mouth of the Columbia, and we think it rather probable that the commercial town will be near the mouth of the river. These considerations have exerted no small influence in the decisions I have made. At this time we have no other minister in the county and there is labor sufficient to occupy the time of one man, although we are farther from the main settlements on the Willamette than is desirable. We need practical, active, common sense preachers, with warm hearts and sound minds, and the churches will soon be able and willing to contribute something for their support.

March 25th.—The indications of divine favor appear to wear a favorable aspect and another of my neighbors seems not far from the Kingdom of Heaven. Tomorrow is the Sabbath and we hope and pray that the Spirit's power may accompany the preached Word.

Br. Johnson is making some efforts to build a meeting house in Oregon City. I have not yet learned with what success. He will probably write you the particulars.¹⁴⁷ Br. Vincent Snelling should be aided, if your Board can make

¹⁴⁶ For the organization of the association, see the letter of Sept. 20, 1848, and Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:18.

¹⁴⁷ This building, the first Baptist meeting house west of the Rocky Mountains, was completed late in 1848, or early in 1849. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:6. See also the diary of the author dated July 2, 1848, and enclosed in the letter of March 1, 1849. The building was situated on Thirteenth and Main streets.

an appropriation for him to labor with the Yam Hill church and the churches in that part of the Valley. Should our next immigration be large, as it probably will, we shall greatly need help in the ministry and a colporter to travel, preach, sell books, visit and address Sabbath schools. The present and a few coming years are of very great importance in relation to all coming time in Oregon. They will constitute the formative period of our Territory, both civilly and morally. Small, immediate results will probably control interests of vast importance to all coming years. Our influence as a denomination should not be lost on the Pacific for the want of a few men and a little means. Your Board will not neglect Upper California. There can be little doubt but two missionaries should be sent, as soon as you can find the men, to labor in the vicinity of San Francisco Bay, should that section of country become a territory of the U. States.¹⁴⁸ Br. Ross, a member of Br. Ewart's church, is there selling goods.

I cannot close this without once more recommending to our Atlantic brethren, who wish to be instrumental in forming the character of some of the most important future states in the Union, to come and labor with us. Very soon the facilities for immigration will be greatly increased, and perhaps no new portion of our whole country will afford a more inviting field for usefulness and enterprise than the one fronting the vast Pacific. Would to God we could make some of our efficient deacons and private brethren arouse to a conviction of duty on this subject and induce them to come over and help us. At the present time it will require less sacrifice in time and property to sail from New York or Boston in October or November for the mouth of the Columbia than it does to immigrate by land from Illinois and Iowa in the spring. The farmer leaving your port in November may plant and sow Oregon soil in May, without spending a winter on expense before he can cultivate the soil. Time

¹⁴⁸ Rev. O. C. Wheeler was appointed to California in 1848 by the Home Mission Society. Soon afterward, Rev. H. W. Read was appointed, but stopped in New Mexico on his way out. **Bap. Home Missions in N. Am., 1832-1882, p. 339.**

admonishes me to lay down my pen.

As ever yours, in gospel bonds,

EZRA FISHER.

March the 29th.—We still see increasing evidence that the Spirit of the Lord is over us, and although Sabbath was very rainy our congregation was good and solemn. We learn of another case in which we begin to cherish hope—a lad of thirteen years. Some backsliders are awakening. Our prayer meetings are becoming interesting, O, for a preparation of heart to lead God's people into the knowledge of every Christian duty and to win sinners to Christ, our all compassionate Saviour!

In view of so many uncertainties in regard to my former letters on board the *Whiton* reaching you, I think best to give you a bill of goods which I wish you will have purchased and forwarded at your earliest convenience. I wrote on board the *Whiton* for one set of Fuller's works. We need Psalmists and you may send me one dozen, unless you find some friends who will donate them. If second-handed, they would be very gratefully received. I requested you to make an effort to have the A. B. Publication Soc. donate some books for ministers' libraries and Sunday schools and forward them to me. I also ordered at that time one bolt of dark calico, ten pounds saleratus put up in an earthen or glass jar, one hat for me (the thread enclosed in this is the circumference of my head), one tin reflector for baking bread, 15 yards of red woolen flannel and 20 yards canton flannel. Please send us one cheap bureau, one good common tea set, one set of plain knives and forks, one set of small dining plates, one common sized deep platter, six half-pint tumblers (a good article), three or four patent wooden pails, one ten-gallon brass kettle, bailed, one box of bar soap, ginger, spice, cinnamon and cloves, two pound each, two lbs. of best quality African capsicum, two lbs. black pepper, two bolts of coarse cotton sheeting, three bolts of good, firm, dark calico, one bolt of plaid linsey, 20 or 25 yds.

of yellow flannel, 12 yards of red flannel, one pilot cloth overcoat large enough for you, to set easy, suited to a new country and a rainy winter, 15 yards of heavy cadet cloth or dark colored satinnet and six yards of black satinnet, a good, fine article, four yards of black kerseymere, six pairs of colored woolen half hose, domestic, two pounds of woolen stocking yarn, two pair of women's black worsted hose, two pair of white cotton hose, women's; one cheap fur cap for a boy 15 years old, two lapped leghorn bonnets, trimmed, five yards of Irish linen, three linen handkerchiefs, two silk pocket handkerchiefs, two black silk handkerchiefs, two brown linen table cloths, 10 yards of brown toweling, one glass lamp, 13 yards of black silk lustre alpaca, 15 yards of black cambric, and cotton wadding enough to stuff one cloak, five yards of brown holland, two pounds of candlewicking, six cakes of shaving soap, one pair heavy calfskin men's shoes, No. 9, two pair of women's shoes, calf skin, No. 4½, two pair of morocco shoes, No. 4, two pair of boys' shoes, heavy kip, Nos. 5 and 6, two pair of girls' shoes, calf skin, Nos. 1 and 2, two pair children's calf skin, Nos. 10 and 11. Our climate is wet and we need thick, firm leather. Also send one school geography.

March 31st.—In the purchase of these articles, you will please have regard to our income and the climate in which we live.

Our late news from the Indian war is of a favorable character and we hope the war will terminate in a few months at longest. Yet a few unfavorable occurrences may involve us in a general Indian warfare. Present prospects for an abundant wheat harvest are very flattering. I must close this, as the last opportunity to send it to the return party will be in a day or two and I have to answer several private letters.

Yours with esteem,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary in Clatsop Plains, Oregon.

Received August 14, 1848.

Clatsop Plains, Clatsop County, Oregon Ter.,
Sept. the 20th, 1848.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.
Very Dear Br.:

All the letters which you sent me on board the ship *Matilda* were probably received on board the brig *Mary Dane*,¹⁴⁹ together with thirteen boxes of goods and books shipped on board the same ship. I suppose the other box was shipped directly to Br. Johnson, as I find it was designed for him. I shall forward this by the Brig *Henry* to the Pacific squadron now on the coast of California, hoping it will reach you; yet I am in so much doubt that I shall not venture to forward my report from March 8th up to this date, which is now partially made out. We are expecting a government steamer in the mouth of the Columbia in a few weeks, by which I will forward you my report, together with an answer to all your inquiries. I will then write to all the societies and individuals who have so kindly sympathized with us in these ends of the earth. The goods and books will afford us great relief and the donors will be held in grateful, lasting remembrance. May God reward them.

We organized an association on the 23rd and 24th of June last in Tualatin Plains by the name of the Willamette Baptist Association, consisting of five churches. I spent the last of June and the month of July in the Willamette Valley. Had the subject of an institution of learning under consideration with a few of the most judicious brethren. It strikes me that the central part of the Willamette Valley, near the head of what will be steam navigation, will be the place best adapted to meet the wants of the present population of Oregon, and will always be the center of a heavy population. But we find no man who will secure a tract of land sufficiently large to meet all the wants of a literary institution unless

¹⁴⁹ "Mary Dare," not "Mary Dane." She belonged to the Hudson Bay Company and arrived from the Hawaiian Islands, where she had probably received these goods from the "Matilda," the latter part of August, 1848. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:43.

I go and buy or take a claim and donate the half of it to the denomination and enter upon the work of commencing and sustaining a school in connection with preaching. But in that event I must measurably abandon this point, which we feel is of vast importance prospectively. Probably \$100 or \$200 would purchase such a claim of 640 acres as would be desirable. But our laws in Oregon require actual residence within one year after recording such claim. I have been in great anxiety on this subject. One year more may probably put such an opportunity beyond our reach without a very considerable sum of money. Neither myself nor family have any inclination to change our place, unless we see a strong probability of advancing the general interests of religion by it. I can secure a tolerably eligible situation in the vicinity of the mouth of the Columbia River, but at present it is remote from the great portion of the population, yet eventually I think it will become a commanding central point. But it will be difficult to induce our brethren to take this view on the subject. While this subject has been engrossing my anxious care, our whole community has been perfectly convulsed with the rumor of much gold in the valleys and hills of California.¹⁵⁰ The report has been often repeated and enlarged upon till more than half of the men of our Territory are either digging gold or on the way in quest of the treasure. The region in which it is found is variously represented as being from 120 to 200 miles in length and about 70 in breadth, and it is said that no limits have yet been found. Pure gold is found everywhere where the diggers break the earth and the amount a man procures per day varies from \$10 worth to \$240. The gold bears the appearance of having been fused and congealed in irregular forms and various sized pieces, from very small pieces (in form resembling wheat bran) to those of more than four pounds' weight. Silver, quicksilver, platina, and even diamonds, are reported

¹⁵⁰ The news of the discovery of gold in California first reached Oregon early in August, 1848. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, I:42, 43. The account of the emigration of able-bodied men from Oregon to California is corroborated by contemporaries. *Ibid.*, 43.

to have been found in this gold region; also iron ore, containing from 80 to 90 per cent of iron. I never saw so excited a community. Gold is the rage, and it is to be feared that the farming interests in Oregon will suffer immensely; and all our manufacturing, commercial, social, civil, moral and religious interests must suffer for years. Indeed I think a greater calamity to our colony could hardly have been sent. California will fill up as by magic with a heterogeneous mass from every nation and tribe. Our congregations are fast waning. But we suppose we shall receive accessions from the States to fill up in part the places vacated. Provisions on the Pacific coast must be scarce in less than eighteen months. Numbers of our brethren have gone to spend the winter at the gold mines and others will go in the spring, probably to make a home. You will see by this that no time should be lost by your Board in securing the labors of two or three efficient ministers for California. We feel that we, more than ever before, need grace to direct in these times of trial. God no doubt has a providence in this. May we so improve under these trials that they shall eventuate in the promotion of the great interests of Zion, both here and in the ends of the world. Tomorrow morning I leave for the Willamette Valley. Our brethren in Tualatin Plains have a protracted meeting appointed and I am strongly solicited to attend. But I must go with a heavy heart. Perhaps half the brethren there have gone for gold. I fear we shall labor in vain. Gold at this time is the people's god and how shall we be able to present the glories of the Redeemer's character in so attractive a light as to win the affections of those enchanted with the immediate prospects of wealth? But God reigns and the hearts of all men are in His hands and He can use the feeblest instrumentality to show forth His praise. But I should not have chosen this time for special labor.

I remain your unworthy brother,

EZRA FISHER.

Received June 11, 1849.

Clatsop Plains, Oregon Ter., Sept. 19, 1848.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Very dear Br.:

Your three letters under date of July 15, 1847, July 17, 1847, and October 15th, 1847, together with one bearing date Feb. 16th, 1847, with an envelope subscribed Sept. 25th, 1847, were received on the 5th inst. by the Hudson Bay Company's brig *Mary Dare*, together with 13 boxes marked with a diamond and numbered 1 to 10 and A, B and D. I think the box marked "C" was shipped direct to Br. Johnson from Honolulu. Your letters cheered our spirits and the goods and books were most welcome messengers.

Beside the above named letters, I have received from you since I left Rock Island, April 12th, 1845, the following letters; one bearing dates Jan. 19th, and 24th, 1846, one commission No. 1081, April 1st, 1846, one letter Oct. 26th, 1846, and one 31st and November 13th, 1846, and one commission, No. 1170, April 1st, 1847.

I wrote you about the 15th of July, 1847, by the ship *Brutus*, to the care of Elder Gary, who assured me he would deliver the letters in person; I next wrote you about the 1st of November, 1847, by the bark *Whiton*, Capt. Gelston, in both which I think I gave you a brief report of labors. I wrote again on the 8th of March, 1848, and reported labor from Nov. 1, 1847, to March 8th, 1848. These three sheets were forwarded by last spring's return party overland. I then reported nineteen weeks, preached twenty sermons, attended four prayer meetings, two religious conferences, preparatory to the constitution of a church, visited 40 families and individuals, two common schools, traveled 147 miles, one young married brother a licensed preacher in my field; monthly concert of prayer is observed; \$14 paid for my salary; two Sabbath schools, 42 scholars, 10 teachers, one school, 100 volumes in the library; the other 20 vols. I have one Bible class of eight members. We were then about to be

constituted in a few days in Clatsop Plains. Had been engaged in building a hewed log school house 18 feet by 24 for the purpose of school and public worship on the Sab. I had spent two weeks in that work.

I will now proceed to report from March 8th, 1848, to Sept. 19th, 1848. My field comprises Clatsop Plains and Astoria. I stately supply two stations in these plains. My place of residence is Clatsop Plains, the community of Astoria as yet being too small to justify my fixing my location there. My post office is Astoria.

I have labored 28 weeks since my last report, preached 37 sermons, delivered two temperance lectures, attended 24 prayer meetings, visited religiously 96 families and individuals, visited five common schools, obtained 22 signatures to the temperance pledge, baptized none, assisted in the constitution of the Clatsop church, no ordination, traveled to and from my appointments 611 miles, seven persons were received by letter into the constitution of the church and one to the Santiam church. By experience none.

We know of no conversions since about the time of our last report. About that time three were hopefully converted. No young men preparing for the ministry. Monthly concert of prayer is observed at one of my stations. My people have paid during this period nothing for home missions, domestic missions, foreign missions, Bible or any other benevolent societies; for my salary \$12. Have so far advanced in our school house that we have a comfortable place for worship. Connected with my stations are two Sunday schools, ten teachers and 40 scholars, 125 volumes in each library. Bible class part of the time in the school; six scholars. I wrote in my last informing you of an interesting state of religious feeling with several of our citizens. I sanguinely hoped during the months of March, April and May that we should have the satisfaction of administering the ordinance of baptism to three or four men, but soon the Cayuse war called off one young man, and in a few weeks two others who gave

evidence of a change being wrought in them removed to the Willamette Valley and the favorable omens passed off without any in-gatherings to the church. Our congregations, however, have generally been good for the amount of population. Our Sunday schools have been very uniform and our children appear unusually interested.

Feb. 2nd, 1849.¹⁵¹—Dear Brother Hill: The want of direct conveyance to New York has occasioned this long delay and I will now make out my report from Sept. 19, 1848, up to this time, making 19 weeks.

Preached 24 sermons, delivered no lectures on moral and benevolent subjects, attended 18 prayer meetings, four covenant meetings, one temperance meeting, visited 49 families and individuals, three common schools; baptized none; obtained two signatures to the temperance pledge; organized no church, no ordination, traveled 412 miles to and from my appointments; received no persons by letter, none by experience; no person preparing for the ministry. Monthly concert of prayer is observed at one station. My people have paid nothing for missionary or other benevolent societies. Paid \$45 for my salary. We have one Sunday school, six teachers, 24 scholars, 125 volumes in the library. No Bible class. I attend our Sunday school and usually explain the lessons; distribute tracts and pamphlets among the children. We have entirely separated from the Presbyterians in our S. S. and congregation, or rather they have separated from us. Our congregations have diminished during the winter from the fact that numbers of our citizens are in the mines in California. Yet the people at home are quite as attentive to the preaching of the Word as usual. Part of our church will soon move to California and all the rest will spend next summer at least in the mines, except my family, and this is somewhat a specimen of the gold excitement throughout Oregon. But a small portion of the men will remain at

¹⁵¹ The letter of Sept. 19, 1848, was inclosed with this of Feb. 2, 1849, and with those of Sept. 20th and Oct. 19th, 1848, was not received until past the middle of June, 1849.

home during the summer, except as they return to harvest their crops in July, Aug. and Sept. Many families will probably leave for California, among which will be found more than a fair proportion of business men. Immediately on the confirmation of the report of much gold in California our Methodist brethren sent one preacher¹⁵² overland to the mines, and I understand that he is now preaching part of the time in San Francisco.

Yours, EZRA FISHER,

Received June 19, 1849.

Missionary in Oregon.

Clatsop Plains on the Pacific Shore, near Astoria,
October 19, 1848.

Beloved Br. Hill:

On opening the most valuable box, No. 9, shipped from New York to me on board the ship *Matilda*, Oct. 15th, 1847, I found an inventory without either name or place attached to it, but we infer that the letter was directed to you and not to either of us from the sentence appended to the invoice in the following words: "The difference of \$2.34 between the invoice and the letter to Brother Hill is owing to articles having been brought in after the letter was sent." The box contained the only shawl, boys' cloth cap, and a piece of bed-ticking that was sent us. The box was valued at \$66.34. We regret that we have neither name nor place attached to the invoice, because it would afford us great pleasure to have addressed a line of grateful acknowledgement to the donors. The box was thankfully received and contained a number of articles of woolen clothing which are especially valuable in our climate, so cool in summer and so wet in winter. Any second-hand woolen clothes, when but partially worn, are always very useful where sheep are scarce and looms none.

¹⁵² Who was sent to California, the editors have not been able to find; Rev. William Roberts and Rev. J. H. Wilbur stopped there several weeks in 1847, on their way from New York to Oregon, and organized a church in San Francisco—the first Methodist church on the Pacific Coast south of Oregon. In 1849, Rev. William Taylor and Rev. Isaac Owen were the regular appointees of the Conference in California.—H. K. Himes, *Missionary History of the Pacific Northwest*, p. 371, 386.

We have not more than two or three looms in all our Territory. Thanks to Br. and Dr. Allen for the Mothers' Journal, the forwarding of the paragraph Bible and Testament and other favors. I shall answer his letter before long. We received a bundle of 100 volumes of new Sunday school books from the Juvenile Soc. of the Sunday school in the Stanton Street Baptist Church. I shall answer Br. Cowan's letter as soon as time will permit. We received a package of new Sunday school books, containing 300 volumes, and we regret to say we found no name nor bill attached to them, as we should be pleased to respond to the donors direct. We know they were obtained through your influence in the City. We regard them a valuable acquisition, especially as we have been obliged to sustain our school in this place with so few volumes of the A. Tract Soc.'s publications and other books less adapted to the capacities of children. We have been waiting and praying a whole year for just such an auxiliary. May the blessings of these ends of the earth come on the donors in the great day of the Lord! The periodicals, especially of 1846 and 1847, were most gratefully received and we are still feasting richly upon their contents, whenever we have an hour of leisure, and we feast not alone. All our neighbors, and especially our Christian friends, find much to entertain them. The annual reports are all valuable, and we only regret that we have no more, as we have frequent occasions to meet prejudices surely through these matters of fact. You speak of procuring and forwarding a box of school books. Next to sustaining the gospel, you will render us the most essential service in a work of this kind. It is very much to be desired that the present system of popular school books in the States be introduced into all our schools in Oregon. And while so much effort is being made in the old states in behalf of popular education in the Mississippi Valley, I trust a voice will be lifted up in behalf of the Pacific borders. Would to God that we had a Slade to plead our cause on this subject in our Atlantic cities and towns. The importance of this subject is daily increasing our responsibilities and the

rage of the gold mania is diminishing public sympathy for the general diffusion of knowledge. At present our old states must assume a part of this responsibility, or it is to be feared that Oregon and California will prove a curse to the Union. We want your books and, as far as practicable, the very same kind and date as those which are so richly blessing your whole Atlantic slope. But with books, we equally need teachers of moral worth and, if possible, of vital piety. Would to God we could make our feelings understood in the eastern and middle states, and we are sure we should see every ship from your ports to our coast crowded with men, and women too, who would become co-workers with us in this and every noble, philanthropic work. Could you but visit us and see and feel for yourself all we see and feel daily of our peculiar relations and temptations, you would strike a note that would not only call out a few boxes of goods to clothe the families of the missionaries already in the field, but would search out from their quiet, comfortable homes many a useful brother to share with us the toils and privations and, I will add too, the honors under God of transferring to these western shores the blessings of general education and spiritual, practical religion. We are in perishing need of help. We need just such men as give efficiency to the churches at home. Then under God we can move forward in the cause of education and Christianity. But we will not despond; we have counted the cost; God is our helper and He has the hearts of His people in His hands. But I must close.

As ever yours,

EZRA FISHER.

On Margin.—Help must be sent to California without delay if possible. I should certainly have spent part of this winter at San Francisco, Monterey and perhaps have visited the mines, if I could have raised the funds to have paid my passage without digging at the mines.

Received June 18, 1849.

Clatsop Plains, Oregon Ter., Feb. 3d, 1849.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill.

Dear Brother:

I closed my last yesterday on the subject of California and will continue to remark. I understand by Capt. of the Undine that Mr. Hunt, a Presbyterian minister, is preaching at San Francisco.¹⁵³ Besides these two, I think there is not a Protestant preacher in Upper California. In view of the extraordinary evolution of things in Oregon and the vast influx of population in California and the fact that a large portion of our Baptist brethren of Oregon will be at the mines throughout most of the summer, and in view of the strong solicitude of our members in Clatsop about to move to California that I should visit that territory at least next summer, and the advice of all the members of the church, and in view of the loss of the goods shipped on board the bark Undine the 21st of June, 1848, I have thought it might be my duty to visit the mines the coming spring and dig long enough to raise means to pay my passage and meet the present pressing wants of my family, spend a few weeks in the American settlements and towns and return home perhaps in July or August. I do not know but this course may be regarded by your Board as outstepping the bounds of your instructions, but I feel a strong conviction that great and sudden and unexpected changes justify extraordinary action. I do not know that I have the first desire to dig in the mines one day and, if I could leave my family comfortable and go by water to San Francisco and other towns on the Bay and the mines, with no other care than that for God's glory on the Pacific Coast, my care would be greatly relieved. But I have not the means, and I cannot leave that interest without being able to make known the wants of that rapidly accumulating mass to your Board. I will keep an account of the amount of time lost in traveling and digging, if any, and report to your Board, or, should your Board disapprove of the enter-

¹⁵³ This was Thomas Dwight Hunt, of Honolulu, a Congregationalist. Bancroft. *Hist. of Calif.* VII:727. Several clergymen came in February, 1849. *Ibid.*

prise and think the cause of Christ better served by discontinuing my appointment the present year, I shall acquiesce, with the privilege of continuing a correspondence with you. I trust, however, that your Board will acquiesce in my views. I am quite sure, if you were here and knew all I know of the state of things in California, you would take the most prompt measures to acquaint yourselves with the wants of that territory and meet them. Oregon must be measurably stationary for a time,¹⁵⁴ while California will swarm with people and overflow with wealth, gambling and dissipation, and, unless our churches act with promptness and devotion and liberality, these inexhaustible treasures are given over into the hands of the Prince of Devils, California will be morally lost and will prove a capital scourge to our nation. It is only relatively that Oregon sinks in importance. No doubt she will become three-fold as valuable to the nation as she would have been, if gold had not been found in California.¹⁵⁵ Although all is in confusion in Oregon and our citizens and members are now going and coming so that it is difficult effecting anything permanent here just at this time, yet be assured that we need more laborers even here, that the efforts already made may be followed up, and under God we may expect a rich return. This, like all other excitements, will sooner or later settle and people and wealth will flow back to Oregon with astonishing rapidity. We now need at least two efficient young men in Oregon who can be well sustained by your Board, and I know that an able young man now placed in San Francisco and liberally supported, another at Sacramento City (Sutter's Fort), another in the American settlements and a fourth at the mines would find profitable work in promoting the interests of Zion under the

¹⁵⁴ This was approximately true.

The immigration to Oregon in 1849 was about 400; in 1850, about 2000; in 1851, about 1500; in 1852, about 2500; while the increase in California during these years was about ten or twenty times this number. F. G. Young, *The Oregon Trail*, in *Oregon Hist. Soc. Quar.* I:370. This estimate probably includes only those who came overland by the Oregon Trail.

¹⁵⁵ The influx of gold-seekers to California gave Oregon a market for its lumber and farm products. Returning miners brought gold dust with them, and the author's prophecy of Oregon's share in the prosperity of California was fulfilled. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:48-59.

Captain of our salvation. I wish you to remember that the formation of our civil and religious character is at hand and vice in all its forms must reign, unless Zion's sons are awake. Just think of the advantageous position of San Francisco in relation to the whole Pacific trade. Where is there another such point to be occupied in all North America? Now hold the map before you. Think of the mountains of gold behind her, the influx of population from Upper and Lower California bordering the coast, the Pacific islands, and even China, swarming hither for gold, and then let me ask our dear brethren, Are we prepared to leave this point unoccupied for the want of a few hundred dollars? This picture is no fiction. Already the principal men of the Sandwich Islands are said to be in the mines digging gold, and I am informed that there are some from China, too. And how long will it be before almost every nation in Europe will be represented there? All who go to the mines and return say the gold is inexhaustible and yields from one ounce of pure gold to six or eight pounds per day to a single laborer. What a point then is San Francisco for the men of God to take with Bibles and devotional books and tracts, sending them as upon the wings of the wind! Will your Board censure me then for pursuing the plan laid down in this sheet the coming summer, in the midst of this unsettled state of things in Oregon?

I received yours of Jan. 22, 1848, giving the sum total of three boxes of goods shipped on board the Bark Undine, Thos. S. Baker, Master, on the 21st of January, 1848. The three boxes with cartage and insurance amounted to \$122.74. The Undine is now in the Columbia. I understand that she suffered a partial wreck in passing Cape Horn and her goods were part thrown overboard and part sold as damaged goods somewhere on the Pacific coast south of this. Thus you see, dear brother, that God has been pleased, graciously no doubt, to deprive me and family of our dependence in clothing for the ensuing year, and it must probably be ten months before you will be able to recover the insurance and place the goods

within my reach. The letters enclosed in the boxes with the periodicals are of course lost. I shall be obliged to write another sheet and enclose in this. I therefore close this by subscribing myself your unworthy brother,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Want of time prevents my writing more by this opportunity to California to meet the first mail steamer. But I will give you extracts from my Journal soon, some brief geographical notices, etc.

Yours, E. F.

Received June 19, 1849.

Clatsop Plains, Feb. 5th, 1849.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill.

Dear Brother:

That there may be no mistake in relation to the boxes shipped on board the bark *Undine* on the 21st day of Jan., 1848, I will give you the copy of the inventory as forwarded by you. . . .

It appears that Thos. S. Baker sailed as Master and that Capt. James Bishop & Co. were proprietors. The *Undine* has changed owners and masters. It is to be hoped you have learned of the disaster and secured the insurance and forwarded me the same articles in kind before this time. But if not, I trust on the receipt of this you will secure the insurance and forward the same articles in kind and quality, excepting the children's shoes. You will please get them all one size larger at least, as they are growing fast. I wrote on board the bark *Whiton* in the fall of 1847 ordering the following: One set of Fuller's works, one dozen of the Psalmist, one bolt of dark calico, ten lbs. of saleratus, one hat, one tin reflector for baking bread, fifteen yds. of red flannel and twenty yds. of canton flannel.

On the 8th of March, 1848, accompanying a report of nineteen weeks, I ordered the following articles: (This was sent overland and I fear has not reached you. If you have not

forwarded it, please omit the bureau and in the place send me a good cooking stove and pipe, as we are not able to have both at present.) . . .

Please send me the following articles, if I have the amount due me. Bill ordered Feb. 5, 1849: Six large tin pans, one set candle moulds, 2 tin pails with lids, six and eight quarts, 10 pint tin cups, 2 quart do., 2 tin coffee pots, one-half box of glass, eight by ten, 1 keg of nails, 8's, 6's and 4's, equal parts, 15 lbs. nails, 10 penny, 1 nail hatchet with handle, 1 ax, 1 spade, with steel blade, 1 hoe, 1 small, plain looking glass, 1 set of dining plates, 1 set butter do., 1 pitcher, 2 quarts, 1 bolt cotton sheeting, heavy, 2 bolts dark, firm calico, 16 yds. black alpaca, or something suitable for ladies' dresses and cloaks, 12 yds. black cambric, 12 sheet wadding, 14 yds. good bed ticking, half lb. good black sewing silk, 1 good cooking stove and furniture with 7 or 8 joints of pipe, 6 ivory fine combs, 6 doz. spools white cotton thread, 1 ream good cap writing paper, 1 box vegetable shaving soap, 1 pen-knife, 1 pocket do., 1 traveler's inkstand and 6 common cheap ones,¹⁵⁶ 1 pair heavy calfskin boots, No. 10, 1 do. shoes, No. 9.

N. B.—Samuel N. Castle, agent A. B. C. F. M. for Sandwich Islands Mission, forwarded the 13 boxes shipped by you on the *Matilda*, charging \$20.73 to me and to Br. Johnson \$1.22, stating that he should draw on you for the same. Br. Johnson requests that you should take his proportion of this freight from the Islands to Astoria from your account charged to me and charge the same to him, which will probably be about ten dollars. I have not the separate bills of freight as charged to him and me from N. Y. to the Sandwich Islands. You have on your books and will confer a favor on me by apportioning the amount, \$21.95, between us. Cut the lower part of this half sheet and you have my entire bill.

P. S.—Send no more goods by the Sandwich Islands. Bill continued from the other page: 1 bolt Kentucky jean, 1 pair

¹⁵⁶ These cheap inkstands were probably for school use.

thick, men's shoes, No. 6, 2 pair stout, ladies' morocco shoes, Nos. 4 and 4½, 1 pair misses' shoes, calf skin, No. 2½, 1 do No. 1.

Yours respectfully,

. . . .

EZRA FISHER.

Clatsop Plains, Oregon Ter., Feb. 8th, 1849.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill.

Dear Brother:

Yours under date of October 15th, 1847, presented some of your views of the importance of making an early attempt to lay the foundation for a denominational school which should eventually mature into a college and theological seminary. I was greatly cheered to learn that some of our Eastern brethren were beginning to think on that subject. This is a cause which is far from being among the least of my cares. And, first, from selfish motives I am called upon to be awake to this work. My rising family and that of a respectable number of our brethren imperiously demand that something be done, and that soon, or our children must be distressingly neglected. And, secondly, such is the character of a large portion of our Oregon Baptists that, as a denomination, we cannot be efficient and secure a great amount of public confidence till we can find some benevolent enterprise at home in which we can enlist their sympathies. This will be likely to be a work around which all will rally from personal interest more readily than any other benevolent enterprise now before the Christian public. Through this medium I would hope to call into our Territory more liberal-minded men from the older states. It is true that we have a respectable number of Baptists who appreciate the importance of an educated ministry and who pray for the universal spread of the gospel by the direct effort of the church, yet the larger portion of our brethren have never seen it so done in Israel.

Thirdly, we owe it to our rising territory to perform our part in the formation of our national character. I spent four

or five weeks last summer in traveling through the Willamette Valley ¹⁵⁷ preaching and privately laying this subject before our brethren, and I rejoiced much to find so many who responded cheerfully to the views that I presented. I then thought some central point in that valley on the banks of the Willamette, or near it, in view of the circumstances, would be the most desirable position. Afterward, when we heard a report of much gold in the vicinity of the Columbia River,¹⁵⁸ both Br. Johnson and myself thought we might as well make an effort on these Plains (Clatsop). We, however, learned that the parties who went to Powder River to explore for gold brought home nothing but mica, or pyrites of iron, and the whole tide of immigration and commerce turned towards California. I, therefore, was compelled to yield to the popular opinion everywhere rife that Oregon must unavoidably be thrown back at least two or three years. Our lovely little church in Clatsop Plains will every one but my own family go to California, and all think it is my duty to go this summer, and some are very solicitous that I move my family there. In view of all these circumstances, nothing more can be done the present season than to fix on a location, and that is somewhat hazardous. Yet with the present development of the country, both here and in California, I think, if anything is done this season, I shall be strongly inclined to favor the commencement of this work somewhere near the point on the Willamette where steam navigation will terminate, say about 70 or 80 miles above Oregon City. I am strengthened in these views from the facts that the Willamette Valley is the largest body of rich farming land in Oregon, and the scenery remarkably picturesque: that the large bodies of farming land on the Umpqua, the Clamet¹⁵⁹ and Rogue rivers will be the next settled after the Willamette, and that there must be a great thoroughfare opened from the falls of the Willamette River to the gold mines on

¹⁵⁷ There was as yet no uniformity in the spelling of this name. See note 71.

¹⁵⁸ These discoveries were not largely utilized until the sixties.—G. H. Himes.

¹⁵⁹ Klamath. See note 100.

the Sacramento River in California before many years. Wagons already travel it with convenience.

You ask how a site may be secured? I know of but one way at present, and that is to find one, two or more brethren interested in the enterprise to take or purchase claims covering the site wanted and then pledge themselves either to donate or sell the necessary amount of land to a board in trust for the denomination.

My feelings last summer were so much enlisted on this subject that I became half-inclined to make a claim in reference to this specific object, change the field of my labor and pledge half of said claim to the denomination. I, however, thought of the time and money expended by your Board to sustain me at the mouth of the river and of the little feeble church here, and, by the advice of Br. Johnson and the absence of all counsel from your Board, I concluded to let matters rest for the present.

Now this complete confusion into which the entire community, both in Oregon and in California, are thrown by means of much gold being found in the latter territory will probably compel me to take my family to the Willamette Valley and work toward this object, in connection with that greatest of all works, the preaching of the gospel, or comply with the wishes of some of the best members of this church and remove to the vicinity of San Francisco Bay; or it is possible, but hardly probable, some good brethren may move to this place. I leave this matter with the great Head of the Church and trust His providences may mark out plainly the path of duty. I need much the advice of your Board on this subject, and trust I shall have it in three or four months. From the present movement of things I think a large portion of the enterprise and business talent of Oregon will be thrown upon the Sacramento River and San Francisco Bay. What proportion of our Oregon brethren and their families, I cannot now tell. But of one thing I am confident, ministerial help and educational help must be sent to

Oregon and California from the States or little will be done. My lungs are beginning to fail me; Br. Johnson has a numerous family and cannot do everything; the means necessary to sustain a family in Oregon the present year will be nearly twice as much as it was last year, and it is exceedingly doubtful whether the liberality of the people on the Pacific will keep pace with the increase of their wealth unless they have the gospel sanctified to them. Sin and iniquity are making fearful strides in California since the commencement of gold digging, if all reports be true. How exceedingly desirable that these unparalleled treasures be consecrated to the service of the Lord in the universal spread of the gospel.

As ever I subscribe myself your unworthy brother,

EZRA FISHER.

Received July 3, 1849.

Clatsop Plains, Oregon, March 1, 1849.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill.

Dear Brother:

In this I will give you a journal of my tour through the Willamette Valley last June and July.

June 13th, 1848.—Preached at my north station, four miles from my residence, to an attentive assembly and attended S. S. and Bible class. We seemed to enjoy more than a usual degree of the divine Presence. In the evening walked three miles to the landing for these plains, seven miles southwest from Astoria. Here we spent an hour in social prayer with six or eight professors, among whom were two who have recently professed a hope in Christ. Conversed with Mr. L. on the importance of publicly putting on Christ by baptism. He assured me that he is only waiting for the returning health of his wife that she may accompany him.

19th.—Left the Scippanouin¹⁶⁰ landing for the Willamette, in company with a party of fifteen, in a large canoe. The morning was delightfully serene and the Columbia, here

¹⁶⁰ Skipanon, on Clatsop Plains.

eight miles in width, formed one vast mirror reflecting the light, the imagery of towering hills and stately forest trees everywhere skirting and often overhanging its bold and precipitous shores. This day by alternate sailing and rowing or paddling, we made our way up the stream forty-three miles; and, just as the sun was concealing his golden beams behind the accumulation of lofty hills, we sought and found a camp on a rocky shore at the base of a steep mountain side loaded with heavy forests and almost impenetrably bestudded with vines and shrubbery. Here we kindled our fire, took such refreshments as we had provided for the journey, committed ourselves to the care of Him who spreadeth out the heavens as a tent and laid our weary bodies down under the starry canopy to rest for the night, as is our uniform custom in journeying on this mighty river.

22d.—This morning at eight reached Linnton, a small town of six or eight log cabins situated on the west bank of the Willamette six miles above its junction with the Columbia and twelve S. W. from Fort Vancouver.¹⁶¹ Here I left my party for Tualatin Plains, ten miles S. W. My way lay over high hills and through a dense forest. About twelve reached the house of my esteemed friend and brother, David T. Lenox. Here I was received with truly Christian hospitality. Four of his children have publicly put on Christ during the last year. In the afternoon visited the school which I taught in the summer of '46, now taught by a worthy Br. Ford, formerly from N. Y.

23rd.—Met delegates from six churches, and by request preached on the importance of brotherly love. Was called to the chair and, after long but friendly deliberation on the subject of the connection of churches with missionary bodies, an association was organized, consisting of five churches, under the name of the Willamette Baptist Association, leaving each church free to act at pleasure on the missionary

¹⁶¹ Linnton was laid out in the winter of 1843-4, and a road cut out from it to Tualatin Plains. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:415. It languished in competition with Portland.

question. Oh, how deeply ought Christians to humble themselves in view of the thought that so many of our dear brethren are so slow to awake and put on their strength and come up to the great battlefield of Zion's King! May the love of the gospel soon bring all our churches to a union of sentiment and action on this great practical subject.

24th.—This day has been one of hard labor and, I trust, of some humble, fervent prayer. It does my soul good to see some manifest marks of discipleship in the midst of error. A spirit of kindness has been maintained while there has been very little yielding of principle. On the whole, the best work done this day has been the discussing and acting on the subject of the importance of liberating the ministry from worldly care and encouraging them to work in Christ's harvest field. Br. Vincent Snelling was appointed to travel and preach twelve months in the Willamette Valley, and nearly \$100 was subscribed on the spot for that object. This is our commencement of the book of acts. May its records be greatly enlarged each coming year.

25th.—Sabbath. Preached to an unusually large concourse for Oregon from Heb. 12:28, "Wherefore we, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved," etc. Theme, Peculiarity and Immutability of Christ's Kingdom. Br. Johnson followed and continued the subject. The fixed attention of the congregation indicated that they were instructed on subjects of infinite moment. May God apply the word with saving effect to some souls!

26th and 27th.—Prepared the minutes for the press and preached to a small collection in Tualatin Plains.

28th.—Rode ten miles to Mr. Clark's camp ground,¹⁶² where a camp meeting was commencing, and at two P. M. preached on the importance of relying entirely upon the means of divine appointment in laboring for Zion's enlargements; Zion's strength rests alone in Zion's King. Some serious impressions had been made during the meeting of our

¹⁶² The site of the present Forest Grove.

Association, and it was evident that some few souls were concerned for their future state.

29th.—Rode ten miles and visited Elder Porter's¹⁶³ family and affectionately recommended to the young members the Pearl of Great Price.

30th.—Rode 28 miles from Tualatin Plains to Oregon City Country interspersed with prairie oak and fir openings and occasionally a belt of half a mile of heavy timber; undergrowth, hazel bush, some of which grows 15 feet high and large enough to be used for making brooms¹⁶⁴; hills high on approaching the river.

July 2d.—Preached for Br. Johnson, and after preaching Br. Johnson baptized a sister in the Willamette, a large concourse of citizens witnessing the scene, which was solemnly interesting. In the afternoon visited and addressed the Union S. school. Br. Johnson's meeting house enclosed except windows, but yet unpainted.

3rd.—Rode 15 miles up the east side of the Willamette to the Molalla River. Visited an anti-missionary Baptist minister¹⁶⁵; found him antinomian in doctrine. Spent the night with Br. Cornelius and wife. The plains on this stream (Molalla) are sufficiently large to afford a good settlement. Here are some eight or ten Baptist members and a church will probably soon be constituted.¹⁶⁶

4th.—Rode 25 miles through a rolling open country, interspersed with prairies. The way lay back of the main French settlement, the Roman stronghold of Oregon.¹⁶⁷ Spent the

¹⁶³ Rev. William Porter (1803-1872) came to Oregon from Ohio in 1847 and settled in Washington County on a farm. He preached mostly for the West Union and Forest Grove churches. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:58.

¹⁶⁴ The author frequently used the hazel to make brooms and coarse brushes for the use of his own family.

¹⁶⁵ Possibly Isom Cranfill.—G. H. Himes.

¹⁶⁶ The date of the organization of the Molalla church, the editors have not been able to find. It was admitted to the Willamette Association in 1851 (*Minutes of the Association of 1851*), but was in existence at least as early as September, 1849, and had been organized after this letter was written, probably in the spring or summer of 1849. Had it been organized by March, 1849, the author would probably have mentioned it in his journal, and it is mentioned in his journal of September, 1849, as having been organized.

¹⁶⁷ This French settlement is usually called French Prairie, because first settled by French Canadians formerly in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:70.

night with a Br. Hunt and family, with whom I became acquainted fifteen years ago in Indiana. Br. H. is some ten miles from any other Baptist family of kindred spirit on the subject of Christian enterprise and about twelve miles from Salem.¹⁶⁸ How important that Christians should always, especially in new countries, select their place of residence in reference to their usefulness and Christian privileges.

5th.—Rode ten miles to Br. Matlock's, another brother with whom I labored in Indiana, one and a half miles from Salem.¹⁶⁹ Visited his family and in the afternoon visited the Oregon university or, in other words, the Methodist Institute, now in operation under the superintendence of Rev. Mr. Wilbur.¹⁷⁰ His daughter performs the duty of teacher at present. I learn they are expecting a teacher from the States the coming year. The school at this time occupies the place of a common school, but meets the wants of the village and surrounding country. The buildings are of wood and have been erected at an expense vastly disproportionate to the present demands of the country. Yet, feeble as the school has been, doubtless it has proved a blessing to Oregon and will ultimately reward the denomination for all the needless expenditures. Its site is eligible, on the east bank of the Willamette about forty miles above Oregon City.

6th.—Rode twenty miles up Mill Creek to the north fork of the Santi Am River, visited two families and attended the funeral of a young married lady with whom I traveled on our way from the States. Made a short address and offered up a prayer at the grave.

7th.—Rode sixteen miles, after fording the river, to the

¹⁶⁸ Salem was laid out on lands belonging to the Oregon Institute shortly after the removal of the latter to Salem in 1844. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:222. There had been a settlement there from an earlier date.

¹⁶⁹ This was W. T. Matlock, who was a member of the state legislature in 1851. *History of Pacific Northwest*, compiled by North Pacific History Company, 1:326. He later lived near Clackamas Station in Clackamas County.

¹⁷⁰ The Oregon Institute, the forerunner of the present Willamette University, intended at first as a school for the children of Methodist missionaries, was organized early in 1842. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:201-203, 222.

Rev. James H. Wilbur, (1811-1887) came to Oregon in 1847. His daughter was later the wife of the Rev. St. M. Fackler, an Episcopal clergyman.—W. D. Fenton, *Father Wilbur and His Work*, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* X, 2; p. 17.

middle fork and preached to an interesting collection of people, some of whom rode from three to twenty-five miles to hear preaching.

8th.—Crossed the middle and south forks; the latter stream is nearly as large as the Mohawk River. Rode 15 miles to the church on said stream and preached at 12 (noon) to the church.¹⁷¹ This church is situated in the midst of the richest and most delightful portion of Oregon. Perhaps a more picturesque scenery cannot be found in North America. The church is small, but its members are fast prospering and wish to work for good while they work for themselves; and under a faithful ministry we might reasonably hope for happy results. This is about 65 miles above Oregon City in the center of the Willamette Valley and a few miles below the termination of future steam navigation, in the vicinity of water power to almost any extent. I was strongly impressed with the thought that near this place was perhaps the most favorable point in the whole country for the location of an institution of learning for our denomination. By the recent developments of gold in California these convictions are strengthened.

9th.—Brother Snelling and myself both preached and administered the sacrament of the supper. Congregation good for so new a country, but no unusual interest apparent.

10th, 11th and 12th.—Visited; viewed the surrounding country. 13th. Rode 30 miles to Salem and spent the night with Br. Matlock. 14th.—Crossed the Willamette and rode about 30 miles over a rolling prairie and open country to the south fork of the Yam Hill; visited two families, but nothing of special interest occurred.

15th.—Rode 14 miles. My way lay along the Yam Hill bottom lands; soil luxuriantly rich and large fields of wheat of enormous growth were now waving their long golden ears to the gentle breezes that glide over the plains. Met the

¹⁷¹ This was probably the Santiam Baptist Church (at Sodaville, Linn Co.), which had been organized by Rev. H. Johnson that same summer. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:8.

Yam Hill church at the time of their monthly meeting and preached on the occasion at the house of Br. Miller,¹⁷² an ordained minister from Missouri. 16th.—It being Lord's day, Br. Snelling and myself both preached to a large congregation for the sparseness of the settlement, and at night I rode home with Br. Snelling. How distressing the thought that in all my travels in the Willamette Valley I have found no Baptist Sabbath school above Oregon City. My spirit is deeply afflicted with the thought that the children of Baptist families and others have so few opportunities for religious instruction. One Sabbath each month they may hear a sermon preached; and then there are few books, except the Bible, adapted to instruct the youthful mind in morals and religion, while the temptations to visit and rove the plains in diversion are many and powerful. I long for the faithful S. S. teachers, with their neat little library of books, to direct the youthful mind in the ways of virtue and wisdom.

17th.—Rode 30 miles, crossed the two remaining forks of the Yam Hill River, passed through Chehalum Valley,¹⁷³ visited two Baptist families and spent the night on the south fork of the Tualatin River with an interesting Baptist family.

18th.—Visited Rev. Mr. Clark in Tuality Plains. Near his residence he, with the assistance of a few benevolent friends, sustains a school called the Oregon Orphans' Asylum.¹⁷⁴ This school will probably become in some future day a literary institution for the Congregational denomination. Rode 14 miles, visited two families and arrived at Br. Lenox's.

20th.—Walked 28 miles to Oregon City.¹⁷⁵ Spent the remainder of the week in visiting in the city and vicinity and in preparing to go down the river. 23d.—Preached twice for Br. Johnson. Congregation moderately good. 24th.—Left

¹⁷² This was Rev. Richard Miller, who came to Oregon in 1847. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:5, 59.

¹⁷³ The Chehalum Valley was settled as early as 1834 or 1835 by Ewing Young, who had accompanied Kelly to Oregon. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:92.

¹⁷⁴ This was the forerunner of Pacific University.

¹⁷⁵ Oregon City at this time, according to Dr. Atkinson, had 120 houses.

Oregon City for Clatsop on board the launch of the unfortunate ship Peacock.¹⁷⁶

28th.—Reached home; found my dear wife just recovering from a painful illness occasioned by an abscess in the right breast. It, however, pleased our Heavenly Father to spare her life and that of our little son, now eight weeks old.

Clatsop Plains, March 1st, 1849.

Dear Br. Hill:

I wrote you one letter under date of Sept., 1848, and forwarded on board the brig Henry bound for San Francisco. I have written you three since and forwarded to San Francisco on board the Mary Cadell. She left about the first of Feb. I hope these will reach you by mail; one of them contained my report of 19 weeks up to Feb. 2, 1849. With this journal I shall send you a letter under date of Feb. 8, 1849, on the subject of a literary institution. Accompanying the package which I sent you on the Mary Cadell were the following in answer to letters received by boxes of goods last Sept.: Two sheets to members of Deep River Baptist Church, Connecticut, under date Oct. 12, 1848. One to Sarah L. Joslin, East Jeffry, N. H., Oct. 12, 1848. One to Rev. Joseph Stockbridge, N. Y., Oct. 14, 1848. One to Mrs. Elizabeth N. Jones, Weston, Mass., Oct. 17, 1848. One to the Baptist church in Amenia, N. Y., Oct. 18, 1848. One to Rev. Reuben Winegar, Rensselaerville, Albany County, N. Y., Oct. 21, 1848. One to the Elmira and South Port church, Chenango County, N. Y., Oct. 18, 1848. One to East Greene church, Chenango Co., N. Y., Nov. 12, 1848. One to James Cowan, 119 Ludlow Street, N. Y., Jan. 24, 1849. One to Rev. Ira M. Allen, N. Y., Feb., 1849, and a package to Timothy Taft under various dates, Clinton, Oneida Co., N. Y. I trust they will all reach their places of destination.

I shall leave in a few days for San Francisco, if Providence wills, and shall probably spend three or four months

¹⁷⁶ The U. S. S. "Peacock," of the Wilkes exploring expedition, was lost at the mouth of the Columbia in 1841. Bancroft, *Hist. of N. W. Coast*, II:532.

in California. Br. Johnson advises to this course in view of the unsettled state of things at present in Oregon. You will hear from me again soon, if life is spared. The goods which you forwarded on the bark *Undine* were lost. You will probably draw to the amount on the insurance office and forward the same articles again.

I will here insert a small bill of articles which were overlooked in making out the bill forwarded you last month. I hope it will reach you before you fill that bill, that you may put them up together :

1 leather travelling trunk, 2 pairs small shoes for child 2 yrs. old, 1 coffee mill, lace for eight or ten ladies' caps, 2 pair of ladies' dark kid gloves, rather over medium size, 1 dress shawl, worsted, 1 Latin dictionary, 1 Virgil with clavis, 1 pair spectacles, for Mrs. Fisher, set in silver, 4 rolls of black quality binding about one inch wide.

N. B.—Should this bill not reach you before you fill the bill last ordered, you will probably forward these articles with other articles which you may forward for the missionaries.

P. S.—I shall report up to the first of April in a few weeks and hope to be able soon to let you know the state of things in California. Br. Johnson writes me that probably nine-tenths of all the men in Oregon will go to the mines in California next summer.¹⁷⁷ I think this a large estimate. Gold is found in small quantities in several places in Oregon, and the prospects are said to be the most promising on the Santi Am River. Whether it will be found sufficiently abundant to justify working is yet uncertain.¹⁷⁸ No doubt our government will order a geological and mineralogical survey of California and Oregon soon.¹⁷⁹ Such a work would

¹⁷⁷ The author was right. Probably about two-thirds of the young and middle-aged men went. F. G. Young, *Financial Hist. of Ore.*, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* VII:373.

¹⁷⁸ Gold was already found in small quantities in the gravels on the Rogue River, and along the Willamette.—G. H. Himes.

¹⁷⁹ This survey was not made, although it was later agitated, especially by a Mr. Evans.—G. H. Himes.

greatly aid emigrants in deciding the place of their locations. We need an unusual degree of grace to enable us to be successful in the great work of the gospel ministry in the midst of the unparalleled excitement which reigns through the entire community. Sometimes I almost despond in view of the present and coming scenes. All articles of living are high—food, raiment and labor. Oregon is almost empty of goods. Farming is being neglected to an alarming extent. All improvements in mills and mechanics' work is about to be suspended and the rage is for gold and how men can reach the mines. It will cost probably two or three times as much in dollars and cents to support a family here this year as last. Yet we hope that in a year or two things will become more settled and the facilities for doing good will be much increased. All reports represent the moral condition of California alarmingly deplorable. Gambling, drunkenness and violence reign.

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received July 3, 1849.

Sullivan's Creek, a fork of the Terwallomy,

May the 12th, 1849.

Dear Mrs. Fisher:

Colonel Hall and Edward Lenox, being about to return to Oregon, I take my pen to write you a line. My health is very good, through the tender mercies of Almighty God. Yet our work is quite laborious at present and we get but little gold in comparison to those who dug six or eight weeks ago. Mr. Stone and myself are boarding with Mr. Jeffrie at three dollars per day. We expect to move camp in a few days to the bars on the large streams. We may go south to the Terwallomy, or we may go north toward the American Fork. I cannot tell when I shall leave for home. Should providence smile on my health, I think of staying till we can get on the bars and till I can make enough to help the family to some of the comforts of life. I have seen men take out 4,

6, 8 and 12 ounces in a day since I have been here, while others within ten steps would not pay their board and work hard. I think the climate tolerably good, but washing day after day with feet and hands in the water, and drinking to intoxication and carousing through the night and sleeping like pigs in the dirt, will generate disease in any climate. I do not know whether it will be necessary for me to send you any funds before I return. Should I conclude to stay till July or August, and I have a good, safe conveyance, I will send you \$100 or \$200. If you need anything to make yourself and the children comfortable and can get a credit till I come, do not let the family suffer. We hope to find better diggings as soon as the rivers fall. We have a tolerable variety of provisions in the mines, but it is not like home. We have few religious privileges in the mines, and nothing would induce me to spend three or four months in the midst of profane swearing, drunkenness, gambling and Sabbath breaking but the hope of providing for my dear family, and that, too, while California and Oregon are in a state of confusion. Next year probably these privileges will be measurably past. We shall hardly expect to get any letters from you till I go to San Francisco. I wish you would write me to that place, to the care of Dr. C. L. Ross, and let me know what articles of clothing and groceries the family will need and I will do as well as I can for them. I spend little time in thinking about moving while I am working hard every day but the Sabbath. I hope to see you in August or the fore part of September at the farthest. Possibly in July. I would like to see you all and enjoy the society of my family and neighbors a few days at least; but I hardly dare to think of it now. Give my best respects to Mr. Robinson and wife. I shall never forget their great kindness, and should like to be their future neighbors, if God so directs.

You can have no adequate idea of the vast influx of population from all parts of the world to California. Do not have Lucy Jane teach and work at home so as to make both

you and her sick. I hope Timothy will do well and take good care of the garden, so that I can have a few good vegetables when I get home, and I will make him a little yellow present. Ann Eliza and Sarah Josephine must be good scholars and help Mother do the work and Father will remember them. Kiss Francis Wayland for me. I suppose he is beginning to go alone. May God bless you all and hasten the time when we may meet in peace and enjoy the comforts of life.

Benjamin Woods, together with several other of our Oregon men, was killed by the Indians a few weeks ago on the American fork. But we have no fear from the Indians in this part of the mines.

Yours in haste,

EZRA FISHER.

Terwallomy River, two miles above the mouth of Sullivan's Creek, July 1st, 1849.

Dear Mrs. Fisher:

I wrote you about one week ago by a Mr. Smith of Oregon, who will soon leave the mines homeward bound. But Mr. Bird, being about to leave tomorrow, I deem it a pleasure to spend a few moments in communicating to my dear family. I am usually well, although somewhat poisoned with ivy. Stone is well; also all the Oregon men with us, except Mr. Bird. He is now recovering from an attack of the flux. I should have left with him, if I had two or three hundred dollars more. But the time for digging on the bars of the rivers is near at hand. I have incurred the expense and fatigue of the journey and to all probability this is the last year that the mining business in California will break up the farming and mechanical pursuits in Oregon, and, as we very much need a few hundred dollars to settle ourselves comfortably, educate our children and to aid in promoting all the interests of Zion on the Pacific Coast, I think I shall stay till perhaps the first or middle of next month, if my health will allow me to continue to dig. But should I feel

any strong indications of approaching sickness, I should embrace the first favorable opportunity of leaving the mines and reaching home in safety. I am heartily tired of the mines. I sometimes think they may be truly called the gambler's and drunkard's heaven and the Christian's banishment. How long I should be willing to remain in this imprisonment for the benefit of myself and family I know not. One day I look towards the place of all my domestic attractions and Christian relations and long for a release. I then think I will not be a fool and entrust the education and support of a rising family to the charity of the Christian public, or to the slow and hard earnings of my hands at home, while six, eight, ten and sometimes twenty and even more dollars can be made here per day clear of expense at a season when society is literally broken up in Oregon, and California too. As far as my friends advise here, they recommend me to stay two or three months at least, and then they say they will go with me. I expected to do no great things in mining when I gave you the parting hand. I have not been disappointed. Yet to all human appearances I have done better than I should have done to have remained in Oregon. The weather for the last week has been very warm, the thermometer rising in the shade during the heat of the day to 106 degrees and in the sun to 119 degrees, but yesterday and today it is quite comfortable. We lay by about three hours in the heat of each day. If you can live comfortably till I return, I would rather Lucy Jane would study than teach, yet I would have you consult the good of the neighbors' children as well as that of our own. I hope Timothy will improve some in arithmetic and grammar, if he can, after doing the necessary work for the family. Should you need flour or anything else, I think you can get it on a short credit and I will cheerfully pay it on my return. Keep Ann Eliza and Sarah Josephine at their books part of each day if you can. Kiss little Francis Wayland Howard for me. I want to see you all very much. May God bless us all with life and health and prepare us for a happy and prosperous meeting..

Tell Widow Bond I have sold her gun tolerably well and hope she will be benefitted by it on my return. I can hardly expect to be favored with so rich a blessing as a letter from you till I reach San Francisco. I have written you five or six letters since I reached that place. I almost envy you the peas, potatoes, onions, gooseberries, strawberries, etc. I hope you enjoy them all well, as well as the milk and butter and eggs. Tell Timothy to save the oats and peas in Mr. Robinson's barn if he can. Do not forget to remember me affectionately to him and all the family. I should have written Mr. Perry before this, but all my time is occupied, and I have somewhat expected that he would be in the mines before this time. Mining business is generally very dull; perhaps half the miners are doing but little more than paying expenses. Give my respects to all the friends. Write me at San Francisco and let me know what groceries and clothing the family will need the coming winter.

Your affectionate husband and father,

EZRA FISHER,

To Lucy Fisher and all the children.

Mrs. Lucy Fisher,

Clatsop Plains, Oregon.

To be left at Astoria, care of Mrs. Ingles.

San Francisco, Cal., July 18, 1849.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

In a letter of the 29th of February I think I gave you my apology for visiting California and going to the mines. I now wish to say that my stay in the mines was a little more than eight weeks, in which I am not conscious that I have performed any essential service to the cause of Christ, farther than that my influence went to suppress the out-breaking sins of those with whom I associated. During those eight weeks I preached but two Sabbaths, and I suppose these were the only sermons which have ever been

preached in the mines. My present haste forbids my giving you at this time anything more than a brief outline of the state of things morally in the mines. A large majority in the part of the mines where I worked were from the Spanish-American republics and soldiers and sailors, many of whom had either deserted from our country's service or run away from merchant vessels. The various countries of Europe, the Pacific isles and China, as well as several states and territories of our own nation, were represented. Profanity, Sabbath breaking, gambling and drunkenness reign unrestrained. Every trading shop within my knowledge sells intoxicating spirits, and most of them suffer gambling tables. Perhaps there is not a place on the face of the earth where gambling is conducted on so large a scale. It may be said in truth that thousands of dollars are sometimes won at one table in a night. Many of the laborers dig through the day and at night change their gold into coin and gamble it away before they sleep. In short, the mines may, with some degree of propriety, be called the gamblers' and drunkards' heaven. And to crown the scene, the Christians' Sabbath is the great day of trade and bull fighting and drunkenness and licentiousness. Professors of religion sell more ardent spirits and provisions on that than any other day in the week. I went to the mines principally to raise something to give my family the bare comforts of life, hoping, however, that I might in some measure unite bodily labor with duties of the ministerial office. God has mercifully blessed me with about \$1000 worth of gold, and to all probability, if I had stayed three or four months longer and had been blessed with a continuance of my health, I might have raised from \$2000 to \$4000 more. But an abiding conviction of the duty I owe to the cause of Christ in Oregon has induced me to direct my attention to the appropriate field of my labors as soon as I could place my family above immediate want. I have been in this place ten days awaiting a vessel for Oregon. I shall sail tomorrow or next day.

I supplied Br. Wheeler's¹⁸⁰ place in this town last Sab. while he is making a visit (and I hope an important one) to Pueblo, about 40 or 50 miles south of this place. One important object he has in view is to secure, if possible, a site for a literary institution. The location must be favorable if secured.

Wrote you on the 29th of Feb. last, at which time I made my report up to that time and, as I left before the middle of March, I shall not think of being chargeable to your Board till the time I arrive again at my own home. It afforded me great pleasure to meet Br. Wheeler and wife as missionaries at San Francisco, when I reached here last April. He needs at least three or four able, efficient fellow laborers.¹⁸¹ I hope your Board have them already under appointment. For my part, I think my first business after reaching home and spending a week or two in Clatsop will be to visit the Willamette churches and endeavor to do something with the friends of education by way of agreeing upon a site and securing it for an institution of learning for the denomination in Oregon.

I have just received a letter from my dear wife informing me of the arrival of several boxes and a barrel of goods at Oregon City, directed to me; also one box directed to Elder Johnson. I shall attend to that business as soon as possible and acknowledge the receipt of the goods donated by letters to the donors. I answered most or all of the letters of which you speak in your last during last winter and you have probably received the answers before this. Many of our Oregon men are returning from the mines and I fondly hope the great gold excitement will gradually abate in Oregon from this time. Yet it is hard to predict what will be the end of this unparalleled state of things. I understand that Br. Snelling is in the mines. An excellent brother in Oregon has given me the assurance that he will join me in

¹⁸⁰ Rev. O. C. Wheeler arrived in California in February, 1849. Bancroft, *Hist. of Calif.* VII:727. See also note 148.

¹⁸¹ Two other missionaries for California were appointed by the Baptist Home Mission Society in 1850.—*Bap. Home Missions in N. Am. 1832-1882*, p. 339.

purchasing two claims side by side and donate in common with me the necessary amount of land for the site of an institution and do all in his power to carry the work forward, if I will go into the enterprise and move to the spot. He has just carried home with him more than \$4000 in gold dust and coin. The question with me is whether I may enter into this work without diminishing my usefulness as a faithful minister. We may act too precipitously on this subject. Should we take action on this subject before the immigration from the States reaches Oregon and lands take a great rise, as they have already done in California, I trust your Board will at least acquiesce in the movement and in that event have a suitable man ready for the mouth of the Columbia.

Yours,
EZRA FISHER,

Received Sept. 13.

Oregon City, Nov. 14, 1849.

Rev. Benj M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. Missionary Society.

Dear Brother:

I shall employ my leisure moments during a few evenings to transcribe my journal of a tour from my former residence, up the Columbia River and through the Willamette Valley in August, September and October last. Aug. 26th.—Preached to an interesting congregation at Clatsop Plains after an absence of five months in California. Found it truly pleasant to meet the few members of the church and address them on the subject of the importance of fortifying the youthful mind against the temptations peculiar to the Coast and solemnly warned the youth of their great danger. 29th.—Left my family for a tour through the Willamette Valley.

Sept. 4th.—This day reached Oregon City, after a journey of almost an entire week of laboriously pulling the oar by day and sleeping on the ground by night, which is no uncommon occurrence to those travelling this route. Found

the Baptist cause in this city somewhat improved and the territorial legislature, in which are two of our Baptist brethren,¹⁸² in session, and, providentially falling in with two other brethren from the country, we held an interesting conference on the subject of the necessity of taking action for the establishment of a literary institution in Oregon and, preparatory to this work, unanimously agreed to call a meeting of friends of education in the denomination to be held in this place on the 21st and 22d days of the present month. This city, situated immediately below the great falls of the Willamette, at the head of which two saw-mills, with two saws each, and two flouring mills,¹⁸³ are kept constantly employed, begins to assume a business like appearance. The town contains ten or twelve drygoods stores, a variety of mechanic shops, five places of public worship—Methodist, Baptist, Congregationalist, Seceder¹⁸⁴ and Roman Catholic—and a population of about six hundred souls. At present this is the most important place in the Territory and it will always form the great connecting link between the Willamette Valley and the Pacific Ocean. Here I spent four days in visiting families and the members of the legislature.

8th.—Travelled 16 miles to the small church on the Molalla over a rolling country interspersed with forests of fir and open lands generally set thick with ferns and scattering grass. Soil generally good, but settlements few.
 9th.—Preached to an interesting congregation on the Molalla prairie. This church, numbering about eight members, has had preaching but a few Sabbaths since its constitution. Manifest a laudable desire for a stated ministry and are willing to contribute liberally, in proportion to their numbers, for its support.

¹⁸² These two Baptist members of the legislature were probably R. C. Kinney and W. T. Matlock, members of the House. Rev. H. Johnson was chaplain of the House. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:72; I:633; II:143. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* In the first reference in Bancroft the initials of Matlock seem to be wrongly given as W. S. The manuscript records of the Oregon City church show W. T. Matlock to have been a member there.

¹⁸³ The two flour mills were owned, respectively, by Dr. John McLoughlin and the Oregon Milling Company. The sawmills were apparently also owned by them and connected with the flour mills. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:2-5.

¹⁸⁴ The Seceders were the New School Presbyterians.

10th.—Travelled up the Willamette Valley about 25 miles, crossing four of the branches of Pudding River, all inconsiderable streams. The face of the country is generally about as level as the gently rolling prairies of the Mississippi Valley, except for a few points of hill in passing out of the Molalla prairie. Soil variable; generally good, yet occasionally inclining to be wet and clayey. Settlements sparse in the morning, but in the afternoon more compact. Spent the night with a brother formerly from Iowa. He is settled on the southwest border of Howell's Prairie, 12 miles N. E. from Salem and, far removed from church privileges, thirsting for the golden waters. It is to be lamented that Christ is too far thrust aside. Oh! "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

11th.—Rode ten miles to Salem, a small town on the east bank of the Willamette containing some twenty families. Here I visited two Baptist families who seem desirous of seeing the cause promoted in their place and have secured two town lots for church purposes, should they be needed for that object.¹⁸⁵ This is the point where the Methodists have located their literary institution. The school at this time numbers about 70 children of both sexes. This place has a commanding central position in the Willamette Valley, and will probably become a place of some importance in future years. At present the health of the place is questionable. We hope the day is near when an efficient Baptist church will be gathered in this place. In the evening rode ten miles up the valley of Mill Creek through a picturesque and fertile part of the country; spent the night with a Baptist family who have been halting on the subject of mission measures, but are now desirous of having a church constituted in their settlement, which may be done in a few months, if we can find any preacher who can visit them

¹⁸⁵ A Baptist church was organized in Salem in November, 1850, but seems not to have survived. It was revived in 1859. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:17, 141. See also the letter of Aug. 23, 1853.

even monthly.¹⁸⁶ There are some eight or ten Baptist members in the settlement.

12th.—Traveled 23 miles this day over some of the most delightful part of Oregon; my way lay along the borders of the timber skirting the Willamette, crossing successively the Santiam and Callipooia rivers. In passing the Santiam the foot of the mountains recedes from the river and the prairies on the east open out to ten or twelve miles in width and forty or fifty miles in length, except as the streams are sometimes skirted with rich groves of fir and oak. The valleys of these streams sometimes penetrate far into the bosom of the mountains, affording some of the richest and best watered lands in the world. Farther east the mountains rise, pile above pile, till at last may be seen some six or seven lofty conical peaks, raising their summits far into the region of perpetual snow. At one view the eye can survey the luxuriant plains with their meandering streams, the ever-varied mountain side clad with dense forests of evergreen firs and the still more lofty snow-capped mountains, around whose sides the clouds sport in wild confusion. Perhaps no part of the world can exhibit, at one glance of the eye, so admirable a combination of the beautiful, the grand and the sublime.

13th.—Spent the day in examining the country in reference to the location of an institution of learning. I never travel through this portion of the valley without being forcibly impressed with the thought of the almost incomparable beauty and grandeur which must strike the eye and cannot fail to inspire the heart of every beholder, when civilization shall have taxed all the resources of these plains and mountains. How important then that the character of the crowds that must soon people this valley should be formed by the precepts of our Holy Law-giver!

¹⁸⁶ This was probably the nucleus of the Shiloh (Turner) Baptist Church, organized August 31, 1850. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:9.

14th.—Visited a small church on the south fork of the Santiam.¹⁸⁷ Find the few brethren ready to do something liberal for the preached Word and in anxious expectation to welcome Br. Cheadle, our colporteur missionary, who has already arrived safe in the valley.¹⁸⁸

15th.—Travelled 25 miles to Mill Creek to meet a Sabbath appointment which I left as I passed up the valley.

16th.—Preached to an interesting congregation and enjoyed a good degree of consolation while they listened attentively to the Word.

17th.—Having returned as far as Molalla, I preached at 3 P. M. to a small congregation of people, and on the 19th reached Oregon City.

Sept. the 21st.—The friends of education convened, and after the preaching of a short sermon the convention was organized by calling Br. Hezekiah Johnson to the chair and electing myself clerk. But a few persons were present; but all seemed impressed with the conviction that the time had arrived when God in His providence called on us as a denomination to take prompt measures to establish a permanent school under the direction and fostering care of the Baptist churches in Oregon.

22d.—Convention met; I again preached, after which the convention originated the Oregon Baptist Education Society and adjourned the meeting to the church in YamHill County on the 27th.

23d.—Spent the Sabbath with the church in the city and twice addressed the people. Congregation good. Spent the remainder of the week in visiting the church in Tualatin Plains and preached twice on the Lord's day. This church have in their bounds an ordained minister of excellent character, but unable to devote much of his time to the minis-

¹⁸⁷ This was probably the Santiam Baptist Church, at Sodaville, Linn County. It was organized in 1848 and became extinct about 1857. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:8.

¹⁸⁸ Rev. Richmond Cheadle, 1801-1875, was born in Ohio and came to Oregon from Iowa in 1849. He was at this time colporteur for the American Baptist Publication Society. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:70.

try.¹⁸⁹ The church wants and needs a man of more ability who can devote his time to the great work of preaching the gospel. A faithful minister might, the first year, expect from this church his family provisions, except groceries, and perhaps more. Your Board would do well to appoint a missionary for that church and vicinity. This church is situated in the midst of an interesting farming country and within from two to eight hours' ride of all the small towns rising up on the Willamette from the Falls (Oregon City) to its lower mouth, including Vancouver on the Columbia River. This church is the oldest and, in truth, at present the most promising church in the territory, having a number of interesting young men.

25th.—Rode to YamHill Church to prepare for the meeting; visited several families. 26th.—Visited three families, among whom I met with a man apparently near the eternal world, yet he seemed unwilling to have his mind led to the subject of his spiritual welfare. I gave him a few words of advice and left him to his own reflections. Oh, how obvious it is that man naturally has no love for God! . . .

27th.—Met the friends of education, one member from each church except the Molalla church being present. After a long and friendly deliberation, it was agreed to locate the institution on the east bank of the Willamette River, about eight miles above the mouth of the Callipooia River, and about seventy above Oregon City. The Education Society appointed a Board of Trustees for the institution and the Board appointed me to take charge of the school and requested me to remove as soon as practicable to the place and open a school. Measures were also taken to raise \$2000 for the purpose of erecting suitable buildings and to meet the other necessary expenses. 28th.—Returned to Oregon City through an interesting, picturesque country of prairie and timber forty miles; visited one family on the way and reached the house of Br. Johnson late at night almost over-

¹⁸⁹ This was probably Rev. William Porter. See note 163.

come with fatigue of body and anxiety of mind. We have assumed vast responsibilities, yet our strength is weakness and I fear but a very few realize the amount of responsibilities we have assumed; and then we must take one man in part from the appropriate duties of the ministry till we can obtain relief from the States. Yet we cannot do less, if we do anything. The public will have no confidence in our meeting and passing resolutions while we do not act. Schools are greatly needed; our hope of successful operation in Oregon is in the youth. Other denominations are in advance of us, and the Romans are already at work. Well, by the grace of God, without which we are nothing, we must try. Present emergencies alone reconcile me to the task. I shall probably be called to preach almost every Sabbath and have thrown under my immediate instruction a portion of the most promising youth in the Territory. I confidently hope relief will be speedily sent from the States in the person of a well qualified professional teacher to fill the place.

29th.—Attended the monthly meeting of the church at Oregon City, preached on the occasion, and on the 30th preached again. The subject, The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Congregation attentive. In the evening addressed Br. Johnson's Sabbath school.

Oct. 15th.—Having succeeded in procuring a passage down the river, I went on board a whale boat, the best method of conveyance we have as yet on our waters, and commenced my journey homeward. 19th.—After four days of hard rowing and three nights' lodging on the ground, I reached home and found my family in usual health and enjoying the smiles of a gracious providence. The scenery along the Columbia from the mouth of the Willamette downward is highly romantic. For the first sixty miles the bottom lands spread out from one to eight or ten miles in width, interspersed with prairies covered with the most luxuriant grasses and weeds, but subject to occasional inundations in June and July. The timber of these bottom lands

is willow, balm of Gilead, alder, fir, oak and some maple and ash. Much of this land is sufficiently elevated to admit of settlement. Immediately back of these bottoms and not unfrequently approaching the river's edge arise the low mountains, sometimes rather abruptly, but seldom precipitously, from 1000 to 5000 feet, groaning under a dense forest of evergreen, fir, spruce and cedar, interspersed with maple and alder. Lower down the river the mountains occasionally arise from the water's edge with great abruptness and sometimes raise their basaltic walls like perpendicular battlements 500 or 600 feet, from whose heights the timber lands rise with a gradual ascent and, during the rainy season, drain their waters in imposing cascades over these buttresses of nature into the bosom of the noble river whose rolling floods perpetually wash their base. As you approach nearer the ocean the scenery becomes more imposing. The river widens into a broad sheet from six to fifteen miles in width; the high hills on either side, with, however, many exceptions, rise abruptly from the water's edge and, clothed with their evergreen forests, present an imposing contrast to the wide spread expanse of waters pent up at their bases. Nor does the grandeur of the scene decline till this vast accumulation of water loses itself in the Pacific, where may be seen, to the astonishment of the beholder, the warring of mighty waters as they meet and dash their angry spray from the summits of mighty billows, bidding defiance to all the inventions of man.

No doubt that the great commercial emporium of Oregon must rise into being in the vicinity of this imposing scenery; and conditions are rapidly working to bring about the commencement of this work. Milling companies are being formed with a large capital for the erection of both water and steam sawmills, and other mills are being erected; town-sites are selected and the rage for speculation in town property is fast ripening into a mania. May God grant that the children of light may be wise and prepare to follow this

extraordinary spirit of enterprise with the spirit of the gospel.
Yours in gospel bonds,

E. FISHER.

Oregon City, Ore., Nov. 31st, 1849.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br.:

After a long delay in consequence of our unsettled affairs as Baptists in Oregon, and the multiplicity of cares that come upon me, both of a religious and domestic character, by means of my absence in California, I now take my pen in hand to write you as near as possible the present state of things with us and to answer a few of your inquiries. And, first, I will acknowledge the receipt of a list of letters which I have received from you: One under date of July 20th, 1848; one July 29, 1848; also the box of goods enclosing with them the bill of lading. Goods were received in good order. With this I have an inventory and bill of lading of goods shipped on board the Serampore. One under date of Aug. 8th, 1848, and with it, I think, a commission No. 1281, April 1, 1848. Also a commission for Elder V. Snelling. Br. Snelling is yet in the gold mines and will not probably return until next spring, consequently he will not be able to fill that appointment. One under date of October 2, 1848; one from Jas. M. Whitehead, Nov. 1st, 1848; one from yourself under date Nov. 1, 1848, accompanying an invoice of goods shipped on board the bark Whiton, Roland Gelston, master, with the bill of lading. Goods all arrived safe and in good order, except that the shoes and donation goods had become somewhat moldy—not materially damaged. Also one under date of Nov. 23, 1848. I have just written and forwarded a letter to Rev. S. S. Cutting, editor of the N. Y. Recorder; also one to the ladies of the First Bap. Church in N. Y., acknowledging receipt of their valuable donation.

On the twenty-third of August I arrived in Clatsop Plains from California, after a passage of twenty-six days. Found

my family in good health. I immediately entered upon the duties of a missionary and, after preaching one Sabbath, left home on a tour in the Willamette Valley. On reaching this city I found two of our brethren in the legislature and two more from the country present. Upon deliberating upon the importance of immediate action on the subject of locating and putting into operation an institution of learning under the direction of the denomination, it was agreed to call a meeting to be held at this place on the 21st and 22d days of September to take action on the subject. The meeting was accordingly held and an educational society was formed; but in consequence of the small number in attendance the meeting was adjourned to the 4th of October to the YamHill Church. At that meeting every church in the Territory but one was represented, and the convention voted to locate the institution on the Willamette River about 70 miles up the river from this place and appointed a brother to repair immediately to the place and secure the site. It was then understood that the land was vacant. The convention also appointed Rev. Richmond Cheadle to labor two months for the purpose of raising two thousand dollars for erecting a school house and covering other necessary expenses. The convention also invited me to move to the place and take charge of the school and voted to pay me \$400 and to request the Home Missionary Society to continue my appointment with the usual salary of \$200, regarding that amount as barely sufficient to sustain my family for the year. Solely from the consideration of the fact that the exigency of the case seemed to demand immediate action, and we have no man in Oregon but myself to whom our brethren are willing to look to fill this place till a competent teacher can be found and sent us from the States, I thought it best to comply with the call. The convention also instructed me to correspond with you on the subject of engaging a well qualified teacher to take charge of the school. We hope to be able to pay a teacher \$800 salary. Thus you perceive the reason why I address you from this place. I have just arrived here with my

family. We have just learned that the site on which we have fixed for the location of our institution is not vacant and we have concluded to spend the winter in this place. I shall open a school here within a few days and preach in this place and the adjoining towns on Sabbaths. I think it rather probable the result will be that we shall finally locate our school in the immediate vicinity of this city. Public sentiment of our wiser brethren seems to be setting strongly this way. By the opening of the spring the question will be decided whether we locate permanently at this place or in the center of the Willamette Valley. We hope to be able to buy the lands and erect the first temporary buildings and perhaps support our first teacher without calling on the liberality of our eastern brethren directly for funds. But we must look to you for a competent teacher qualified to teach the Latin and Greek languages, natural science and mathematics, and it will be very desirable if he could teach music. Money is plentiful¹⁹⁰ in this country and education is held in popular favor. Our plan will be to find some Baptist friends who will buy and hold a claim of 640 acres and donate a portion of it for a site now while land is cheap. Will you find us a teacher and send him to our assistance as soon as a properly qualified one can be obtained? My removal from the mouth of the Columbia renders it important that your Board find a young man of talent and appoint him to labor at Astoria and Clatsop Plains. A man is also much needed in the church in Tualatin Plains. The church in that place will supply a minister's table from the first and the place is important in location. I shall report at the expiration of this quarter for all the time I have served as missionary since I returned from California, but I shall forward you a portion of my journal the next mail.

I am much interested in the private letter. Almost all articles of drygoods sell at from 100 to 300 or 400 per cent ad-

¹⁹⁰ The increase in the supply of money in Oregon was, of course, the result of the California mines. Some gold was coined in Oregon City, and Mexican and Peruvian silver dollars had come in large quantities. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:52-55.

vance on the market prices in New York. Farming utensils, castings, especially stoves, tinware, nails, crockery, patent pails, washtubs, brass kettles and household furniture of all kinds sell very high, and all kinds of fabrics made of leather (shoes, boots, saddles, bridles, etc.), ready-made clothing, calicos and all kind of cotton goods, flannels, silks and fashionable woolen goods for ladies' clothing, woolen hose and half hose, etc. I hope your friend still continues of the same mind. I think I can find a faithful, experienced Baptist brother who will like to embark in the business. He is now in California for his stock of goods. His name is Levi A. Rice, formerly from Ohio, whose moral character stands high. Should your friend wish farther information and still wish to do something through the medium of trade for the moral and religious condition of Oregon, I hope God will open the door for him. We have also another brother of good standing and also an attorney-at-law who is about entering into trade in this place, who no doubt might be induced to enter into this kind of business. Freight from San Francisco to this place costs as much as freight from N. Y. to this place. Your friend will readily see the advantage of shipping directly to the Columbia. Our merchants all trade through California. Consequently it is their policy to discourage all capitalists in eastern cities from embarking directly in the Oregon trade. Oregon has suffered long from this selfish policy.

Yours with Christian esteem,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Feb. 9, 1850.

Oregon City, Jan. 8th, 1850.

Dear Br. Hill:

. . . You have probably learned before this that I am at this place engaged in teaching and preaching. A conviction of duty rather than a desire to change has brought me to this place and this employment. At this period in my life I have not the most distant desire to engage in teaching and

thus abate my ministerial labors. But the time has evidently come when we, as a denomination, must act in reference to securing a site and putting into operation a school or we lose an important kind of influence with the rising generation, and even with the present acting community.

The public are asking for schools and will have them. If then we select our site and leave the schools to spring up hereafter, the public will repose no confidence in our enterprise and other denominations will educate not only the children generally, but even those of our Baptist families. And then we need, very much need, some benevolent object around which we may rally the denomination, and I know of no one benevolent object in which they will so readily be brought to harmonize and which will serve as a precursor to all the benevolent enterprises of the gospel as an institution of learning under the control and instruction of Baptist men and dependent on the denomination for support. If we undertook the work, I felt fully assured that I must give a portion of my time at least to the work till such time as we could secure the labors of a professional teacher from the States. Again, should the Lord of all hearts convert our children and they look to the work of the ministry, they must either enter upon that work uneducated, or we must provide the means of education for them in Oregon. We cannot expect to send our sons back across the Rocky Mountains or by way of the ocean to the States to be educated, and they are fast growing up around us. With these and many other considerations rushing upon my mind, I was led to the conviction that it was my duty for the time being to enter upon the work of teacher as well as preacher till we can be supplied from other sources. Perhaps Br. Johnson and myself will be enabled to perform nearly as much ministerial labor and sustain the school, if it is continued in this place, as we should if I had continued at Clatsop, although I left that place at last with great reluctance. We shall probably finally fix upon a site for our institution immediately adjoining this city plat, about half a mile from the

river on a point which will have a commanding view of the river below and a portion of the city as soon as the timber is removed. We have provided for forty acres of land.¹⁹¹ I suppose Br. Johnson has given you the particulars. I therefore will leave this subject for the present.

I have rather a promising school.¹⁹² How long it may remain so is with the All Wise to disclose. We shall much need classical books, such as are in use in our best schools in the States, among which we must have a few Latin and Greek grammars, lexicons and such preparatory books as are required in fitting for college in the old States. Also Roman and Greek antiquities and classical dictionaries. We hope to make arrangements as soon as we can to order such books as we shall need. But should you find any liberal friend of education in Oregon, I hope you will do something for us by way of securing a few books of the above description.

We intend to make vigorous efforts the coming summer to erect a good wooden school house, perhaps with two apartments and a boarding house, notwithstanding the enormous price of lumber and all building materials and labor. Lumber is now worth \$100 per thousand feet; carpenter's labor is worth from \$8 to \$12 per day. Flour is worth \$25 per barrel, potatoes \$4 per bushel and all other provisions proportionately high. You will readily see that all our expenses must be very high, and there is no immediate prospect of their becoming lower. All kinds of labor are richly rewarded except that of preachers and teachers.

191 This was on the Ezra Fisher Donation Land Claim, which adjoins on the east the town site of Oregon City. The author, Rev. H. Johnson and J. Jeffers bought the right to this tract of over 600 acres, and the author obtained a patent to it from the government. See his letters of March 29, 1850, and Nov. 12, 1850. The purchasers agreed to give the college a tract, and fifty-one acres were later deeded to the trustees of Oregon City University, under which name the institution was chartered. Some of the timber on the claim was very large. One red fir measured 300 feet in height.

The view mentioned included the Willamett River and three snow-capped peaks—St. Helens, Adams and Hood.

192 A niece of Hezekiah Johnson had taught a private school in the church building for several months, sometime previous to this. Besides the author's school there were at this time only three other schools in the town—two under Roman Catholic auspices, and a private school for girls under Mrs. N. M. Thornton. See letter of Feb. 8th of this year.

Our Board of Trustees have requested me to ask that your Board of the H. M. Soc. continue to appoint me with a salary of \$200, in addition to what I shall receive for teaching, as they expect I shall preach nearly every Sabbath and spend some time in visiting the churches and attending public meetings. Your Board should not neglect a single month to secure a suitable man for the mouth of the Columbia River and to have him on the way immediately. The place is too important to be neglected.

Accept, dear brother, my grateful acknowledgement of the clothes you sent me. They fit well and are the best I have to appear in public in. The Lord grant you your reward. The clothing we have received from the States has been of essential service to my family, and I know not how I should have been able to have sustained my family without them. Let our friends know that partially worn woolen clothes aid us in publishing the gospel in this new and neglected territory.

I wrote you last about the 8th and 9th of Nov. and then thought I should have forwarded these sheets in a few weeks, but the labors of my school and other duties have prevented till the present. You will soon hear from me again on the subject of your friend's commercial enterprise and by way of my report, etc.

Yours affectionately,

EZRA FISHER.

Received, April 6, 1850.

Oregon City, Jan. 26, 1850.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill.

Dear Brother:

Your letter of June, blank day, 1849, and June 28th, were received on the 18th inst., acknowledging the receipt of sundry letters from me, one of which contained an order for goods. I trust you have filled the bill and forwarded the goods, with the replacing of those lost on the Undine. I

think rather unfavorably of the Undine wreck, falsely so called, and I have not unbounded confidence in Capt. Gelston. He presented a friend of mine with an order on me for freight on the goods you shipped by him for me to California, after giving you a receipt on the bill of lading. The order was not paid and I presume he will not present me with his bill as I retain his receipt in the bill of lading. I wish to give you a statement of facts relative to our missionary affairs in Oregon. When we came to Oregon, Oregon City was the only place worthy the name of a town in the whole Territory. Br. Johnson seemed providentially thrown into this city. I was providentially thrown into Tualatin Plains. I explored the settled part of the country generally, and in view of the fact of Br. Snelling being placed at Yamhill, a place somewhat central in the Willamette Valley, and in view of the prospect that a place of importance would soon rise at the mouth of the Columbia, Br. Johnson complied with my suggestion that it was important to fill that opening. I removed to Astoria, but finding little could be done there till commerce increased, yet being conscious of the importance of the point prospectively, I removed eight miles to Clatsop Plains, where we have a few good members, thinking to labor there till circumstances should favor an attempt to build up an interest at Astoria. Things were new, everything was to be done, both in the way of providing for my family, for common schools and for the cause of Christ. The means of subsistence, except clothing and mechanics' labor, were cheap. We knew the policy of your Board in relation to the amount they give to aid the churches in sustaining each missionary and, in the main, we approved of it. We could not expect any very rapid changes in the settlement of our territory, so far removed from all other settlements. Yet we were confident that our position was of great importance. Our brethren were generally men who had received their religious training in the West and knew but little of system in the support of the ministry and indeed had not yet generally learned the importance of ministerial

support. Were we to ask the Board for \$600 salary, that would appear like an enormous expenditure in comparison to the relative results and importance of the field. We, therefore, concluded that to abandon the field would be disastrous and our only alternative, in view of all circumstances, would be to practice economy, even to parsimony, and, while the country was new, to meet the necessities of our families, which remained unprovided for by the Board and our brethren and friends, by our own industry and that of our families till we could have time to correct false views in our brethren here and the age of the country would insure us entire support. I know not how it has been with Br. Johnson, but I have never attempted to conceal from your Board the fact that sheer necessity impelled me to labor, working with my hands to supply my immediate wants. Had you forwarded to me the \$200 in cash, that sum would not have bought \$65 worth of clothing and groceries in N. Y. My only alternative seemed to be to order goods for my family supplies. This process has taken from one to two or three years to get our returns. With this state of things I have been inclined to wait with patience. Could we have received our pay from N. Y. at your prices at the end of each year, we might have been able to give ourselves mostly to the gospel ministry up to the time of the commencement of the gold excitement. Since that time changes have gone on with unparalleled rapidity, till the time has now come when, instead of \$200, it would require \$1800 to \$2000 to give my family a comfortable support at Oregon prices. Gold is found so abundant that our men will go and get it in preference to farming their rich lands, till potatoes are worth \$5 per bushel and flour is from \$25 to \$30 per barrel, and all kinds of living extravagantly high. Gold is found on the Umpqua and Rogue rivers in Oregon, so that our men will probably mine near home next summer.¹⁹³ We therefore expect a great in-

¹⁹³ Mining was just beginning in these valleys. The summer of 1850 saw two hundred miners at work in the Umpqua Valley, but the real boom came some time later. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:184-186.

flux of population into our Territory the coming year.¹⁹⁴ Farming will revive and sawmills will be multiplied through the country bordering on our navigable waters. We confidently hope for a more settled state of things and expect our brethren will soon become liberal in the support of the gospel. I could now settle myself in Tuallity Plains and have my family table supplied, excepting groceries. Then \$200 or \$300 would meet all my expenses, by ordering my clothing and groceries from N. Y. But we must have a school, and our brethren think my duty calls me to take charge of it till you can send us suitable teachers. I may realize about \$1000 per year for teaching, if we continue the school in this place, and be able to preach every Sabbath. Next week the friends of education meet at this place and no doubt they will agree in opinion with Br. Johnson and myself on the place of location. We have forty acres of land cleared from all incumbrances immediately adjoining the city plat for the site, and can build within half a mile from the Willamette River on a commanding eminence. In the event of my teaching, Br. Johnson will travel through the Willamette Valley the coming season and I shall spend my Sabbaths with this church and at Milwaukie,¹⁹⁵ a business place springing up six miles below this place on the river. My first quarter of the school will close next week. School has been large and I have been compelled to call in the aid of my eldest daughter part of the time. We shall continue the school in the Baptist meeting house¹⁹⁶ till next fall or the spring following and, in the meantime, we shall make an effort to build a good school house, with two apartments, on the contemplated

194 See note 154.

195 Milwaukie, only recently laid out, had a population of 500 in the fall of 1850. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:251, quoted from *Oregon Spectator*, Nov. 28, 1850.

196 Among the pupils who attended the school while it was still held in the meeting-house were Theodore Matlock, Almond B. Holcomb, William G. Welch, Isaac Holman, John Welch, F. Dillard Holman, E. M. White, W. L. White, Lucy Jane G. Fisher, E. T. T. Fisher, Ann Eliza Fisher, Franklin Johnson, W. C. Johnson, Anne Abernethy, Abner P. Gaines, Noble W. Matlock, Jane Matlock, Ellen Matlock, William Bullack, William Cason, Adoniram Cason, James Cason, Maria Moffett, William Moffett, Julia A. Johnson, Charlotte Johnson, Amy Johnson, Sarah Josephine Fisher, Lucy More, Rebecca Parrish, Pauline Tompkins, Helen Tompkins, Josephine Hunsaker, Horton Hunsaker, Jacob Hunsaker, and Medorum Crawford.—*Recollections of W. C. Johnson and W. G. Welch.*

site, although lumber is from \$100 to \$150 per thousand feet and carpenters' and joiners' labor is from \$8 to \$12 per day. Cannot some friends furnish us with a bell weighing from 100 to 400 pounds? You may learn by the bearer of this that a large company is forming, or rather is formed, to build up a town immediately adjoining Cape Disappointment with steam mill, steam boat,¹⁹⁷ etc. This is adjoining the point which the government will first fortify on the north side of the Columbia at the entrance from the ocean. The enterprise will probably succeed, not however to the prejudice of Astoria. I am pained in spirit every moment I think of that point (at the mouth of the Columbia) being left destitute of a Baptist minister. Your Board cannot be too forcibly reminded of the importance of early occupying that part of the field. The N. Y. of Oregon must spring up in that vicinity very soon. The first steamer which comes into the Columbia to run between this city and the mouth of the Columbia will stop the shipping at Astoria. We have a small church at Clatsop Plains, not quite extinct, which would receive a minister and do what they can for his support. If we had a man at the mouth of the river now, a block 200 feet square and located in the most favorable part of this new town, called Lancaster, would be donated for church purposes. Elder Snelling is in California and I learn that he has made arrangements to move his family to that territory.¹⁹⁸ He has not labored under the commission you sent me. We feel that we must have a missionary or two more for the Willamette Valley. One is needed at Salem on the east side of the river and one on the opposite side of the river with the Rickreal Church or the YamHill Church.

Yours affectionately,

EZRA FISHER.

Received May 8, 1850.

¹⁹⁷ This was later known as Pacific City, then Unity, and then Ilwaco.—G. H. Himes.

¹⁹⁸ Snelling died in California in 1855. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:44.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Feb. 8th, 1850.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br.:

I take my pen in hand to give you the Constitution of the Oregon Bapt. Educational Soc., together with a few of the resolutions passed at the late meeting of its Board held in this city Feb. 2nd. As we have as yet no means of publishing the proceedings of our meetings, we must transcribe and send all our proceedings in letter form:—

Constitution of the Oregon Baptist Education Society as adopted by convention, Sept. 22, 1849.

Art. 1st.—This Society shall be called the Oregon Bapt. Education Society.

Art. 2nd. The objects of this society shall be to promote the cause of education generally; to locate one literary institution, or more, for the benefit of the Baptist denomination in Oregon Territory; to appoint a board of trustees for each of the same; to hold such board or boards responsible for the faithful execution of the trust committed to them; to aid in the education of indigent pious youth of promising gifts in our churches and to raise funds to carry into effect the above named objects.

Art. 3rd.—The officers of the Society shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and five Directors who shall constitute a board for the transaction of business, all of whom shall be members of regular Baptist churches, and three of whom shall form a quorum whose respective duties shall be the same as those usually exercised by officers of the same name in similar societies, who shall be chosen annually, but shall hold their offices until their successors are chosen.

Art. 4th.—Any person may become a member of this Society by subscribing to this Constitution.

Art. 5th.—This Society shall hold its annual meetings at the time and place of the annual meetings of the Willamette Baptist Association.

Art. 6th.—It shall be the duty of the President to call special meetings of this Society at the request of any two members of the Board.

Art. 7th.—The officers of this Society shall be empowered to regulate their own meetings and to make their own by-laws, not inconsistent with this Constitution.

Art. 8th.—This Constitution may be altered or amended at any annual meeting of the Society by a vote of two-thirds the members present.

In view of the improbability of securing the property where the locating committee had fixed for the site of an institution and in view of the manifest providences of God, the Education Society convened Feb. 3d. Elder H. Johnson called to the chair. Moderator prayed. On motion it was voted to reconsider so much of the proceedings of the Society as it related to the location of an institution of learning in the center of the Willamette Valley.

After hearing proposals from the brethren who had purchased the Barlow claim in reference to this object, it was unanimously voted to locate the Baptist institution on the forty acres of the above named claim immediately adjoining the city plat of Oregon city.¹⁹⁹ The site will command an excellent view of the river below the town and the lower part of the city. Providence has seemed to close up almost

¹⁹⁹ The tract is now known on official maps as the Ezra Fisher Donation Land Claim, and adjoins the Oregon City Claim on the east. No college buildings were ever erected there. The building, as recorded later in these letters, was put up in Oregon City.

This Baptist institution was only one of a number of Christian denominational institutions which were projected in these days when the state had as yet failed to provide adequately for public instruction. Some of these institutions died early; others, as at Monmouth and Corvallis, were merged into state institutions. A few survive as Christian academies and colleges.

Among those which perished were the Clackamas "female seminary" at Oregon City, a college at Eugene, and academies at Sheridan and Santiam. Among the surviving schools are Willamette University, Pacific University, Albany College, and McMinnville College. To this last was turned over the remnant of the property of that Oregon City college, whose early history is given in these letters.

every other favorable point and open up this point unanticipated by all and unsought, and by this means throw us as a denomination in juxtaposition with the Romans, and in the only position where they may be successfully met. Here they are making great efforts to secure the work of educating the children and youths of our city and surrounding country. They have erected a nunnery about 70 feet by 30, two and one half stories, with a school in operation under a lady superior and five assistant sisters of charity and have about sixteen or twenty female children from families in our city. One of the priests teaches all the male scholars he can draw under his instruction, which, by the way, have been very few (not more than 8 or 10) since I opened my school. My school the last quarter numbered more than fifty.

We have also a female school in this place taught by a Presbyterian lady.²⁰⁰

On motion it was unanimously voted to request Elder Ezra Fisher to continue the charge of the school in Oregon City and that the Board of the A. B. H. M. Soc. be requested to continue him as a missionary in this place and vicinity at a salary of two hundred dollars a year. The Society voted to make an effort to raise four thousand dollars the ensuing year to erect a suitable school house and to meet the incidental expenses of the Society. The Society voted to appoint Elder Richmond Cheadle its agent for two months, with a salary of one hundred dollars per month, to carry the above resolution into effect.

Voted to request the Board of the A. B. H. M. Soc. to use their influence to procure us a bell, weighing from 200 to 500 pounds, and classical books such as are in use in literary schools in New England and New York.

Since the last named meeting the proprietors of the claim have agreed to give to the institution about ten or

200 This was Mrs. N. M. Thornton. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:35.

twelve acres more of land lying immediately adjoining the site and we hope for a small donation from the adjoining claim.²⁰¹ I must renew my private request that you find us a well qualified, literary young man and send him out to our relief as soon as practicable. I cannot think of being long confined five days in seven within the walls of a schoolhouse while so much is to be done in the ministry and there are so few laborers. But at present our brethren have so willed it and I comply from a conviction of duty rather than from a desire for the office. I wish to leave this matter with God. I trust I shall be able to make out my report up to this time next week.

I am as ever your unworthy brother and fellow-laborer
in Christ's vineyard,

EZRA FISHER,
Missionary in Oregon.

Received May 27, 1850.

Oregon City, Feb. 19, 1850.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill.

Dear Brother:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society from the 22nd of August, 1849, up to the first of Oct. for the term of ten weeks, it being the first report which I have made for the year commencing the first day of April, 1849. I have labored ten weeks in the quarter, preached fourteen sermons, delivered six lectures on the subject of Sunday schools and religious education, visited religiously fifty families and one common school, baptized one, traveled to and from appointments 535 miles. The remaining items of the report I have been unable to do anything for, except that the Sunday school in Clatsop Plains is continued with three Baptist teachers and about twenty scholars; about 135 volumes in the library. For a more

²⁰¹ This donation from the adjoining claim was never made.

detailed account of my labors this quarter I refer you to my journal, which I forwarded you in December last, if I mistake not.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

Missionary in Oregon.

Oregon City, Feb. 20, 1850.

Herein I send you my report of labor for the third quarter of the year commencing April 1st, the quarter commencing October first, 1849. Labored thirteen weeks, preached fourteen times, delivered thirteen Sunday school lectures and twenty lectures to my day school, attended three church meetings and visited eighteen families religiously. But have done nothing on the other various subjects required in the form of reports in the commission. The reason I assign is the circumstance of my being called to remove to Oregon City and the new and somewhat peculiar relation I have consented to sustain for the time being as a teacher in our newly organized school for Oregon.

The time has come when all these benevolent enterprises should have a home in the hearts of all the Baptists in Oregon and should be responded to by benevolent action; and I think something will soon be done on the subjects of home missions, foreign missions and the Bible cause, as well as for our institution of learning. My school has been flourishing the past quarter and numbered between sixty and seventy different scholars. I had about ten young men and lads who declaimed each two weeks and about 20, male and female, who wrote and read their compositions each alternate two weeks. Two boys in algebra, one young lady in natural philosophy, about a dozen in geography and about the same number in English grammar, about twenty in arithmetic and two in history. The present term is an unfav-

orable season of the year. I have taught but one week, have 24 and the prospects fair for about 40 scholars. At a meeting of the board of the institution, held in this place on the 15th instant, it was resolved to name the institution the Oregon City College.

I will now proceed to give you a report as near as I can calculate for the quarter ending April 1st, 1850. My field of labor comprises Oregon City, Milwaukie and vicinity. I have labored thirteen weeks in the quarter, preached sixteen sermons, attended three church meetings. Addressed Sabbath schools twelve times, my day school fifteen times on religious subjects. Delivered one temperance lecture. Visited religiously thirty-five families and individuals. I have assisted in the celebration of the Lord's Supper twice; attended one meeting of the Oregon Baptists' Education Society. Have the charge of the Sabbath school in Oregon City, with 20 scholars and four teachers and 200 volumes in the library. The remaining requisitions in the instructions I have omitted, as nothing is yet done for them. Our congregations in this place and Milwaukie are increasing and it seems obvious to all our friends at least that the hand of God is in our attempts to establish our institution in this place. Marked attention is generally paid to the preached word and we fondly hope that God will visit us with His spirit, notwithstanding all the rage for gold and speculation with which we are surrounded. All of which is respectfully submitted.

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary in Oregon.

Received May 27, 1850.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., March 29, 1850.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill.

Dear Brother:

Yours of July 14, 1849, addressed to me in California, containing a copy of the one you forwarded in

June, yours under date October 15th, 1849, accompanying my commission bearing date Apr. 1, 1849, and yours of Dec. 10, 1849, have all been received within a few days, the last of which I hasten to answer as briefly and as directly as the complicated circumstances will admit. You may rest assured that it affords us great pleasure in Oregon to have so strong assurances that our brethren on the other side of the mountains cherish so correct and liberal views in relation to the future importance of Oregon and we are still more cheered to discover the almost impatient anxiety you manifest in our prompt action on the subject of locating and bringing into existence a school for the benefit of the Baptists in Oregon.

I have only to say that when I wrote you in Feb. and July the denomination as such in Oregon had not been consulted on the subject in any of its peculiar relations and my object in writing you from San Francisco was rather to apprise you of the course marked out in my own mind for my immediate actions than to ask our eastern brethren to aid us immediately. But God in His providence has seemed to mark out for us a course in an unexpected manner and in a relation which we had little anticipated and now we are compelled to yield to the manifest providential indications or sacrifice the most important local position in the Territory and with it the little public confidence we are beginning to secure. This is the only point in Oregon where Romanism and Protestantism can be brought to bear directly upon each other. The nuns have here a school and we understand the Jesuits contemplate establishing a college in the immediate vicinity. We have good reason to suppose that other denominations would have soon fixed upon this place if we had not secured our site first. I have already informed you that we have secured a land claim immediately adjoining the claim on which Oregon City stands at an ex-

pense of \$5000. Br. Johnson assumed one half of the debt and I paid \$1250, which consumed all my available means, and we found a friend of mine who paid \$1250. This was the only method we could hit upon by which we could secure anything like a suitable amount of land for college purposes near this place without paying from \$8000 to \$15000. We have appropriated about fifty acres of the claim, in the most eligible situation and within about half a mile of the most populous part of the town, to college purposes and the Trustees accepted the same. Since I last wrote you we have secured a town lot, 66 feet by 100, in a central part of the city as a donation.²⁰² This lot is now valued at \$300. We wish to put on this lot a building, 66 by 30, two stories, the present season, if possible, to be occupied by the school till such time as we can sustain a school on the college premises. The building and lot will then sell for more than the first cost or, what is rather probable, may be appropriated to a preparatory department. By this plan we shall be able to keep a full school from this time forward, with suitable teachers. Should the price of lumber fall, as is probable it will, we shall labor hard to raise the requisite means and build this summer and fall. Yet we have few men in Oregon to whom we may look to give us the requisite means. Br. Johnson, one other brother and myself have subscribed \$650 toward that object. Our school now occupies the Baptist meeting house and must still occupy it till we can build. We also need a boarding house erected so that we can be prepared to board as cheap as board can be had in the country. This must be done or we shall fail of benefitting children of Baptist families in the country. Unless funds can be raised in the States to the amount of five or six thousand dollars, this part of the work must be delayed. Now we think that the school itself will afford a good teacher from six hundred to a thousand dollars salary. We think we can manage to furnish him a garden and other perquisites

²⁰² This was lot 8, block 97, of the Oregon City townsite, and was southwest of the present Barclay School building.—Clackamas County Deed Records.

to the amount of from one to two hundred dollars. We think by these means, if the friends in the States could raise \$200, so that he could provide his family clothing at N. York, we can sustain a good teacher. We would suggest that he leave his measure for all his clothes with you, as it costs 30 dollars in California gold to get a coat made at a tailor's shop in Oregon and all other sewing is proportionately high. \$200 in New York is worth \$1000 here in the line of clothing, etc.

We must have a teacher well qualified to be a popular teacher in a New England Academy and one who wishes to make teaching his business for life. It would be desirable that he have a wife qualified to teach in the primary department, or to teach a ladies' school. It will be of little use to send us a stupid, half-educated man, with little common sense and ignorant of human nature. Should he be a good singer, and preacher too, it will be all the better. We can find him work. We want and must have, if possible, almost everything necessary to afford facilities for students to prosecute their studies without serious inconvenience. We need a system of common school books so that we can furnish our scholars with the best approved books at moderate prices, when they enter the school. Our school will soon have scholars commencing a preparatory course and we must therefore have text books. We then want common school books, from the spelling book to the rhetorical reader. Perhaps Saunder's series is as good as you can furnish us. We are now using these as reading books, but there are no more to be obtained in the country. We are using Thompson's Arithmetic; perhaps that is as good as you can send us.²⁰³ We use Brown's and Wells' English grammar. We have a few in natural philosophy; we use Olmsted's. We

²⁰³ James B. Thomson had a number of works on arithmetic published by Clark and Maynard, New York.

Denison Olmsted, of Yale, had a number of works on natural philosophy by the same publishers; and by R. B. Collins and E. D. Trueman of Cincinnati.—American Catalogue for 1876, and O. A. Roorbach, Bibliotheca Americana. W. H. Wells' Grammar was published in Boston, and Gould Brown's Grammar was published in New York. Ibid.

have some in algebra and shall soon need a few Latin and Greek grammars, readers, and lexicons. Now it seems almost indispensable to our success that we have the most approved works always at hand. Can you not find some friends who will send out by our teacher on commission a small book store of school books and religious and literary works and afford them here for forty or fifty per cent profits? They will meet with a ready sale and we can find some friend here who will sell them for a small per cent for the benefit of the school and Oregon generally, without taxing the teacher with this matter farther than receiving the funds and forwarding them and conducting the correspondence. More than a thousand dollars' worth of school books were brought to this place about two months since²⁰⁴ and they are almost entirely sold, so that the country will be out of school books in a few weeks. In addition to this we want a small, well selected library, comprising histories, voyages, travels, literary and scientific works, especially works on the natural sciences, mental and moral philosophy, political economy, lives, theological standard works, etc.; also a set of globes, a small portable telescope and a case of instruments to facilitate the study of natural philosophy, surveying, trigonometry, etc. We have already asked you for a bell. We repeat that request; if you can find some benevolent friends who can send us one of from 200 to 600 pounds weight. The Romans regulate the time of our city by their bells. Not a Protestant bell in the place. We need nails, hinges, door latches and glass sufficient for building a house of the size before named and furnishing two school rooms thirty feet square. Sash also can be bought and shipped much cheaper than they can be bought here. We think you could render us essential service, if your Board would take this matter into advisement and, when you find the man, commission him to travel a few months through some of the most important cities and large towns in the free states and solicit funds

204 These were brought out by G. H. Atkinson.—G. H. Himes.

for the above named object. We want no old, useless books shipped. Send us standard works of the most approved authors, if you would aid us in giving a sound political, moral and religious character to Oregon. 23000 miles is too far to ship trash for a literary institution and, I trust, theological school for the Baptists in Oregon.

We intend to raise \$5000 or more for this work in Oregon the present season. We have an agent appointed for two months and he will work in the best part of the season. I this day introduced the subject to a friend of mine. He assured me that he would give us \$500 when we got ready to circulate our subscription and would also deed us a lot in Lancaster, a town just springing into existence on Baker's bay on the north side of the mouth of the Columbia, which he said was worth \$500 more. Surely, thought I, the Lord intends to bless our feeble efforts. We feel that we are placed by providence now where we cannot leave the work and we see no other way but that I must stand in this moral Thermopylae until you can send us aid. We have reason to expect my health must gradually decline under the labor of teaching, and preaching every Sabbath. Yet such is the great destitution in our whole territory that we feel that it is sinful for me to think of leaving the appropriate duties of the ministry. There are times in the history of men's lives in which all the energies of the man are called for. This at present is our condition in Oregon. This is the time when the demand for preparatory work is great, very great. There is scarcely a rising town in Oregon where church property and educational property would not be donated to the denomination, if we had a few more men in the ministry, or, what would be still better, a few more wise, active laymen to secure such valuable property.

We hope the brother you appointed for Oregon last Nov. is on his way with one or two more fellow laborers. We would name Fort Vancouver as a commanding point which should be occupied very soon. Soon immigration will be pouring in

upon us from over the mountains and by water. Your Board must be apprised of this. We have the best evidence that gold is abundant in the south part of Oregon, and probably our Oregon men will dig near home this season.

We see that Br. Geo. C. Chandler is about leaving the presidency of Franklin College.²⁰⁵ He is favorably known by us. Would it not be right to draw him away from Indiana to the charge of our school? Means must not be wanting to insure us a teacher such as will secure public respect and confidence. My school numbers about 45 this quarter and will be larger from this time forward. Last quarter it was larger.

We subscribe ourselves, Yours respectfully,
 EZRA FISHER, W. T. MATLOCK,
 Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Clerk of the Board.
 Done by order of the Trustees of Oregon City College.
 Received July 9, 1850.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., July 1, 1850.

To Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bapt. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the first quarter ending June 30, 1850. My field comprises Oregon City and Milwaukie, six miles below Oregon City on the east bank of the Willamette, Clackamas County, and Linn City,²⁰⁶ Washington County (formerly Tualatin) immediately across the Willamette from Oregon City. I stately supply the station at Oregon City half the time and superintend the Sabbath school and teach the Bible class. Supply the station at Milwaukie once each four weeks and supply the station at Linn City once each Sabbath three-fourths of the time. I have labored thirteen weeks the last quarter, preached twenty-five

²⁰⁵ Rev. George C. Chandler (1807-1881) was licensed by the church in Springfield, Vermont, while the author was pastor there. He went to Indiana in 1838 and was president of Franklin College from 1843 to 1850. He came to Oregon in 1851. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:73-82.

²⁰⁶ Linn City was laid off by Robert Moore in 1843. *Hist. of Portland*, ed. by H. W. Scott, p. 78.

(25) sermons, delivered one annual address before the Oregon Tract Society,²⁰⁷ auxiliary to the A. T. Soc., twelve lectures to the Sabbath school and Bible class, attended three prayer meetings and one three-days' meeting in connection with the communion season of the church in this place on the first Sab. in May. Visited religiously twenty-three families and individuals, visited no common schools, addressed my own on moral and religious subjects twenty-seven times. Baptized none, obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge, organized no church, aided in no ordination, traveled to and from my appointments one hundred and fifty miles, received none by letter or experience, no conversions known, none preparing for the ministry, except one anti-missionary brother who is studying and reciting to me. No monthly concert of prayer (I trust this thing will not long be so).

The people where I labor have done nothing for any of the missionary societies. Connected with the places where I preach are three Sabbath schools in which the Baptists participate, but only one under Baptist direction. The one at Oregon City has four teachers, 20 scholars, and 200 volumes in the library. I have a Bible class of six scholars.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Oregon City and vicinity.

Our association has just closed an interesting session.²⁰⁸ All was harmony; all the delegates were deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of ministerial support and passed some spirited resolutions on the subject. One small church sent up a pledge that they would pay one hundred dollars for one fourth of the time for a year, if they could be supplied with monthly preaching. Other churches will do as well and we now have the hope that before the rainy season sets in almost every church of nominally missionary Baptists in the

²⁰⁷ This was organized in the autumn of 1848 and did some colporteurage work.—G. H. Himes.

²⁰⁸ The Association met with the La Creole Church, June 28-30.—Minutes of Willamette Baptist Assn. of Ore.

Territory will have entered into a systematic arrangement of their own to sustain preaching part of the time. Yet we have serious drawbacks upon our spiritual prospects by means of the gold excitement. Some of our leading members and many of the men, especially our young men, are off in the mines much of the time, and the mind dwells on the thought of golden treasures at the expense of all the great moral and religious subjects which are indispensable to a happy and religious influence. Our citizens are now mining successfully in Oregon on the Umpqua and Rogue rivers and gold is found above the Cascade Mountains on both sides of the Columbia River²⁰⁹ and it is the opinion of those who have visited that region as prospectors that it will also become a mining region this fall.

Our school is quite as flourishing as could be expected in the midst of all these exciting causes. Several of the young men have gone to the gold regions and one or more will leave soon. Yet my average number of scholars, large and small, is about 56 the present quarter. I have had 75 different scholars since the term commenced, which was on the 27th of May. The school calls for all my energies during the week. My oldest daughter is almost constantly employed in teaching with me. In addition to teaching, for the last eight weeks I have spent about one hour each day soliciting subscriptions for our school building. We shall build the first building in the city, on account of obtaining scholars, but think we shall be able in two or three years (perhaps sooner) to take the department for young men to the college premises. We have resolved as a Board to build a house 22 feet by 42, two stories, so as to accommodate the school with two good school rooms in one story and appropriate the other story to a lecture room, 22 by 32, and a room of 10 feet by 22 for a library, philosophical apparatus or reading room, as the case may demand. We have now subscribed \$3332 in cash and what is called \$6500 in Pacific City property. The

²⁰⁹ This gold was found on bars just above the Cascades of the Columbia.—G. H. Himes.

town property is not available at present and probably is not now worth more than twenty cents on the dollar. This subscription I have obtained, except a few hundred dollars. We have an agent, Eld. Richmond Cheadle, in the field for two months, so as not to materially interfere with his ministerial duties. He has just entered upon the work. We hope he will raise for us \$2000 or \$3000. We think we shall be able to raise 500 or 1000 dollars more in this vicinity for this object. The hand of the Lord seems to be with us in this work. Yet it is extremely expensive building. Lumber is worth at this time \$55 per thousand feet, delivered, and we have no hope of its being lower, and mechanics' work is worth from \$10 to \$12 per day. We are waiting with great anxiety for our teacher and hope his wife may be well qualified to teach a large school. The building for our county female seminary is going up and teachers will be needed in that and we ought to furnish our proportion of teachers.²¹⁰ The building is to be 60 by 30, two stories. You will no doubt do what you can for us by way of securing a library suited to our present wants and, if possible, make arrangements so that we can have a small book store kept here so that at all times we can supply our own scholars, and all others who may want them, with the best approved school books and other popular and standard works. Our whole territory is materially suffering for want of school books now and the scarcity will be daily increasing. Our teachers, or one of them, might keep the books and sell them without entirely deranging the school. I say one of them, for, with present appearances, we cannot expect to do with less than two teachers from this time forward. Beside this, we must have teachers, both male and female, through the Territory. Immigration will soon pour in upon us from all parts of the world by thousands and we must be prepared to meet this extraordinary state of things or ignor-

²¹⁰ The Clackamas County Female Seminary was the successor of a school opened by Mrs. N. M. Thornton, February 1, 1847.—*Oregon Spectator*.

It was later enlarged, chiefly through the efforts of Dr. G. H. Atkinson, and two teachers sent out through Governor Slade of Vermont taught there for a time. It became a public school some years later. The site is occupied by the present Barclay School.—G. H. Himes.

ance and vice and luxury will soon work the ruin of this fair portion of our great nation. We are looking for some half dozen female teachers sent out by the Board of the National Popular Educational Society.²¹¹ We hope that the Society will not be made a tool to sustain Congregationalism through all our new states and territories. From the nature of the case it must be a mighty engine and, unless well guarded, will be employed to serve the interests of those sects who manage its affairs. A fair proportion of the teachers sent out to the West by that Society should be Baptists, or the deficiency should be met by direct denominational action on our part, or the molding of the minds of the next generation in the mighty West is given over into Pedit-baptist hands, or, what is far worse, into the hands of the Romans.

We have not yet contracted the printing of the minutes of our Association, but voted to print 300 copies, together with an abstract of the minutes of 1848, all of which will about fill eight octavo pages. Our printer here will charge us \$75 for 150 copies. I have prepared them for the press and I do not know but we shall send to you for printing. We presume the work can be done for \$12 at most in New Y. The Association voted unanimously to request the Board of the American Baptist Home Mission Society to appoint Elder Vincent Snelling as their missionary to labor one year within the bounds of the Willamette Baptist Association at a salary of \$200.²¹² Done by order of the Association. Ezra Fisher, Clerk.

Yours respectfully,
EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, Oregon, July 10, 1850.

Dear Br. Hill:

The steamer Carolina is in with the mail at Portland. I do not know how soon she will go out, but probably in two or three

²¹¹ This refers doubtless to the five young women who came out to teach in 1851. They were escorted by Thurston, the Oregon delegate to Congress, who died on the way out. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:136. They were sent by the National Board of Education.

²¹² Rev. Vincent Snelling was appointed Aug. 1, 1850, by the Home Mission Society, for the term of one year. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:44.

days.²¹³ I mail this in haste, hoping to be able to write again before the mail is made up at this place. We had a S. school celebration in this place on the Fourth. I was called upon to deliver the address. The whole business of the day passed off in order and on the whole a new import to the S. S. cause was given. All our schools have increased since that day—ours has almost doubled. My school large. Gold on the Umpqua and Rogue rivers not found sufficiently plentiful to justify digging while the mines are more rich elsewhere. Nothing certain as to the quantity of gold up the Columbia. I shall send an order for clothing and groceries this mail if possible.

Yours truly,
EZRA FISHER.

Received Sept. 6, 1850.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., June 17, 1850.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother :

Herein I send you a bill for goods which I wish you to fill and forward to me by the first good opportunity you have to ship direct to Oregon. I hope you will not ship to California, as it costs as much to ship from California to Oregon as it does from N. Y. to Oregon. 1 book case and table for writing made so that the book case can stand on the table, cherry, 1 barrel of best brown sugar, 1 ten pound box of green tea, 30 or 35 yds. of carpeting, not exceeding \$1.25 per yd., 1 box sperm candles, 1 pair heavy calfskin boots, No. 11s, 4 pairs of men's good calfskin shoes, No. 10, 4 do. half No. 8's and half No. 9's; 2 pairs thick shoes, 8's and 9's; 4 pairs ladies' gaiters, Nos. 4 and 4½ each; 1 pair do., No. 3; 4 pairs of ladies' shoes, calf, 4 and 4½; 2 do. Morocco, 4 and 4½; 2 pairs ladies' shoes, calf, No. 3; 2 pairs do. girls' Nos. 12 and 13;

²¹³ In June, 1850, the steamer *Carolina* (Captain R. L. Whiting) made her first run to Portland from San Francisco with mails and passengers. In August she was withdrawn and put on the run between San Francisco and Panama. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:188.

1 pair girls' gaiters, No. 12; 4 pairs child's shoes, calf, Nos. 8 and 9; 1 dress coat; 1 good summer vest and 2 pairs cloth pantaloons for me, made to your measure, rather large; 4 pairs of suspenders for pantaloons; 12 or 15 pairs colored lamb's-wool half hose for men; 6 pairs ladies' cotton hose, colored; 2 do. alpaca; 3 do. lamb's-wool; 4 do. lamb's-wool, small, for girl about twelve years old; 4 do. lamb's-wool hose for girls eight or nine years of age; four pairs lamb'swool half hose for children, four or five years old. Let all the hose and half hose be colored. 1 bolt of good gingham; 1 bolt of good worsted, or alpaca, fashionable for ladies' dresses, not very light colored; 20 yds. of lawn, light colored; 1 cheap settee, if it will not cost too much for freight; 10 yds. of Irish linen, fine, for bosoms and collars; 1 bolt cotton sheeting, bleached, fine; 1 do. unbleached, fine; 2 ladies' summer bonnets, trimmed; 2 do. misses' trimmed, age 8 and 12 years; 1 web of linen edging, half-inch wide; 1 do. $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide, a good article; 3 pairs brown linen gloves for gentlemen, rather large; 1 pair black kid gloves, gentlemen's, rather large; 4 do. ladies' gloves; 2 pairs ladies' mitts for summer; 4 do. misses' mitts for girls 8 and 12 years old; 6 large bottomed chairs and one large and one small rocking chair, strong, boxed, ready to set up here; 2 pairs of silver set spectacles, suitable for my age; 1 hat for me, $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference on the outside around the band; 1 copy of the Comprehensive Commentary, if you have not forwarded it to me before this; 1 pair of brass candlesticks; 1 do. iron; 1 pair of snuffers and snuffer tray; 6 German silver dessert spoons, large; 2 boxes of vegetable shaving soap, put up in small white earthen boxes; 6 fine ivory combs; 1 ladies' parasol; 6 white linen pocket handkerchiefs; 4 silk pocket handkerchiefs; 4 black silk cravats for gentlemen, or 4 yards of good black silk for cravats; 8 yds. of figured white lace for ladies' caps; 1 bolt of good, fine, firm, red flannel; 20 yds. of drab colored cambric for facings of dresses; 1 boy's cap for winter, not fur, for boy four years old; 12 yds. brown holland, fine article; 15

yds. brown toweling; half pound good black sewing silk; 1 silk and 2 cotton umbrellas; 1 dozen spools of white sewing thread; 1½ dozen spools of colored thread; half pound of black linen sewing thread; 15 yds. good black cassimere for men's pantaloons; half ream good letter paper; 1 lb. alum; 1 good overcoat for me, rather large for yourself; 1 dress shawl, worsted, a good article; 4 pounds of Thompsonian composition,²¹⁴ and a quart of No. Six. We wish you to study economy in the purchase of these articles, yet we are quite sure that cheap sale articles, for instance shoes and boots, ready-made clothes, etc., are very unprofitable; they fall to pieces so soon. Sale shoes, for instance, in this dry climate often last but a few weeks and sometimes but a few days. The taste of people is fast changing and people are becoming extravagant in dress and we must be able to appear in all circles. You need no further explanations. I received no bill of the goods you sent us last and know nothing how your account stands with me. We want you to fill this bill and let us know how we stand. We feel that we cannot get along with anything short of what I have ordered, in our present condition, and, if this more than covers my salary, I must try and raise the funds here some way to meet it. Our necessary expenses and sacrifices to keep the institution in operation must keep us exhausted in means unless God by His gracious providence opens doors beyond our present knowledge. But we have commenced the work in faith and we trust we shall be sustained. We cannot go back. The work to us appears more and more important every month. We expect the labor of elevating its character will be great and the work will advance slowly and with great expense, but waiting will be disastrous to our reputation as a denomination of Christians in Oregon. We must have help in Oregon for this work!

Not a word from you in this mail, either to Br. Johnson

²¹⁴ This was a famous remedy of that time.

The formula seems to have been bayberry 2 lbs., ginger 1 lb., cayenne pepper 2 oz., cloves 2 oz. Horton Howard, *An Improved System of Botanic Medicine*, Columbus, 1832, p. 370.

or myself. Give us at least a male and female teacher before next spring, and a good, young minister for Astoria and vicinity; a man adapted to rise with the people and mold the mind of the people, both morally and religiously. This seems to me indispensable, if you will have the Baptist interest take deep root at the great commercial point in Oregon.²¹⁵

Yours with great respect,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Sept. 6, 1850.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Sept. 20, 1850.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill.

Dear Brother:

After a long delay I take my pen to write you a kind of a general epistle, a part of which must be virtually a recapitulation of some of my former letters. By Divine blessing my family and Brother Johnson's are all in tolerable health. I commenced the fall quarter of our school last Monday. We have now fifty scholars; probably we shall have an increase next week. My daughter still assists and we are yet compelled to have all the school in one room. The work on our school building progresses as fast as we could expect, in view of the present state of things in our country. We have the frame now erected, forty-two feet by twenty-two; two stories of ten and eleven feet, and a basement of wood eight feet in the clear. We shall be able in a few days to pay for the timber and work as far as we have gone, which will be about \$2000. Our financial affairs will then stand somewhat as follows: \$3000 on subscriptions in cash and building materials, town property as subscribed \$6700, which we estimate worth about \$2000 or \$2500.²¹⁶ It would seem by a glance at our subscription list that there

²¹⁵ The reason why the commercial metropolis of Oregon rose at Portland instead of Astoria is probably because of the long haul from Astoria to the more thickly settled parts of Oregon. It was cheaper to bring ocean ships to the head of navigation, Portland, than to make the longer haul overland to Astoria.

²¹⁶ The school building completed at so much sacrifice was not used as such for more than a few years after the period covered by these letters. It was finally torn down in the seventies. The proceeds of such property of the school as could be sold were given to McMinnville College. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:37.

are no serious embarrassments to our moving forward and completing so much of the house as will be imperiously called for the coming winter and painting the outside. But money is daily becoming more scarce with us and we see no reason to suppose it will become more plenty. Those who went to the mines last year and found gold so plentiful have spent their surplus funds and little improvements in agriculture or buildings have been made. Lumber has been in little demand in California, the markets there having been filled with eastern lumber. Collections must, therefore, go on slowly, yet labor and lumber and all kinds of building materials are higher here than they are even in California. We, however, hope to be able to enclose the house and finish two school rooms before the first of January. The superintending of the work must necessarily make some drafts upon both Br. Johnson's and my time. He has the superintending of the building and I have secured about three-fourths of the subscription. But a failure in this work would prove ruinous to the Baptist cause in the public estimation, so far as present appearances indicate. When we have proceeded so far as to have finished two school rooms, our entreaties for a teacher qualified to sustain the reputation of the first literary school in Oregon will know no denial. To me it seems that we shall be brought to a Thermopylae. We have taken strong encouragement from your letters and reports that we shall not be disappointed and we have given publicity to our sanguine expectations. Our school also is increasing in numbers and improvements and will very soon call for the labors of two men in the higher department and a teacher in the primary department. This would be the case at this time, if we had a boarding-house connected with the school where students could board for four or five dollars per week; but at present board is from \$10 to \$12 per week, washings not included. We need to build a boarding-house and find some good eastern family to come and take charge of it, who would be satisfied with a steady increase of property and a conviction of being instrumental of great

good to Oregon and the world. Would to God that such a man could be found in some of our older churches who would be able and willing to enter into such an enterprise. Such a department, well filled, would, no doubt, open the way for scores every year to commence an education under the influence of the gospel. We ardently hope you will spare no ordinary efforts to secure us one teacher at least who will stand high in moral and literary attainments.

We have another subject nearly allied to this, to which I wish to call the attention of your Board, because I suppose it can be done better through that channel than any other now open. It is this: We now have several rising towns just beginning to spring up at points which will not fail to become important business places. The proprietors of these townsites and the citizens will spare no pains, and I had almost said means, to build a good school house and sustain a good teacher who will give promise of some permanency. Now, had we at this time, and from this time forward for four or five years at least, a few good Baptist teachers of leading minds, they might enter into a profitable business to themselves and be exceedingly useful to the cause of Christ and general education. Such an enterprise would no doubt lay the foundation for the establishment of Baptist churches in these towns at a very early period in the history of the towns. I know now of a place where a preacher who would consent to take a school might grow up with the people, and his family, if not large, would be easily sustained from the first. The people—men of enterprise—are solicitous on the subject. I could now name several such places on the Columbia and the Willamette below the head of tide water. Our Methodist brethren, ever awake to secure vantage ground, are now negotiating with the proprietors of Portland, twelve miles below this place, and will no doubt soon have there a school in operation belonging to the Methodist Church and built and sustained, so far as funds are concern-

ed, by the proprietors and citizens of Portland.²¹⁷ We can find employment at this time for more than a dozen good teachers in our territory, where they would be well paid and at the same time opening the way for fourfold that number more. As it respects our want of ministers, allow me to repeat the request with earnestness that your Board make an appointment for a minister to labor at Astoria, Pacific City and Clatsop Plains as soon as you can find a man who is suited to the place. The great commercial city for Oregon must rise at the mouth of the Columbia. This must be the key to the whole country. We have a fair proportion of Baptist members and adherents there, and I shall never rest when I think of this place till it is occupied. A Brother Newell,²¹⁸ formerly a teacher of music in N. Y. and Auburn, is in Pacific City and will probably take his family to that place. The Baptist interest is rising in Salem, the seat of the Methodist Institute, and a church will be constituted in a few weeks at that place.²¹⁹ I have referred your Board to this place on a former occasion. An efficient minister would soon find his support there, by your aid, in a few years. This is the best point in all the upper country from which to reach all points in the Willamette Valley. Another minister is wanted about as much on the west side of the river five miles above at a new town called Cincinnati.²²⁰ This place is in the bounds of the La Creole Church, formerly called Rick-re-All. Two ministers thus located would always be near each other to counsel and give aid and at the same time would each have a wide and rich field on each side of the river. Another minister is much needed on Tualatin Plains. This is the strongest church in the Ter. and would do their duty as they learned it. The immigrants to

217 This was Portland Academy and Female Seminary. The building was completed in November, 1851, largely through the efforts of Rev. J. H. Wilbur. Wm. D. Fenton, *Father Wilbur and His Work*, Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar. X:21.

218 George P. Newell (1819-1886) was a native of England, but had lived in America some years before coming to Oregon in 1850. He was Government Surveyor and Inspector of Customs at Pacific City for three years, and was for fifteen years a deacon in the Oregon City Church. *Mattoon, Bap. An. of Ore.* I:72.

219 See note 185.

220 The town was laid out by A. C. R. Shaw. The name is now Eola.—G. H. Himes.

California are, many of them, turning their course to the Willamette Valley and others to the Puget Sound.²²¹ Immigrants are now daily arriving, and every vessel and steamer from California is bringing the disappointed miners; it is confidently expected that we shall have our population more than doubled before next April. Your Board will soon see the necessity of making special effort for Oregon, as well as California. I often feel almost worn out in the multiplicity of my labors, yet I have never felt more the importance of working while the lamp burns and throwing all over into the hands of the Lord than I have the past summer. God has wonderfully blessed my poor frail body with strength. We are now out of school books. Will you not induce some friend of youthful education in Oregon to raise some school books—Saunders's series, or Angel's, if better; Thompson's arithmetic; a few grammars and books of philosophy, history and astronomy, adapted to academies—and have them shipped? Could not a society of young men be formed in your city who will furnish us with books as we may order them, so that we might have time to sell them and refund the money, with profit enough to pay them for the labor? There are now no school books or singing books suited to teach church music in Oregon. Do think of us.

Respectfully and affectionately yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Nov. 14, 1850.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Oct. 1, 1850.

The Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Miss. Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the second quarter (under the commission bearing date April 1, 1850) ending October 1st, 1850. I statedly supplied the station in this place

²²¹ The first American settlement in the Puget Sound country was in 1845. By 1850 there were possibly one hundred American citizens in that region; and trade had just begun in American bottoms. The Hudson Bay Company had, of course, come in some years before the Americans.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Washington, Idaho and Montana*, pp. 2-17.

half of my time and the station at Milwaukie one Sabbath a month. Milwaukie is a rising village on the east bank of the Willamette near the head of ship navigation and six miles below this place.²²² I preached the remainder of the time in this place and vicinity. I have labored thirteen weeks in this quarter, preached 21 sermons, delivered no lectures except to my school and Sabbath school. Baptized none, obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge, have not organized any church, aided in no ordination. We established a weekly prayer meeting in this place about five weeks since; have attended all its meetings. Visited religiously twenty families and individuals, visited no common schools, traveled to and from my appointments 40 miles. No persons have been received by letter or by experience and I know of no person who has experienced a hope in Christ. No young men in our churches to whom I preach preparing for the ministry. Our sisters in this place have established a monthly concert of prayer for the cause of missions. My people have paid me during the quarter \$25 for my salary, but nothing for any missionary society. I have the superintendence of the Sabbath school in this church and conduct the Bible class except when absent. We have four teachers and about 25 children; library, about 150 volumes. My Bible class varies from four to eight or ten, mostly members of my day school. My day school embraces about fifty in an average attendance, but I have had 70 different scholars since the present quarter commenced, which has now been in progress three weeks. My daughter devotes most of her time as an assistant. Our prospects as a whole are far better for building up a permanent interest in this place and the whole Territory than at any period since we have been in Oregon.

Churches are beginning to feel the importance of liberating the ministry from secular labor and care.

I have secured a deed for four town lots in Portland for a

²²² Ocean-going ships stopped coming to Milwaukie about 1852.—G. H. Himes.

Baptist church property.²²³ Since the first of January I have paid by way of establishing our school not far from \$300 in securing the site, \$50 to the erecting of a building on land, \$50 towards ceiling our meeting house and have \$100 more to meet on my subscription for our school building before next summer and have given no less than \$100 of time in soliciting subscriptions and collecting funds for our school building. I do not name this to boast of my liberality. But we have entered upon the work and there seems to be an imperious necessity laid on the few friends who have taken hold of it. The rainy season has commenced and our school building is not enclosed. We have therefore to fit up our meeting house for the winter. I wish you to send Mrs. Fisher the Mothers' Journal and pay for it from my salary. We are in great want of religious periodicals to circulate among the churches and our members. Numbers of them would gladly pay for them, if the proprietors would run the risk of conveyance of the money. But they seem unwilling to pay their money and forward it and not receive the papers. We could obviate this difficulty by ordering you to pay for the periodicals from our salaries, but our salaries in N. Y. are worth from 75 to 400 per cent more to us than the money is here, and, with the great expense of living here and the responsibilities in carrying on the work before us, we cannot make that sacrifice. We will get the subscribers, collect the money and forward it faithfully free of charge for our services, if the proprietors of the papers will allow us to forward it at their risk. We will also pay the per cent for transportation. We feel that after the preaching of the Word, our brethren cannot be profited so much in any other way by being led into the duties of the consistent Christian as through the medium of the Christian press.

Br. Mahlom Brock has subscribed and paid for the Moth-

²²³ The First Baptist Church of Portland was not organized until 1855. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, 1:14. Mattoon says that Rev. H. Johnson obtained the property for the church in 1850, and gives it as a half-block on the corner of Fourth and Alder Streets. *Ibid.* p. 140.

ers' Journal and the Home Mission Record ²²⁴ and I could have numbers of other similar subscriptions, if I could insure the papers. If you think best to accede to the proposals made in this, write me at your earliest convenience. We wish to know if the proprietors of the New York Recorder and the Mothers' Journal will do the same. We wish you to be reminded anew that we are almost discouraged in relation to the hope of your furnishing us a suitable teacher by the opening of spring. God being my helper, I will try and sustain the school till you send us a suitable man to sustain at least a part of the responsibilities of our school. Then again we are entirely out of school books and there are none to be had in the country. Cannot you send us some? We will sell them so that we can refund the money with ten or 20 per cent, perhaps more.

Then we very much need preachers for the places I mentioned to you in the letter I forwarded to you by the last mail.

I have received no letter from you since the one you sent accompanying the commission of the first of April last.

All which is respectfully submitted in great haste,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Oregon City.

Received Dec. 9, 1850.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Nov. 12, 1850.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Dear Brother:

Yours under date of Sept 4th, 7th, 9th, together with a letter from Rev. Geo. C. Chandler of Aug. 19, were received last mail and I now hasten to answer them in brief so as to have them leave by the next steamer. By Divine favor my health and that of my family have been unusually good through the season, notwithstanding the unusual amount of

²²⁴ "The Home Mission Record" was the official publication of the Baptist Home Mission Society and was first published in 1849. *Bap. Home Missions in N. Am. 1832-1882*, p. 541.

labor on my hands. We were much rejoiced to learn that you had succeeded in securing the services of our esteemed Br. Chandler for Oregon, but regret that he must be so long detained from the field so much needing his labors. We hoped confidently that I should have been relieved from at least a part of the responsibilities of the school before another summer opened upon us. But now, should our school prosper as the present signs seem to indicate and we should be able to complete our building and open a boarding house at moderate charge, we shall have more scholars than two men can faithfully teach, unless the common school system should go into effect in our city.²²⁵ Should this take effect, our school will be reduced in numbers, but not injured in character. We must aim at elevating the character of the school as fast as the demands of the people require it. We know nothing of Mr. Thurston's arrangements with teachers for Oregon City.²²⁶ We as a Board of Trustees for the Oregon City College have never thought of corresponding with any man or body of men to meet our demands but your Board. And we see no good reason at this time for changing our policy. We ardently trust that your Board will not let the appointment of Br. Chandler fail through any rumor you may hear from Boston or Washington. Should a good Baptist teacher reach Oregon and find himself disappointed in prospects, we should of course do what we could to introduce him to useful employment, but we have no thought of filling this vacancy with any other than the man of your appointment. The average number of our school this quarter is between 50 and 60 and we have had more than 80 different scholars since the quarter commenced. You will see by this that I have work enough for one man aside from my ministerial duties. We are obliged to suspend the work of our house for a few weeks in consequence of the sickness of Sis-

²²⁵ This refers to the efforts made in 1849 to establish a public school system in Oregon City. Rev. G. H. Atkinson was appointed school commissioner, but the system of free graded schools was deemed too expensive, and the "female seminary" was opened instead. Mrs. E. E. Dye, in Joseph Gaston, *Portland, Its History and Builders*, Portland, 1911; I:665.

²²⁶ See note 211.

ter Johnson, which has necessarily engrossed Br. Johnson's time and care for the last four weeks, but hope the work will soon be progressing. But the rainy season will not allow us to hope to be able to occupy the building till the opening of another spring. Our lumber is all green and it is becoming difficult to collect subscriptions fast.

The peculiar features of the Oregon land bill make it unsafe for us to leave the college claim unoccupied after the first day of next month.²²⁷ It therefore devolves upon me to move onto the claim. The erecting a temporary house claims some of my time, when it is much needed to forward the work of our school house, but we trust God will give us patience and strength to go through this part of the work. I trust you will make good use of Br. Chandler's time while in the old states in making him acquainted with the most efficient patrons of education and securing so much of public favor as will insure to our institution that kind of aid which must be derived from abroad.²²⁸ I mean books and necessary apparatus. School books at this time cannot be had in Oregon. This day four scholars were taken out of my school purely because no school books could be obtained in the country. And, unless we get books soon, similar cases will be no uncommon occurrence with us.

November 16.—Arrangements should be entered into immediately to keep our school supplied with school books, at least, without fail. I wrote you on this subject in my last. We should be kept constantly advised of the best systems of common school books and classical text books. I hope Br. Chandler will make the necessary arrangements with some book store or young men's association to meet our wants. I have written the Cor. Sec. A. B. Publication Society on the importance of supplying Oregon in part with religious read-

²²⁷ The organic act organizing Oregon Territory had made void all titles obtained under the laws of the provisional government. By the donation land law of 1850 a four-years' residence was required before title could be obtained to the lands granted under it. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:260-261.

²²⁸ Mr. Chandler originally came to Oregon to take charge of the school in Oregon City. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:76. See also note 205.

ing. That Society has had a missionary agent in Oregon more²²⁹ than a year when money has been plenty and books scarce and almost everybody asking for religious books and the agent not a book to sell. And that too, when the agent could probably do ten times the amount of work for the country with his buggy of books by visiting and preaching and selling truth from house to house that he will unaided by this valuable auxiliary. I venture the opinion that no part of the union has opened a more inviting field for this work than this territory. In addition to this, we have not a church of our order in the country with half a supply of hymn books, and no note books.²³⁰ All this with a people who are every day becoming more and more conscious that their children must be put on an equality with the rising generation on the Atlantic coast. Our gold is fast going to build up eastern cities and enrich the old states and we shall be less able to patronize this cause than at this time and there will be greater difficulties in training the people to a spirit of enlarged benevolence. Could our colporter be furnished with such works as he might order it would be a source of great influence to every Baptist minister in Oregon, of incalculable benefit to fortify the public mind against error and afford a good profit to the Society. Please urge this matter upon the consideration of that Soc.'s Board. Immigration is rapidly coming in by land and by water.²³¹ It is now time for Christians to work. I hope your Board will appoint Br. Snelling as your missionary; it will do good, more so than a man of the same ability from the States. For explanation on this subject I refer you to Br. Johnson's letter. I should write to Br. Chandler, but I know not where to direct a letter at this time. If he comes with an ox team, let him have good, substantial oxen of 4, 5 and 6 years of age.²³² Horses will do if he gets good ones and comes in

229 This was Rev. Richmond Cheadle. See note 188.

230 The "note books" refer to books giving the music for the hymns.

231 The immigration of 1850 amounted, so Bancroft says, to about eight thousand. *Hist. of Ore.* II:174.

This is four times the estimate of Young. See note 305. Young's estimate, however, probably refers only to those who came overland.

232 Mr. Chandler finally came overland, but some of his goods came by sea. See letters of Sept. 3, and August 8, 1851.

the first train, which he should do by all means, and start as early as he can travel, and take along with him oats and corn to feed his team principally for the first month, before the grass starts much. Drive moderately at first, have plenty of teams so that two horses may travel behind the wagon, and exchange horses each alternate day, and work each pair of horses two days in succession. Let provisions be selected in proportion to the amount of nutrition they contain to the pound. Let him take dried fruit, dried beef and the fattest pork he can find without bone, well cured. Let him take nothing heavy, except clothing, and send his books by water, put up so that they will not get wet. Let him have good India rubber cloths to sleep on and under. Tell him to take special care of his team and, if he comes with horses, never let them go to hunt stray cattle, if he can avoid it and keep peace with the caravan. Tell him to be sure to cross at or near Council Bluffs and keep the north side of the Platte all the way and never touch the old road till he reaches the Sweet Water and he will save several days' travel and avoid all the bad water courses. I speak advisedly on this subject. If he comes with a horse team, he should have mares. He will need much grace, but if he does not take too much care and labor on himself the journey will be pleasant and healthy to himself and family. May God bless him and his and make them a lasting blessing to Oregon.

Yours affectionately,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Jan. 25, 1851.

Oregon City, Ore., Jan. 17, 1851.

To Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mis. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the quarter ending January 1st, 1851.

I have labored thirteen weeks in the quarter in the work of the ministry, so far as I could in connection with my varied and urgent duties with our school, preached 20 sermons, delivered twelve lectures to our Sabbath school and Bible classes, attended 14 prayer and church meetings, visited religiously 15 families and other persons, weekly recommend the cause of Christ to my school, visited no common school, baptized none, obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge direct; no church organized, attended no ordination; traveled to and from my appointments 20 miles; no persons have been received by letter or experience; no hopeful conversions; no young men preparing for the ministry; monthly concert not observed as yet. My people have paid during the quarter nothing for any missionary or benevolent society; I have received ten dollars for my salary; our people have paid \$150 to ceil our meeting house, which is still our school room. Connected with the churches to which I preach are two Sabbath schools, one in this place under my charge having five teachers and 25 scholars, with a library of about 150 volumes; the other is a mixed school, about ten of the children from Baptist families and one or two of the teachers.

N. B.—I have not reported the number of the members received to the church in this place as Br. Johnson acts as moderator, is present at all our church meetings and has undoubtedly reported them. They shouldn't be reported twice. I have reported the state of our Sabbath school because this work rests on me. While I am necessarily employed as teacher and have the care of the school on my hands, I must confine my labors to this place and vicinity. I preach one Sabbath in four at Milwaukie where our prospects are flattering for building up a good church in the course of the coming year. We contemplate commencing our labors in Portland, a commercial town of 800 or 1000 souls, twelve miles below this, in a few months. Till Brother Chandler arrives it seems indispensable that Brother Johnson and myself make this place our residence. The cause of temperance is at this time on the ascendant in our city. We

are holding weekly meetings, with encouraging prospects. One of my scholars succeeded last week in obtaining about fifteen names of his fellow students to the pledge. Our sisters sustain a monthly prayer meeting.

The passage of the Oregon Land bill is operating temporarily against our school by calling some of our supporters with their families to leave town and settle on their land. Yet our school this quarter numbers about fifty and is increasing. We think we shall feel the effect of the bill still more through the coming summer, probably not longer. Our school building moves forward slowly. Money is constantly becoming more scarce and we find it hard collecting subscriptions, yet our motto is Onward. As soon as the days become a little longer and the travelling improved I intend, God granting, to take the subscription paper mornings and evenings and try what can be done by way of collecting and enlarging the subscriptions.

Perhaps we shall have to secure the labors of some person for two months in this work during the season. We have contracted for enclosing the house and that work is on the way and the house will be ready for painting as soon as the rainy season passes. We shall not be ready to occupy the house before June, perhaps Aug. or Sept. We trust we shall not fail of receiving a reinforcement in Br. Chandler, and we hope others. It is ruinous to abandon this work or even to suspend operations at this time. We could better do it after the house is completed. Should we suspend at this time, the public would say this people attempted to build and were not able, we should lose public confidence, consequently pecuniary aid, and our unfinished work would mock us. At present we are assured that we are securing public approbation. Our community is weekly increasing with an energetic, enterprising people, and the demand for ministerial labor this year will be triple that of last summer. I am in a strait betwixt the two, but I see no other way than to hold to the school till relief comes, preach as much as I can and leave

all with God. I moved to our College claim the 29th of Nov.

Yours in gospel bonds,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Oregon City.

Received March 10, 1851.

On Margin:

N. B.—I have received no letter from you since the one under date of Sept. 4th and 7th informing me of Br. Chandler's appointment. I have answered them.

Oregon City, Feb. 17, 1851.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Yours under date Oct. 19th, Nov. 11th and Dec. 9th have all come to hand, together with duplicates of the invoice of goods and bills of lading of the same on board the bark Francis and Louisa. We hope they may arrive safe in the month of April, but I have taken my pen in haste, worn out with fatigue, to make another application to your Board for a re-appointment for one year. I will here insert a copy of the requests from the church in this place and from the Board of Trustees of the Oregon City College.

At the regular church meeting Feb. 1, 1851, voted to recommend Elder Ezra Fisher to the Board of the A. B. H. Mission Socy. for re-appointment to labor in this place and vicinity for the term of one year.

F. A. COLLARD,²³³

Clerk.

HEZEKIAH JOHNSON,

Mod.

Oregon City, Feb. 6th, 1851.

This is to certify that at a meeting of the Trustees of the Oregon City College held at the Baptist meeting house in said city on the day and year first aforesaid it was agreed to recommend to the Board of the A. B. H. Mission Soc. Elder

²³³ F. A. Collard came to Oregon in 1847. He later served three terms in the legislature. *Hist. of Willamette Valley*, p. 669.

Ezra Fisher as their missionary in Oregon for the term of one year from the first day of April next.

W. T. MATLOCK,²³⁴
Secretary.

E. FISHER,
Chairman.

My labors will be one fourth of the time in this city, probably one fourth of the time at Linn City on the opposite side of the river from this city, one fourth of the time at Milwaukie, at the request of brethren there, and part of the time at Portland. It seemed to me desirable that Br. Johnson should continue his labors in this place the coming year. I therefore moved his call to the pastoral care of our little church. I shall find all the labor I can possibly perform with my school on my hands. We are advancing slowly with our school house. It is a hard time to collect, and almost all our men are going to the mines this spring. Very extravagant reports come from the Klamath mines, pretty well authenticated, of very rich mines of gold on the waters of that stream.²³⁵ Probably two thirds of the men in the territory will go for gold during the spring, if we receive no counter reports. At present the whole community is in a high state of excitement. We think things will become settled within a few months and hope the farming community will return permanently to their farms. We shall do all we can, in connection with all our other cares, this spring and the ensuing summer to carry the work (of building) forward and hope to have two rooms ready for occupancy before the arrival of Brs. Chandler and Read. Our school has already suffered the loss of several of the young men from the gold excitement, and more will go to the mines. Yet they will probably return in the fall, at least a part of them. Labor will be extravagantly high the coming season and lumber will be scarce. We dare not oppose the providences of God

²³⁴ W. T. Matlock was several times a member of the territorial legislature. He was a delegate to the first Republican state convention, and was at one time receiver of the U. S. Land Office. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:72, 143, 158, 296, 418, 458.

²³⁵ Gold was first found in the tributaries of the Klamath in the spring of 1850. In July discoveries were made on the main Klamath. Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:185.

in this new excitement and we think we can better calculate on results than when the mines were first discovered in California. Our men will not leave our Territory. Immigration is constantly pouring in upon us. The mining is to be done in our own territory and in six or eight months our valley will be thronged with immortal beings. Gold will either be plentiful or labor will be comparatively cheap. The world's wickedness will be thrown upon us. How much we need strong faith and warm hearts to meet and conquer the enemy by love!

Our school numbers about fifty this term. When our reinforcement arrives we hope to make such a disposition of the labor as will most glorify God. Brother Johnson and myself have concluded to order the Home Mission Record as fast as we obtain subscribers and pay for the paper out of our salary at N. Y. till it amounts to five dollars each, and that will be as much as will meet the wants of our brethren in Oregon the present season probably. We would gladly do ten fold that amount, if we were able, but our family expenses are great and we are economizing to the extent of our abilities to meet the claims of our schools and secure public confidence. I trust God will carry us through and bless the efforts.

I herein send you the names of Mahlom Brock, Oregon City Post Office, and J. D. Garrett and Hector Campbell, Milwaukie Post Office, as subscribers for the Home Mission Record. Please forward them to said offices.

Give my sincere thanks to Dr. Williams²³⁶ for constituting me a life member of your Society. I am altogether unworthy the honor of that distinguished servant of Christ. The Lord multiply his means and enlarge his liberality to this great Christian enterprise. My personal thanks to Dr.

²³⁶ This was probably Rev. William R. Williams, at that time pastor of the Amity Street Baptist Church of New York City. *Am. Encyc.* XVI:641.

A person could be made a life member of the Home Mission Society by the payment of \$30.00.—*Bap. Home Missions in N. Am. 1832-1882*, p. 350.

Cone²³⁷ for the donation to our College library. When the books arrive, the Board will take action on the subject.

Yours with esteem,
EZRA FISHER.

Received April 21, 1851.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Apr. 7th, 1851.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mis. Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the fourth quarter of the year ending April 1, 1851. I have labored (13) thirteen weeks in the quarter; preached eighteen (18) sermons; delivered six (6) lectures on moral and benevolent subjects; attended ten (10) prayer and other religious meetings, visited religiously twelve (12) families and individuals, baptized none, obtained no signatures to the temperance pledge, have not assisted in the organization of any church or the ordination of any minister; have traveled (50) fifty miles to and from my appointments, received none by letter, none by experience; we know of none hopefully converted, no young men preparing for the ministry, monthly concert not observed.

The people to whom I preach have paid nothing during the quarter for any of the missionary societies or Bible society; nothing toward my salary; the church has done nothing by way of building meeting house. Sabbath school is in operation in this place with 4 teachers and about 16 scholars and about 150 volumes in the library. The Bible class is connected with the school and numbers but four.

My school occupies most of my time through the week. We read the Scriptures twice each day and I frequently accompany this exercise with a few remarks and, as often as I judge it is useful, address the school on the great subject of

²³⁷ This was Rev. Spencer Houghton Cone, DD., (1785-1855). He was a leading member of the Baptist denomination at this time, and pastor of the First Baptist Church of New York City.—*Am Encyc.* V, 220.

their relations and obligations to God, to man and to themselves. I open and close the school each day by prayer. I preach at two other points besides this place, one on the opposite side of the river²³⁸ and the other at Milwaukie, six miles below this place. I contemplate commencing monthly preaching at Portland in a few weeks, if my health will allow me to perform the labor.²³⁹ Many of the men of the territory are in the mines. Brother Snelling is among the number, so that we have but little preaching in the country. This spring I hardly dare contemplate our condition of feeble churches left without pastors while I am confined within the walls of a school house. I am sometimes half resolved to leave the school in the hands of such a teacher as we can secure, and travel through the valley, visit, preach and collect funds for the school building. But we fear the consequences of a change in teachers before our expected teachers arrive. We commenced our spring quarter today with 40 scholars, notwithstanding the gold excitement and the removal for a time of nearly all the remnant of our large boys for farming purposes during the summer. The number will increase for the ensuing two weeks. Our money has been drained off to build up eastern cities and farming is greatly neglected for the mines. Consequently it is difficult to collect for carrying forward our building and labor is extravagantly high. That work must progress slowly this summer. We hope to make a special effort in the fall for this work; I fear not before, unless I leave the school next quarter. We more need an efficient preacher as colporter for the A. B. Publication Soc., who would do some work for the Bible Society, than an agent for the Bible Society to the neglect of the Publication Society. But if the Publication Society do not do this work through their agent, we will be glad to see your proposed enterprise take effect. Should the Bible Soc. send us an agent, or Bibles, they will do well to send a large pro-

²³⁸ This was Linn City.

²³⁹ The author apparently soon began holding occasional services in Portland in the Congregational meeting-house. They were continued until October, 1854, when a Baptist minister settled in Portland.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* II:14.

portion of large Bibles suitable for family Bibles. There has been an inquiry for them for a long time, when small Bibles cannot be sold for cost. Every evangelical society has Bibles in the country and the people have generally obtained Bibles and Testaments gratuitously, or at very low price, till the country has become tolerably supplied. But our coming population will create a large demand for more next year.

We are truly gratified to learn that interests in Oregon are beginning to receive a share in the sympathies of our trans-mountain brethren. My personal thanks to Dr. Pike for the part of the philosophical apparatus which he so generously donated for the institution. In due time, on the reception of the gift, he will receive an expression from the Board.

I received the boxes you shipped on board the Grecian. I have received the bill of lading for the goods you shipped me on board the bark Francis and Louisa; also the bills of lading of the goods shipped for Br. Chandler on board the Golden Age.

Affectionately yours,
EZRA FISHER,

Received June 3, 1851.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., July 1, 1851.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the first quarter ending July 1, 1851. My field comprises the church at Oregon City, the community at Linn City, Milwaukie and vicinity and Portland. At the three last named places we have as yet no church.

I have labored 13 weeks in the quarter, preached 21 sermons, delivered no lectures on moral and benevolent subjects, attended three church meetings and two prayer meetings, visited religiously twenty families and individuals, no common schools, baptized none, obtained no signatures to the temper-

ance pledge, have assisted at the organization of no church, no ordination, have traveled to and from my appointments 126 miles, received none by letter, none by experience and none to my knowledge has been hopefully converted. No young men in the church preparing for the ministry. Monthly concert of prayer is not observed. My people have paid during the quarter for the Home Mission Society nothing and nothing for any other benevolent society. Church has done nothing by way of building meeting houses. I have received from individuals for my support as a minister \$10.00. Connected with the congregations to which I preach are two Sabbath schools, one with the church in this place, having three teachers, 18 scholars and about 150 volumes; the other at Milwaukie, a promiscuous school, with one Baptist teacher and seven scholars of Baptist family. There is also a Bible class with five pupils connected with the Sabbath school in Oregon City which I teach one fourth of the time. Our school is about as numerous as at any preceding period. My confinement in school and the necessary labor and care prevent my laboring so much in the ministry direct as I should otherwise do, yet I trust we are laying the foundation for more efficient work hereafter. Our school building is now being enclosed and we hope to have two rooms finished by the time of the arrival of Brs. Chandler and Read. I have most of the labor of raising subscriptions for the work. More than one third of the old subscriptions cannot be made available at present, mostly by means of a change in the moneyed matters of the subscribers. We have now most of the lumber engaged and paid for to carry the work on as far as above specified and as yet have no debts hanging over us; but I fear my confinement in the school and Br. Johnson's necessary callings will leave the building one or two thousand dollars in debt, when fit for use, which must be met by an appeal to the public, as soon as Br. Chandler arrives, which our brethren tell me I will have to do.

You see, dear brother, that I have upon me the labor of two men now and when it will be less is known only by Him

whom we serve. I have just returned from our association held in Tualatin Plains. Our business was transacted with great unanimity. Resolutions were passed in favor of the cause of home missions, American and Foreign Bible Society, American Bap. Pub. Soc., American Tract Society, the Sunday school cause and religious periodicals. Our congregations were unusually large and solemn. We must leave the results with God, but confidently hope the cause which we represent in Oregon is advancing. Three churches were added to our association during the anniversary. I am appointed to correspond with you on the subject of an exploring agent and the appointment of a missionary for Salem, which I must defer till after the next mail. I received my commission, under date of May 2d, and accompanying letter. I will attend to the deficiency on the part of the church and forward the concurrent certificates in my next. When Br. Chandler arrives, we must have an entire change in our fields of labor and we have a committee appointed by our association to call a convention of the brethren to consult on the best method of promoting the cause of Christianity and education in Oregon, immediately on the arrival of Br. Chandler. Would it not be well for your Board to authorize your missionaries in this territory to make such changes at that time as the said convention may deem necessary for the furtherance of the cause of Christ? Please write me immediately on this subject.

I will here insert the following names as subscribers for the Home Mission Record: Rev. Richmond Cheadle, Santiam Post Office, Elmer Keys, do, Edward T. Lenox, Hillsboro P. O., James S. Holman, Luckiamute.

Yours in gospel fellowship,

EZRA FISHER,

Missionary at Oregon City and vicinity.

N. B.—I am waiting with prayerful solicitude for the time to arrive when I may do my duty as a servant of God and leave the walls of the school and meet the suffering wants of some of the feeble, famishing churches in the valley. Br.

Newell ²⁴⁰ was here today, broken in spirit at the loss of his dear wife and child. Br. Coe has spent one night with us; am much pleased with him. Dea. Failing ²⁴¹ and sons spent two nights with us; were well. Will stop at present at Portland. I hope we shall be able during the present season to constitute a church at Portland.

Yours,
E.F.

Received Aug. 22, 1851.

Aug. 8, 1851.

I received all the goods shipped on board the bark Ellen and Louisa which the bill of lading calls for. I learn too that the Golden Age is at Portland and I have made arrangements to have Br. Chandler's goods stored free of charge till he arrives. I suppose we have now for the first time a tolerable supply of books of the A. Bap. Publication Soc's publications and I trust Elder Cheadle, their Colporter, will exert a good influence with these works in his hands. The immigration from California will probably be large the coming winter and even for a longer time. I am informed that the Spanish titles to the land are generally good and the result will be many American citizens who would like lands in California will avail themselves of the benefits of the Oregon land bill. I think Pacific City will not greatly suffer for the want of an efficient minister before another summer. Br. Newell has been seriously afflicted by the loss of his wife and child on the passage and he is as yet somewhat unsettled, yet I think we must soon have a good man located at that place or Astoria or Clatsop Plains to meet the wants temporarily of all that region. He should be a prudent, business-like, devoted minister who loves Zion and can resist worldly temptations. From this time forward changes must be great on the Pacific coast and every improvement must go forward with a rapidity unequalled in any new portion of our coun-

²⁴⁰ See note 218.

²⁴¹ Josiah Failing (1806-1877) came to Oregon in 1851 and was prominent in business, church and politics.--Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:69. The two sons were John W. and Henry.

try. Our churches must be supplied with a devoted, thorough ministry and that ministry must and will, with a love approaching to a passion for the work, train the churches right. I feel a strong assurance on this subject.

I am not tired of doing my duty, but I think I shall appreciate in some measure the responsibilities of the ministry more than I have done in past years, should the Lord graciously spare my life till I can give over this school into other hands. When I look over the moral waste of the Willamette Valley and hear the appeals as often as I see the brethren, "When will you come and preach to us?" it is almost more than I can endure. The interests of our school must not be neglected, but, unless we are visited with the outpourings of the spirit from on high, we are a ruined people in Oregon. Pray for us.

Yours.

E. FISHER.

Received Oct. 6, 1851.

Oregon City, Sept. 3d, 1851.

Rev. Benj. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

I received by the last mail two copies of the annual report of the A. B. H. M. Soc. for 1851, and Br. Johnson received a letter from you. Religious matters in the Territory remain much as they were when I last wrote. Our school numbers about forty scholars since we dismissed the female department and will be considerably enlarged the next two quarters, should our teachers prove to be popular with this people, as we trust they will. I have but three weeks after the present one in this quarter. Then I hope to be able under God to visit the churches through the valley and preach to them Saturdays and Sabbaths and, at the same time, raise some funds for our building, which lies heavy on our hands and heavier on my heart. The work has moved on slowly this summer, it being only enclosed, without doors or win-

dows. We, however, have part of the glass, and the oil and lead for painting. The house is between three and four hundred dollars in debt. We have about \$1000 uncollected on our subscription paper and we can probably rely on about \$200 this fall from that source. We have flooring enough on hand to lay the floor for two rooms and a few hundred feet of ceiling and may probably get some more lumber on the old subscription and more subscribed.

We had the pleasure of welcoming Br. Chandler to this place yesterday, but his family were left sixteen miles back in the first settlements this side of the Cascade Mountains. He was in health and in good spirits, as were his family and Br. Read,²⁴² all of whom will be in town this week. We trust that from this time we shall be able to do more for our feeble churches than formerly and hope we may enjoy an enlarged measure of the spirit of our Divine Master. We shall call the convention, of which I made mention in my last, about the time of the close of my quarter. I rejoice to find that you have anticipated the same thing in your letter to Br. Johnson. I have discontinued my appointments at Linn City on account of the small number of families in that place this summer, and commenced preaching once a month at Canema,²⁴³ a village springing up at the head of the falls on this side of the Willamette, one mile above this place. We may continue a monthly appointment there after the meeting of the convention, but we must not longer neglect the churches in the valley above. I should have sent you the concurrent certificate of the church²⁴⁴ by the last mail but for the fact that our church clerk lives three miles from this place on the other side of the Willamette²⁴⁵ and I have had no opportunity of seeing

242 This was Rev. J. S. Read. He had just graduated from Franklin College. He taught in the Oregon City School for one school year and then went to Southern Oregon. He returned to Indiana in 1854.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:13.

243 Canemah began in the later forties. It took its name either from an Indian chief, or from a word meaning a canoe landing; probably the former.—G. H. Himes.

244 These certificates were required by the Home Mission Society to be sent in by churches which were asking for the service of its missionaries.

245 The clerk of the Oregon City Church at this time was F. A. Collard, who was then living on his land claim just south of what is now Oswego.—*Records of First Baptist Church of Ore. City* (MS. and records in Clackamas County Court House).

him for four weeks. At the first meeting I had with the brethren in Portland they appointed a committee to sign a similar certificate, but on my last visit to that place the two most efficient brethren were gone to San Francisco on business, and thus the matter is delayed. I will now record the vote of the church on the subject of application for my appointment and, should I not see our clerk before the next mail leaves, I shall hand the letter to Br. Johnson for signature.

Yours,

E. FISHER.

Voted to recommend Elder Ezra Fisher to the favorable consideration of the Home Missionary Society for re-appointment for the term of one year. Also voted to invite Elder Ezra Fisher to supply the church one fourth of the time. Done at the church meeting on the first Saturday in Feb., 1851.

The 1st Bap. Church at Oregon City concur in all the terms of the application made by Elder Fisher in a letter addressed to the Corresponding Secretary in Feb. last.

September 6th, 1851.

W. T. MATLOCK,

Clerk pro tem.

N. B. We have this day had Brs. Chandler and Read in attendance and agreed to call the convention of which I made mention in my last on Friday the 17th instant.

Yours,

Received Nov. 3, 1851.

E. F.

Oct. 1st, 1851.

To Rev. B. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the second quarter ending Oct. 1, 1851.

Up to this time my field has comprised Oregon City, Portland, Milwaukie and an out-station at Canema, a rising village half a mile above Oregon City, at the head of the Wil-

lamette Falls, which I stately supply. I have labored 13 weeks in the quarter, preached 19 sermons, delivered three lectures to the Sabbath school in this place, attended three ministers' prayer meetings in this place (which are weekly), visited religiously 25 families and individuals, visited no common schools, but addressed my own weekly, baptized none, no signatures to the temperance pledge, organized no church, no ordination, traveled to and from my appointments 130 miles, none received by letter, none by experience, have had no hopeful conversions, no young men preparing for the ministry. The monthly concert of prayer is not observed at any of my stations. My people have paid nothing during the quarter for any missionary or benevolent society. I have received nothing for my salary; no meeting houses being erected. Connected with the church in Oregon City is a Sabbath school of 18 scholars and three teachers and about 150 volumes in the library. There is also a Bible class with 3 pupils.

EZRA FISHER,
Missionary.

N. B.—At the meeting of the convention held at this place on the 19th and 20th of Sept. last you will see, by referring to the minutes which will probably leave in the next mail, that the Trustees of the Oregon City College appointed me temporarily as agent for that school to collect funds to carry on the building now up and enclosed, but between four and five hundred dollars in debt. It was thought to be the best that could be done. It was hoped that this work might be performed without materially diverting me from my ministerial labors. I shall be expected to meet my regular appointments twice each month at Portland, or supply them with a substitute. You will also see a request from this convention that your Board appoint me as a corresponding evangelist for Oregon (I am not certain that I have the right name as I have not the minutes of that convention and quote from memory). The name of exploring agent was urgently objected to by one and only one of the members of the con-

vention, but he is a man of influence and with his objections against eastern influence. It is understood, however, that this evangelist is to perform the duties of an exploring agent. It seems necessary that the Willamette and Umpqua valleys²⁴⁶ be explored or visited by a faithful missionary who will be able to make a fair representation of the wants of the denomination, both to your Board and to the Willamette Association. The people at the mouth of the Columbia should also be visited, and perhaps the settlement at Puget Sound²⁴⁷ during the next season. Little, if anything, can be expected the present year in aid for the support of such an agent above what I shall receive from Portland, unless I should supply some destitute church a stated portion of the time. Yet the scattered members would be encouraged to early organizations and be led to appreciate the great utility of the missionary organization. Should the winter rains hold off, I hope to visit several destitute churches in the upper part of the valley. Baptist sentiments seem to be well received, and it is very obvious that our efforts in the cause of education seem to inspire public confidence in the efficiency of the denomination. I will give one instance: A Br. Hill²⁴⁸ from Missouri came to Albany, a county seat on the Willamette about 70 miles above this place, and commenced teaching and preaching some time last winter. His labors resulted in organizing a small church; the proprietors of the lower part of the town have built a school house and at our late convention requested us to send them a teacher and a preacher, with the assurance that the people would help to support him as a minister and donate one-fourth of the lots of their town for church purposes. It is said that they have from forty to sixty acres laid

²⁴⁶ The Hudson Bay Company had established a post in the Umpqua Valley as early as 1832.—Bancroft, *Hist. of N. W. Coast*, II:521. The valley was first carefully explored and extensively settled in 1850, largely through the efforts of the "Umpqua Town-Site and Colonization Land Company," which was largely financed from California.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:175-183.

²⁴⁷ See note 390. There were a number of Americans of the immigration of 1851 who settled on Puget Sound.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Wash., Idaho and Montana*, p. 21.

²⁴⁸ This was Rev. Reuben Coleman Hill, M. D., (1808-1890). He was born in Kentucky and moved to Missouri in 1846, to California in 1850, and to Oregon in 1851.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* II:82.

out in town lots. We have similar proposals for taking schools under our care upon town sites upon the banks of the Willamette. If we had a few young men of prudence and energy, with a sacrificing spirit, to throw into our county seats in the valley above us, no doubt, with the blessings of the Great Teacher, an incalculable amount of good might be accomplished.

The overland immigration is large and mostly in the valley and in the Cascade Mountains and will be in in eight or ten days.²⁴⁹ Its number is estimated at from four to five thousand souls. We are constantly receiving accessions by water, so that it is thought that our white population by the first of March will be at least 30,000.

Brs. Chandler and Read will enter upon their duties as teachers week after next. We expect they will supply this church and one or two out stations in the vicinity. Money is scarce and crops of wheat and vegetables abundant. I have not yet learned whether my appointment as missionary is confirmed, but I have been acting with that expectation and shall venture to order you to put me up some family clothing and books, in a few days. I am receiving the Christian Chronicle regularly and, if it is charged to me, I wish you to arrange the matter with the editors and charge that amount to me.

We fear that Br. Failing will become discouraged in business and leave for N. Y., but still hope God will otherwise direct. He is much needed in Oregon.

Yours in gospel fellowship,
EZRA FISHER.

Received Nov. 19, 1851.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Jan. 30, 1852.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Yours, bearing date Nov. 29 and mail mark Dec. 9th, con-

²⁴⁹ See note 154.

taining a commission for me to act as exploring agent for Oregon for the term of three months, was received by the last mail. I now hasten to answer the same and make a few general statements of facts as nearly as I can explain matters now in Oregon. Since the arrival of Brs. Chandler and Read I have visited YamHill county and church; spent ten days in that county, principally to look over their spiritual wants in the absence of Elder Snelling,²⁵⁰ the former pastor of Yam-Hill church. Found the members scattered over half a large county and almost disheartened, but they seemed cheered by the visit and manifested a desire to enjoy the preached word. In this visit, as in all my public labors the past fall and winter, I have endeavored to make my agency for the school subserve the interests of the churches rather than make it the all engrossing subject. I have preached half my Sabbaths at Portland and Milwaukie; in the morning at the latter place, and in the evening at the former. The remaining part of my time I have performed labors in the south and southeast part of Marion County, on the east side of the Willamette River from 20 to 40 miles south from Oregon City and one of the most promising agricultural parts of the Willamette Valley, in which are located two feeble churches,²⁵¹ one of which had lost its visibility for the want of the occasional preaching of the word. All the former members of the church have changed their location and in so doing have thrown themselves into a more commanding position in the same vicinity. Their position is such that at no distant day two small business towns must rise up in their vicinity, one on the Willamette about 15 miles below Salem, the other on Pudding River, eight miles east of the landing on the Willamette.

In looking over the field which God in his providence has seen fit to assign us, we are constrained to say, "Ours is a goodly heritage," and we feel no inclination to abandon it

²⁵⁰ Snelling was then in California.

²⁵¹ The two churches were the one at French Prairie, organized in 1850, near or in the present town of Gervais; and the Shiloh Church, organized in 1850, at the present town of Turner.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:9.

It was probably the French Prairie Church which was so weak.

for others, yet we think your Board do not fully appreciate all the embarrassments under which we, as missionaries and churches, labor. Our field is as truly a missionary field as any portion of the great field which was contemplated in the first organization of the A. B. H. M. Soc. Imagine for a moment 200 or 300 American citizens who have been gathering upon the waters of Puget Sound²⁵² (the future naval depot for Oregon) for the last seven years, and for all this time have never been visited by a Protestant minister. Now suppose you were to meet one of these citizens and hear him relate to you the fact that they trade with foreigners and go to the Roman church²⁵³ for Sabbath instruction and then ask, "Why can you not come over and preach to us, for I verily think ours is missionary ground?" What would be the feelings of your heart when you are compelled to turn them away with an indefinite reply? This is but one case. The people settled upon the banks of the Columbia River (the great thoroughfare of trade for the valley of Willamette and the Northern gold mines of Rogue River) from Vancouver to Astoria, a distance of 90 miles,²⁵⁴ have never had preaching of any order save in a very few instances. But a few days since an acquaintance of mine residing near a rising town which, at no very distant period, will not fail to be a place of some importance, asked me if I could not sometime come and preach to them, saying he was a wicked man, but he had children and had raised them to respect the gospel and they and his neighbors wanted to hear preaching and he would make his house a comfortable home for any respectable minister who would come and preach one sermon and give him ten dollars for his part.

Then, with me, take a bird's eye view of the Willamette, whose settlements spread over a territory 180 miles in length and from 20 to sixty miles in width, in almost every settle-

²⁵² See note 247. The trade on the Sound increased largely in 1852-3, and several small towns were springing up.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:250.

²⁵³ This church was near Olympia at a place now called Priest's Point Park.—G. H. Himes.

²⁵⁴ The towns of St. Helens, Milton, Westport, and Rainier, were all springing up about this time.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Oregon.* II:251, 252.

ment of which are found one or more members of our order surrounded with men of all religious sects and of no religious creed, and exposed to all the disorganizing influences peculiar to a country where preaching is but occasional and Sabbath day visiting and hunting of loose cattle and wild game are common, and at the same time large portions of the men are going to and coming from the mines. Can this be regarded as any other than a missionary field in the most unqualified sense of the term? Then turn your attention to the Umpqua Valley, in which are now two organized counties,²⁵⁵ and it is said that it is now as thickly peopled as the Willamete, with no evangelical minister to break the bread of life,²⁵⁶ where character is formed with unexampled rapidity, and no means are wanting to draw the youth into the most abandoned habits which the temptations of gold can inspire in the absence of the moral influence of the Bible (for men will soon neglect their Bibles if the gospel is not preached), and here we must say is a missionary field. Immediately south of the Umpqua River, gold diggings begin and that portion of the mines between this and the Chasty (Shasta)²⁵⁷ Mountains, a distance of 140 to 150 miles from north to south, is included in the Oregon field. Here thousands of our countrymen are constantly engaged in digging gold, with no one to minister to them the excellencies of that gospel which is incomparably more valuable than gold. With a few exceptions, the entire population of the Umpqua and the gold regions of Oregon have congregated on our southern border within the term of the last eighteen months. Is not Oregon then a missionary field? We desire your Board to take another view of our condition. By referring to the minutes of our association you will see that we report

²⁵⁵ Douglas and Umpqua Counties, the former of which had just been organized, and Jackson County, which was also organized in January, 1852, comprised the Rogue River Valley.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:710, 712.

²⁵⁶ This statement is probably correct.

²⁵⁷ Shasta, a corruption of the French "chaste," was first applied to the mountain by early American travelers.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Calif.* VII:440.

eleven small churches.²⁵⁸ Two others are constituted and probably some four or five more will spring into existence the coming summer. In all these churches we number about 160 members. Forty or fifty more may include all the members of the territory; and these members come to us from almost every state in the union, and some from Australia. It would be almost a miracle, in bringing together such a community, if all would at once co-operate, in ways and means to carry out the great objects of the gospel, with all the harmony of the spheres. Yet be it said to the praise of these brethren and to the honor of the gospel of Christ that, according to the means of grace they enjoy, they will not suffer in comparison with most of the country churches in the States, both as it regards the order of the members or the willingness to support the gospel. Now when we remember that nine years ago the first of these brethren arrived in Oregon and from that time to the present they arrived in this valley poor, many without bed or bedding, save a few blankets, with their teams either lost in the mountains or reduced to skeletons, and every necessary of life to provide anew, with clothing, groceries, cooking and farming utensils at a price fourfold that of the cost in the States, that in churches of from six to twenty-seven members no two families lived nearer than a mile of each other, and these interspersed with every variety of religionist found in the States, till it is not common for more than two Baptist churches to be found in a large county, is it reasonable to expect that everything will be done with the promptness and precision with which business is transacted in well organized churches in the midst of compact cities?

And then your missionaries, unlike our missionaries in the foreign fields, have been compelled to divide their energies between the interests of the churches and the recurring ur-

²⁵⁸ The minutes for June, 1851, show only nine churches: the West Union, Yamhill, Rickreal, Oregon City, Santiam, Lebanon, Shiloh, Molalla, and Clatsop Churches. The French Prairie and Marysville Churches were organized, but not admitted.—Minutes of Willamette Baptist Association for 1851. Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:1-17. The author must have been mistaken, for the Association of 1852 did not meet until the June after this letter was written.

gent wants of rising families. During the last three years the extravagant prices of all the articles of family consumption, together with the rage for gold which pervaded almost the entire community, precluded all reasonable hope that the Missionary Society and the scattered churches would give the families of your missionaries a bare sustenance. With this state of things we are fully convinced that your Board have been disposed to exercise a laudable (I might perhaps say unwarrantable) forbearance. But this policy has been fruitful in evil consequences. Our necessities have diverted our time and care to a lamentable extent from our appropriate work. While we have been fast wearing out our lives in hard labor directed to the best of our wisdom, we feel a lamentable conviction that the feeble cause of Christ has been neglected and our Christian graces have been gradually declining. In the midst of these embarrassing circumstances we have labored and under the blessing of God we have brought a school into existence. In the assumption of the necessary responsibilities, Brother Johnson has involved himself in pecuniary liabilities from which it is doubtful whether he will ever be able to recover. The school furnished me a living while at the same time it consumed all my available means and confines me for years to the place in order to secure a permanent site for a literary institution for the denomination in Oregon. But times and prospects have greatly changed in a few months. The prices of most of the ordinary articles of family consumption are materially reduced. Still the labor of man and beast is high. Butter is still 75 cents a pound, so we use none of that article; fresh beef from 8 to 12 cents per pound, pork from 14 to 18 and eggs 75 cents per dozen. The prospect of usefulness is also materially increased, especially in the country churches. Feeble and scattered as our churches are, I think they will pay from \$50 to \$150 this year for preaching, if they can secure it one Sabbath each month. These churches are all located in the midst of most important agricultural districts in the Willamette Valley, some of them in the immediate vicinity of

county seats, and must not be neglected. The population in all our towns is greatly reduced by means of that peculiar feature in the land bill which requires four years' actual residence on a claim to obtain a patent from government. Numbers of the remaining citizens are adventurers who have left their families in the States and intend to return to their families as soon as they shall have sheared the golden fleece. Others are uncertain whether their business will justify the removal of their families to our shores. These and other circumstances too numerous to be named render the successful occupancy of our towns more than doubly difficult that of the towns in the Western states, technically so called. But with all these difficulties to encounter, Pedit-baptist churches, both Roman and Protestant, are sustaining their ministers in the most important of these towns by very little aid from the members in the place. Should we entirely neglect these towns, they will soon become very difficult of access to Baptists. Your missionaries are of opinion that a missionary should be stationed at Portland and principally supported by the Board at home, if a suitable man can be found. A small family at this place would require \$600 a year to enable a man to devote himself to the work of the ministry, \$100 of which is as much as could reasonably be expected from the people of the place, unless favorable changes could be made. Portland, as I have informed you in a former letter, is the principal port in Oregon. The present population is estimated at 700 souls. It contains 35 wholesale and retail stores, two tin shops, four public taverns, two steam sawmills, one steam flouring mill, with two run of stones, six or eight drinking shops and billiard tables, one wine and spirit manufactory, a variety of mechanic shops and from 8 to 15 merchant vessels are always seen lying at anchor in the river or at the wharves. The Methodists, Presbyterians and Romans have each built them neat places for public worship.²⁵⁹ The Episcopalians have service

²⁵⁹ In 1852 there seems to have been only the following church buildings in Portland: Methodist, built in 1850; Catholic, 1851; Congregational, 1851. There was in addition a parish of the Episcopal Church, organized in 1851. A Presbyterian Church was not organized until 1854. The author evidently confuses the Presbyterians with the Congregationalists.—Hist of Portland, ed. by H. W. Scott, pp. 344-356.

two Sabbaths each month. The Methodist Church have a high school in progress and a neat edifice of wood, two stories, 60 by 40 feet. A few months ago we had ten Baptist members in this place; now we can find but six. But about half of them can be regarded as permanent. This is the place where nearly all the immigrants by water land and from which they will go to their various points of destination. You will see then the importance of early planting a church in this place.

What I have said of Portland in respect to support is true of Oregon City. Yet it will not do to abandon that post. Our school must be sustained and much of that must be done at the sacrifice of your missionaries. To human appearance the abandonment of this enterprise would be ruinous. To tax one man with the labor of the school and the care of the church and then require him to be put in competition with ministers of other denominations who are sustained in their own appropriate work seems much like double working a man and at the same time taking from him the use of his tools. In this condition a brother may greatly desire to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," but it is certain he cannot study much to do these things. After Brother Chandler's year closes, we shall be compelled to make some change in his labors so that he may either devote the most of his energies to the school or to the church. Br. Johnson's health is slowly improving. I hope he will be able to enter the field of labor by the first of April. The Molalla and West Union churches are waiting for his services and when they learn that he can serve them I have no doubt but they will make the requisite application and will probably raise for his support from \$150 to \$200. Beyond this, he wishes to itinerate and visit and preach to destitute churches and settlements, as Providence may direct, half the time. In view of the scattered condition of our numbers and the influence he would exert upon the churches and ministers, I think this will contribute more to organize and strengthen

the churches than any course he could pursue. We feel that your Board, if possible, ought to increase his salary at least to \$300. It has been thought advisable by all with whom I have consulted that I should devote my time to the business of an exploring agent according to the instructions contained in the late commission, if I can be sustained. But I think no reasonable man in Oregon would say this can be done for less than \$500 per year. Something might be done by the churches and individuals, should the Lord give me favor with the people. Should your Board make me the appointment of exploring agent and leave it discretionary with your missionaries here whether I should attend one or two churches monthly, I think the object you contemplate will be accomplished and I can receive about \$150 of the \$500 from the churches and reach all the important points in the territory except Puget Sound, and perhaps that. Through this arrangement Br. Johnson and myself would be able occasionally to spend a Sabbath together in a meeting, if Providence should indicate. I make this last suggestion partly to save your Board funds and partly from a conviction of its practical results on the cause in Oregon. In this event I would engage to labor one year, should you appoint me with a salary of \$350 from your Board.

Our school building is about \$200 in debt, and we must have \$300 or \$400 more expended before it will be suitable to occupy. The latter sum can hardly be raised from the old subscriptions, although we have some \$1200 on the subscription unpaid which was subscribed in good faith. But what in Oregon is called hard times renders most of it very doubtful. Somebody must do this work, that somebody must be one of your missionaries, and I know not but that missionary must be myself. Our Congregational friends are about to send one of their ministers to the States to raise funds to liquidate the debts of the female seminary in this place.²⁶⁰ We shall try to do this first work in Oregon if possible. I have no more available means to apply to this

²⁶⁰ This was Rev. George H. Atkinson.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:680.

work, not enough to purchase a horse for the coming year's labors, yet I trust my friends will in some way provide me at least the use of an animal. As it respects the present appointment for three months, it will be impossible for me to devote my entire time to the agency. The next five or six weeks are among the most unfavorable in the year to travel, except as we do it by steam; and then I have engagements twice each month which I cannot at once dispense with, if I can reach them. I have concluded to do what I can in the agency in connection with my other engagements and report accordingly. I shall not make a monthly report till next mail as this general communication is so extended. We trust with more than usual confidence that the coming season will be one of some ingathering into the churches. The future is with the Lord. The present becomes us to devote to him. Late indications at least appear rather flattering. May we be enabled to wait on the Lord in His appointed ways and His providential indications. As ever,

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received March 16, 1852.

Oregon City, O. Ter., April 1, 1852.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Society.

Dear Bro.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the fourth quarter appointment under the commission forwarded under date of ending the last day of March, 1852 (or for the three months' Nov. 29, 1850). The condition of our churches and my engagements rendered it necessary that I should supply three destitute churches up to this time. I have visited Portland at my regular appointments four times. Have visited the church in the French Prairie three times, the Lebanon church (Marion Co.) 12 miles east from Salem, three times; the Shilo church, 12 miles south of Salem on the north fork

of the Santiam once, Albany church at Albany (county seat of Linn) once; and the La Creole church, Polk Co., 8 miles S. W. of Salem (members dispersed through the county). Have labored 13 weeks, travelled 655 miles, paid \$2.25 travelling expenses. Received \$30 for my support, preached 42 sermons, visited religiously 56 families and individuals. My visit to the La Creole was to meet a public meeting called for the purpose of taking into consideration ways and means of meeting the destitution of the feeble churches and new portions of the territory, if practicable. But four ministers were present, one of whom is on the eve of leaving for the States. But four churches were represented and incipient measures were taken to supply them. It was thought desirable that I should attend two of those churches, each one Sabbath in two months, and that Br. V. Snelling attend them the alternate Sabbath one each two months. As soon as I shall have visited them I shall report their state and what they will do for the support, if that can be learned. It is slow bringing churches into an organized state for efficient action, but we will labor toward that as fast as we can.

The meeting was conducted with great unanimity of sentiment and, although the weather was very unfavorable, traveling bad and the waters high, the congregations were large for the place and, after preaching, five were received for baptism and four followed the footsteps of their Redeemer through the liquid grave, one the teacher of the school in the place. The deferred member will be baptized next Sabbath. He also is one of the leading men in the county. This church has received four or five others by baptism the past winter under the labors of Rev. R. C. Hill from Missouri.

Yours in the gospel,

Received May 17, 1852.

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Apr. 1, 1852.

To the Executive Board of the

Am. Bapt. Home Mission Society:

The subscriber desires reappointment as a missionary of the

American Baptist Home Mission Society, for the term of one year from this date, to labor one-quarter of the time with the Baptist church at Lebanon, Marion County, one-quarter of the time with the Shilo church, Marion County, and the Marysville²⁶¹ church, Benton County, and to spend the remaining time as an itinerant preacher, in which time it is proposed by the friends in Oregon that I shall visit the Umpqua Valley and other portions in Oregon as often as circumstances may seem to demand. The Lebanon²⁶² church is in an important farming country 12 miles east of Salem; church numbers but 8 members. Average attendance on Lord's day about 50. The missionary Baptists have no church within 12 miles of the place. The church agree to pay for my support \$50 and hope to raise it to \$100. The Shilo church has 10 members; congregation the Sabbath I preached to them about 55. The position is important, both for farming and for manufacturing purposes. I cannot tell what they will do until after the next church meeting. Probably about \$50 for one eighth of the time. I have not visited Marysville church. It is just constituted by the labors of Elder R. C. Hill and consists of about 16 members. The Lord has visited that region with a pleasing revival the past winter and Elder Hill, in behalf of that church, solicits my labors part of the time, with the assurance that they will aid in my support. The point is at the head of navigation and the seat of justice for Benton County,²⁶³ and probably it will become the most important place above Salem, if not above Oregon City. Providence has signally opened the door to the Baptists in this place and it seems to me that it should be occupied immediately. I will append the concurrent certificate.

EZRA FISHER.

²⁶¹ This was the present Corvallis. The name was changed in 1854. The church was organized in December, 1851.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:10.

²⁶² The Lebanon Church was organized May 17, 1851.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:16.

²⁶³ Benton County was organized in 1847, and was named after Thomas H. Benton, of Missouri.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:706.

The Lebanon Baptist church concur in all the terms of the foregoing application. By order of the church,

JOHN HUNT,
Church Clerk.

This is to certify that I approve of the above application.
GEO. C. CHANDLER.

N. B.—Elder Johnson is absent, but he assured me he would recommend this course of labor to me.

N. B.—I cannot visit Marysville church till the first Sab. in May. I have asked for an appointment of the above kind from the conviction of all with whom I have conversed that the churches already gathered should be attended at least once a month, in preference to exploring ground, no more important, which we cannot occupy. Should you be disposed to appoint me exploring agent, with the above named liberty, I will serve you under that name and in that capacity as far as practicable. As to the salary, your wisdom will decide what is necessary when I say that common laborers cannot be hired short of from \$2 to \$3 per day and mechanics from \$5 to \$6. All articles of living are from 50 to 100 per cent above your city prices.

Respectfully yours,
EZRA FISHER.

Received May 17, 1852.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., May 25, 1852.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br.:

A desire to be able to communicate the state of the Baptist cause in Benton county when I next wrote you and my being unable to visit that county till the first Sabbath in this month forms my excuse for not forwarding the concurrent certificate of the Shilo church in Marion Co. to the application which I made in the month of Mar. for a reappointment as your missionary in Oregon.

At the regular church meeting the Shilo church invited Elder Ezra Fisher to take charge of the church and agreed to raise one hundred dollars for his services one fourth of the time; also resolved to ask the Board of the Am. Baptist Home Missionary Society to appoint Elder Ezra Fisher as a missionary in the bounds of this church and to itinerate in the territory so as to promote the interests of the destitute churches and villages. The church heard the statements of Elder Fisher relating to the application which he had made for reappointment as a missionary in Oregon and concur in all the terms of the application as stated by him. Post Office address is Salem, Marion Co., O. T.

Shilo Church, Apr. 3d, 1852.

AARON CORNELIUS,

Church Clerk.

N. B.—By means of my being called away from the church before the clerk could attend to this application, Br. Cornelius requested me to make the statement of the facts and use his name in reference to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

Now as I have a little spare paper I wish to state a few facts. I visited the Marysville church, Benton Co., eighty miles above Oregon City by land and 160 by water, Saturday and Sabbath, the first and second days in May. Preached both days and visited four days in their bounds. The weather was unusually rainy, having been preceded by heavy rains for ten days so that all the streams were high, and most of the members living at a distance could not attend. The church had no meeting for business; on Saturday I preached to eight persons; Sabbath to about sixty-five. The facts touching the history of this church are interesting. Brother Hill from Missouri, having sustained himself by teaching and practicing medicine in Albany, about 15 miles below, on the east side of the river, while he preached on Sabbaths, was invited by a brother to visit and preach to the

people in Marysville on Sabbath. Br. Hill complied with the request and discovered such indications of Divine favor as induced him to repeat his appointments, till he soon found that Providence manifestly called him to visit from house to house through the day and to preach each evening in some of the sparse settlements. He continued his labors about two months, during which time he baptized fourteen converts, numbers of old professors were revived and a church was constituted in Marysville, the county seat of Benton County, one of the most commanding points on the Willamette River. The church has since increased till it now numbers 30 members; others will unite by baptism and profession during the summer. The church have voted to build a neat house of worship, 30 feet by 40, paint the outside and finish the inside, and have contracted the work at \$2500, to be finished next Sept. By these providential interpositions the interests of the Baptist denomination in the county are more promising than those of any other sect. Marysville is the head of steamboat navigation at present and must become one of the best points on the river for trade, with a surrounding country unrivalled in point of fertility of soil and beauty of scenery. At the solicitude of some of the members and friends I consented to spend the fifth Sabbath in this month with them. The church will make arrangements during the month of June to supply themselves once or twice each month. Should they invite me to preach monthly with them, I shall regard it my duty to comply with the request till they can get a man to devote his entire labors in Benton County.

Marysville is about two years old, contains about eight or ten families, five dry goods stores and about twenty frame buildings. A brisk trade is carried on between the place and the gold mines.²⁶⁴ The church paid Br. Hill something more than \$200 for his services and I think would raise some \$200

²⁶⁴ Corvallis was about three miles east of the Hudson Bay Company's trail to California.—G. H. Himes.

to \$400 salary for a suitable minister to preach all the time in the county.

You will hear more from this place in two or three months. My time is all taken up in travelling and preaching and performing the duties of a minister in Oregon. My lungs have been troublesome through the winter and are not entirely healed. Br. Johnson is still unable to preach.

Yours truly,

EZRA FISHER.

Received July 17, 1852.

N. B.—I received the bills of lading for the goods shipped on the M. Howes Jan. 13 and 20.

Oregon City, O. T., July 28, 1852.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., N. York.

Dear Brother:

Yours under date June 3rd came to hand by the last mail. You will learn before the receipt of this that I am making arrangements to devote all my time to the agency. Br. Read is now disengaged from the school and I hope soon to see him situated where he can take care of one or more churches. I hope he will meet the wishes of the brethren at Marysville. I look upon this place as the most surely available point of importance for the Baptists above Oregon City. I gave you a brief description of the place and its position in point of trade. Although it is difficult at this period in the history of our country to decide with certainty what may be the developments of a country rich with agricultural resources on one hand, while on the other new and rich discoveries of gold mines are being made almost monthly, yet such are its relations to the whole of these resources that it seems hardly possible that it should fail of becoming the first town of importance in the Willamette Valley. I spent the Sabbath with this young church on the 11th of this month, at which time three valuable members were received by letter and one related her experience and was received as a candidate for baptism.

On the second Sabbath in next month on my way to Umpqua and Rogue rivers I shall probably baptize two and receive one more by experience. On the third Sabbath of this month and the two preceding days I attended the yearly meeting of the Lebanon church. This was a scene mingled with joy and grief. Here I found a young married lady, whom the church had expected soon to receive by baptism, lying at the point of death and she expired on Saturday, enjoying a comfortable hope of a blissful immortality beyond the grave. On Sabbath I baptized one young man into the fellowship of the church who found the Saviour precious last month. One young brother was received by letter. In the afternoon the church for the first time received the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Elder Sperry,²⁶⁵ our itinerant, was with me through the meetings. This church is small, as you will see by referring to the minutes, and in the country, but its position is good, being twelve miles east from Salem, the present seat of government, and in the heart of an extensively rich farming country. The community are mostly farmers. The members are intelligent and influential. This church have sustained a Sunday school the last year and will probably soon resume it.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

The Oregon City church at the regular meeting on the 3d of July invited Rev. George C. Chandler to continue to labor with them another year; resolved that they would raise \$100 toward his support and appointed a committee to confer with Br. Chandler, learn the sum necessary to support his family and, should Br. Chandler comply with the request, make application to the Home Missionary Society for aid sufficient to enable him to devote himself exclusively to the ministry. . . .

²⁶⁵ This was Rev. William Sperry (1811-1857). He was born in Kentucky, moved to Ohio and to Iowa and came to Oregon in 1851. He was at this time the missionary of the Willamette Association (Baptist). In 1854 he was pastor of the Pleasant Butte Church in Lane County.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:86, 19.

The church committee were informed that a committee appointed by the Methodist church to inquire into the necessary expenses of their minister stationed at Oregon City, with a family of the minister, his wife and one little child, a babe, exclusive of the parsonage, which would probably rent for \$300 or \$400, reported to the church \$850. . . .

To the Executive Board of the Am. Bap. Home Missionary Society: The church at Oregon City desires the reappointment of Elder George C. Chandler as a missionary of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society to labor all the time within its bounds for twelve months from the first day of Sept. 1852, at a salary of \$1250, one hundred dollars of which the church pledges herself she will pay: By order of the church, George P. Newell, Lyman D. C. Latourette,²⁶⁶ Ezra Fisher, Committee of the Church.
Received Sept. 13, 1852.

Oregon City, July 28, '52.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Will you do me the favor to order me a copy of the New York Recorder to Mr. John Robinson to Marysville postoffice, Benton Co., O. T., and pay for the same and charge the same to my account?

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—I shall write you no more until after my return from Umpqua and Rogue River valleys. The distance is about 350 miles out, and my return the same, which will require about six weeks to perform and reach all the points I wish. I leave home tomorrow morning. We greatly need the prayers of God's people in Oregon that Heaven's richest blessings may rest upon us in laying the foundation for ef-

²⁶⁶ For G. P. Newell, see note 240.

L. D. C. Latourette (1825-1886), was born in New York, came to Oregon in 1848, and after a short stay in the California mines in 1849, returned to Oregon City. In and near this town he spent the remainder of his life. His first wife, Lucy Jane Gray, was the eldest daughter of the author. She died in 1864, and Mr. Latourette later married her younger sister, Ann Eliza.

ficient Christian enterprise for after ages. I have collected over \$1000 since last fall for our school building. The work has advanced so far that the school is now in it; but we must immediately look for other teachers, or rather teacher. It seems to me desirable that we should have an efficient young man qualified to teach an academy in N. Y. who wishes to make teaching a profession and could at the same time exert an influence in the Baptist cause. We have had no meeting of the Board for eight weeks and they are now scattered so that it has been impracticable to call a meeting since my return last week. I feel safe however in requesting you to find such a man. The school will number about 30 next year, perhaps more. We need very much the portable maps, on rollers, of the world, the United States, North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and a map of the Ancient Roman Empire and one of Palestine. Could not some friends secure them for us so that you could send them out next winter?

Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Sep. 13, 1852.

Oregon City, O. T., Sept. 6, 1852.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. Bap. H. M. Soc., N. Y.

Dear Brother:

Having just returned from a tour of the Umpqua I hasten to give you a brief account of my tour. Leaving home on the 29th of Aug., I took a small steamer²⁶⁷ for Champoeg,²⁶⁸ a small village of some eight or ten houses, principally log built in French style, with two small stores. This town is situated on the east bank of the Willamette near the north

²⁶⁷ The first steamship traffic on the lower Willamette was in 1850, and from the summer of 1851 steamers became numerous. In 1852 a number were running on the upper river.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 11:256.

²⁶⁸ Champoeg was the oldest settlement in French Prairie, which was, in turn, the oldest settlement in the Willamette Valley. The derivation of the word is not certain, but is possibly "Sandy Encampment."—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:72. F. V. Holman, *Hist. of the Counties of Ore.* in *Ore Hist. Soc. Quar.* XI:21.

extremity of French Prairie, 30 miles from Oregon City by water. I landed at 1 P. M. Being without a horse, I walked 18 miles. My way lay through the French Prairie in a south and southeast course, skirted first on the right and then on the left by beautiful glades of fir and branched oak, while the prairie is studded with fields of wheat standing in the shock, indicating a generous return to the labors of the husbandman. Spent the night with Br. Smith and was happy to learn from him that the church at French Prairie had secured the labors of Rev. John Rexford²⁶⁹ one Sabbath each month. From this church my way lay through the upper end of French Prairie six miles south across what is falsely called Lake La Bish,²⁷⁰ a tract of rich marsh land about 200 or 300 yards in width and some 3 or 4 miles in length, forming the summit level between the Willamette and Pudding rivers, thence six miles through timber and prairie to Salem, the present capital of our Territory.²⁷¹ Found three or four Baptist members near this place, but hastened to the place of my appointment twelve miles up Mill creek through one of the most delightful prairies and surrounded by one of the most picturesque sceneries in North America, if not in the world. In this valley, about two and a half miles from the north fork of the Santiam and six miles east from the Willamette, is a log school house, about 20 by 22 feet, where the Shilo church meet to worship the God of Heaven. Here I spent the Saturday and Sabbath and preached each day, on Sabbath to a full house. The church consists of 12 members and pays \$100 for the preached word one Sab. each month. Their position is good. The members of the church, although a few, are among the most substantial citizens and sustain a Sabbath school, yet are surrounded by Methodists, Campbellites, Anti-missionary

²⁶⁹ Rev. John Rexford was born in Canada, came from Illinois to Oregon in 1851, and died in Detroit, Mich., in 1880.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:16.

²⁷⁰ Lake La Bische has since been drained.

²⁷¹ The capital was ordered transferred to Salem in 1851 and has remained there until the present time with the exception of a few months in 1855, when it was at Corvallis.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:146, 147. See also W. C. Winslow, *Contest Over the Capital of Oregon*, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* VIII:173-178.

Baptists and unbelievers. A good minister would find this one of the most important country locations in any new country. On the twelfth I passed through the fork of the Santiam, a fine prairie country, eighteen miles, stopping and preaching at three P. M. Spent three days with the Santiam church visiting, and preached once. This is a small and afflicted church on the south side of the south fork of the Santiam, under the pastoral care of Rev. Richmond Cheadle, and situated in a rich, level, prairie country near the only soda springs in the Willamette Valley, which are acquiring some celebrity for their medicinal properties. This church is thirty miles south of Salem and 15 east of Albany, Lynn County seat.

Sept. 12, at Lebanon, Marion County. Passing through an open prairie country, 24 miles, I came to Marysville, the county seat of Benton County, standing on the west bank of the Willamette River 70 miles by land above this place. Preached on the 17th and 18th, baptized two candidates and received one more for baptism. The house, 30 by 40 feet., is nearly completed. Here a minister is more immediately needed than in any other point in the territory—a ready, business-like, devoted preacher, who could give direction and exercise a general supervision in bringing into existence and sustaining an academical school for the denomination. Such a man would receive \$200 or \$250 from the church the first year. The church is young and inexperienced, but is by far the most wealthy church in the territory. From Marysville I followed up the valley of the most western fork of the Willamette 70 miles through a level prairie country studded with small groves of ash and soft maple, while the hills were crowned with oak groves, but on the Willamette bottoms the balm of Gilead, white fir and soft maple constitute the principal growth of timber. Crossing the Calapooia Mountains, a distance of 8 miles by good wagon road, one enters what is called the Umpqua Valley,²⁷² which consists of a series of

²⁷² For the early history of the Umpqua Valley, see note 246.

narrow valleys varying from a few yards to three or four miles in width. In the midst of these valleys and on every hand rise hills varying in form and elevation from the gentle sloping mound fifty feet in elevation to low mountains raising their imposing summits 2000 or 3000 feet above the level of the valleys below, whose sloping sides are covered with a luxuriant growth of the most nutritious grasses, everywhere interspersed with open groves of red and white oak. Fencing and building timber is rather scarce till you approach the Coast, Cascade and transverse ranges of mountains. Springs of pure water are abundant near the base of these hill slopes. After crossing the Calapooia Mountains, I traveled about 50 miles through these valleys on the great road from the Willamette Valley to the gold mines.²⁷³ This road has already become a great thoroughfare where loaded wagons, pack trains of mules and horses and droves of beef cattle are daily passing. These valleys are fast filling up with settlers and it is confidently believed that the largest portion of the arable land will be taken up before the first of next January. The population of the Umpqua Valley may now be estimated at 1500 or 2000 souls, among which I found six Baptist members. On the 25th I preached at Winchester,²⁷⁴ the only village in the main valley, to about 60 attentive hearers. Winchester is situated about the center of the valley, or rather assemblage of valleys, on the south bank of the north fork of the Umpqua on the great road. It contains four families and one store, a saw and grist mill and two or three mechanic shops. The seat of justice for the county will probably be located about six miles south of this on the south fork. The valley contains nearly two counties, and, as yet, not a single preacher of any denomination. This district of country lies contiguous to the gold mines, is extremely rich in agricultural resources, and of water power there is no end. Great

²⁷³ This road followed in most places the old Hudson Bay Company's trail to California.—G. H. Himes.

²⁷⁴ Winchester was laid out in 1850. It was on a trail to the coast and to the mines. The county seat of Douglas County was there until 1853, when it was transferred to Roseburg, as the author prophesies.—Bancroft, Hist. of Ore. II:183,711.

anxiety was expressed by the citizens of every description for the settlement of ministers and school teachers among them. It is about two years since the first white family settled in the valley and probably not more than five or six evangelical sermons have been preached in that whole district. Mr. Jesse Applegate,²⁷⁵ the leading man in the valley, assured me, if the Baptists would locate a school in his neighborhood with a view of raising it to an academical school, he would donate 40 acres of choice land and he and his brother²⁷⁶ would each give \$1000 toward erecting a suitable building and he thought another brother would give \$1000 for the same object. In the absence of a common school system, and in view of the religious and literary destitution of that country and the prospects of its rapid development both in population and resources and in view of the untiring efforts of other religious sects, upon consultation with our brethren here, we have thought it best for Br. Read to proceed immediately to the Umpqua and commence preaching to the destitute, and at the same time look after the interests of education and attempt, if practicable, to lay the foundation for a Baptist academy in as favored a location as can be secured, as his labors have closed with the Oregon City College.

I did not visit Scottsburg,²⁷⁷ the commercial point for the Umpqua, but learned that it consists of six dry goods stores, is near the head of tide water on the Umpqua, some four or five families residing in the vicinity, and that the entire community consists of about 70 or 75 souls. Fifteen vessels have

²⁷⁵ Jesse Applegate was a well-known figure in early Oregon history. He was a leader in the immigration of 1843. He was a prominent member of the provisional legislature in 1845 and 1849. In 1846 he helped open a southern route to the Willamette Valley. In 1849 he settled near Yoncalla, in the Umpqua Valley. He was Indian agent in 1870, candidate for U. S. Senator in 1876, and died in 1888.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:393, 473, 544, 568; 11:178, 564, 673, 763.

²⁷⁶ Charles Applegate came to Oregon in 1843 and settled in the Umpqua Valley in 1849 near his brother.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 1:393, 569.

The other brother was Lindsey, who also came to Oregon in 1843 and who had settled where Ashland now stands.—*Ibid.* 1:569, 393.

²⁷⁷ Scottsburg was at the head of tidewater on the Umpqua and was named after Levi Scott.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* 11:178.

It was the point from which settlers in Southern Oregon got many of their supplies. There had been a Hudson Bay Company's post there, and mule trails to the interior of Oregon.—Mrs. S. A. Long, Mrs. Jesse Applegate, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.* VIII:182.

entered the mouth of the river within the last 15 months. Next month I expect to visit Rogue River. On my return I visited the church just constituted in the forks of the Willamette²⁷⁸ and spent the Sabbath. At present I shall defer giving you a description of this church, except to mention that our itinerant, Rev. Mr. Sperry, preaches to them monthly and they are sustaining a Sunday school. Circumstances over which I have no control prevented my proceeding to Rogue River as I intended when I left home, but, by Divine permission, I shall visit that part of the country next month. Indications seem very favorable that an immediate and urgent demand will be made for the appointment of an efficient, enterprising, devoted missionary to labor at the Indian Agency, where we have two valuable Baptist families, and Jacksonville, the trading town for the rich mining district now attracting many miners on the Rogue River, and but seven miles from the Agency. I trust you will be casting about you with prayerful anxiety to find the very man to meet vice in all its forms and succeed in that place. . . .

Numbers of appointments must be made, which will require from \$300 to \$400 each from your Board, or the cause must be given over into other hands for the want of efficient ministers. The Old School Presbyterian Church has three missionaries here, with but one church, very small.²⁷⁹ Congregationalists have seven or eight ministers, the Methodists about a score, Seceders four to five, Cumberland Presbyterians four or five, Campbellites six or seven and Anti-missionary Baptists six or eight. It strikes me that four missionaries should be immediately appointed for Oregon who should be subject to the advice of the ministers here in the selection of their location. Marysville, Salem and Portland are all suffering for want of efficient Baptist ministers, yet

²⁷⁸ This church was organized May 1, 1852, by Revs. Vincent Snelling and William Sperry.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:19.

²⁷⁹ The three old-school Presbyterian missionaries were Revs. Lewis Thompson, Robert Robe and E. R. Geary. J. A. Hanna had also probably arrived by this time. The church was probably the one at Corvallis.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:680, 681.

Among the Congregational ministers were Revs. Harvey Clark, Geo. H. Atkinson, Myron Eells, Horace Lyman and Elkanah Walker.—*Ibid.* II:679; I:137.

the distance is so far from New York and the time is so long before you can secure the labors of the right man that we are obliged to throw such laborers into the field as we have and, by the time of the arrival of a man just adapted for the field, we have a man in the way who cannot be removed without temporary injury to the cause.

Our school at Oregon City is doing well as yet. Br. Chandler's labors close in about two weeks and we have found no teacher to succeed him. We expect we shall be compelled to take up a temporary teacher. The Trustees, at a late meeting, instructed me to correspond with you and request you to secure for us a teacher, if possible, from one of the New England or New York colleges, who wishes to identify himself with a rising institution and grow up with it, with hopes of permanency in the profession of teaching. We think the school will give such a man a reasonable support. He should by all means bring along with him an amiable, intelligent wife.

The goods that were shipped on the M. Howes arrived safe and in good order except a few pairs of ladies' shoes and gaiters; the numbers of pairs I cannot now state, as I am from home and have not the invoice of goods along, but will state particulars in my next.

The importance of our mission to Oregon is every day becoming more manifest and we daily need more grace and wisdom and energy to meet the openings of providence in laying broad and deep the foundations of institutions for enlarged Christian philanthropy. As a denomination we are suffering for the want of an efficient colporteur of the American Baptist Publication Society. A colporteur who could be kept constantly supplied with books to meet the demands of the people, and so sustained that he could go everywhere carrying and selling his books and preaching the Word, would, by harmonizing discordant elements and scattering broadcast the seed of evangelical truth in a luxuriant soil, accomplish a work for Oregon which no other man can do.

When I think on this subject all my bones are pained. We are now out of books and the Society's agent²⁸⁰ is at home providing for his family, teaching school for a support, while every Methodist circuit rider is selling books of the Arminian stamp through the country and the Campbellites have their books on the way to proselyte to their faith. It strikes me that a colporteur missionary must be sustained by the Publication Soc. and that the results will soon justify the outlay. Pray for us that our faith and labors fail not.

Respectfully,
EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. T., Sept. 22, '52.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., N. York.

Dear Br.:

I learn by a letter which Br. Chandler has just received from you that you are in correspondence with a brother who is willing to come to Oregon as a professional teacher, and who is a licentiate.²⁸¹ If he can preach, and your Board cannot send him as a teacher, could you not give him an appointment as you did Brs. Chandler and Read? If so, and he can preach to the edification of the people, we can find profitable use for him as a teacher and preacher in this place and vicinity. This would operate to liberate the pastor here and enable him to exert a more general personal influence in the surrounding villages and the churches in the Willamette Valley. We feel that we must have an efficient, professional teacher, and we must look to you for the man. . . .

Please send the Home Mission Record to the following brethren: William S. Wilmot,²⁸² eight copies, Salem Post-

²⁸⁰ This was Rev. Richmond Cheadle.

²⁸¹ This was probably J. D. Post, who came to Oregon in 1852.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:37.

²⁸² Rev. William S. Wilmot, M. D., was born in Kentucky in 1808, moved to Missouri in 1841, and to Oregon in 1850. He settled in Marion County and was connected with the Shiloh Church for about twenty years. He was ordained in 1859, and later lived in Washington and Idaho. He died at Beaverton, Ore.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:71.

office, Russel T. Hill, eight copies, Santiam Post-office, and John Trapp, eight copies, Marysville Post-office, and charge the same to my account. I have received pay. Will you order to Talbert Carter,²⁸³ Albany Post-office, one copy of the New York Recorder, and pay for the same and charge me with the amount. I wish not to be responsible for any paper I order more than a year at a time. Should they not order them renewed, you will have them discontinued at the end of the year.

The ladies' shoes and gaiters not received in the bill of goods referred to in another sheet are one pair women's Brogans, 90 cents; two pairs morocco, marked \$1.00 each; one pair calf marked 70 cents; one pair kid marked \$1.00; and one pair colored gaiters \$1.38. Total \$5.98. I presume they were overlooked and not put up. It is possible the box might have been opened on the way, but not probable. During my absence the past three weeks, my family have been occupied with the family of Rev. Mr. Stevens²⁸⁴ from northern Ohio. His wife and three of the children have had a severe attack of the camp fever. The affliction was deepened by the death of his eldest daughter of seventeen years. Br. Stevens goes to Marysville. I hope he will succeed there. His family left my house this morning in an enfeebled state. The immigrants are every day reaching our valley in large numbers. The number of immigrants for Oregon are variously estimated from five to twenty thousand souls.²⁸⁵ There has been an unusual amount of suffering on the way by cholera, in a mitigated form, and camp fever. Those who come by the overland route should invariably start early, take the most wholesome kinds of food, drive regularly and make no forced marches, except in the

²⁸³ Tolbert Carter (1825-1899) was born in Illinois, moved to Missouri in 1841, and to Oregon in 1846. He settled in Benton County and served several terms in the state legislature. He was prominent in church life as a licensed preacher and deacon.—*Mattoon, Bap. An. of Ore.* I:57.

²⁸⁴ Rev. Thomas Stephens (1803-1888) was born in Wales, where he was ordained, lived later in New York and Ohio, and came to Oregon in 1852. He preached for the Shiloh and Corvallis churches for a time and later settled near Roseburg.—*Mattoon, Bap. An. of Ore.* I:14. See also the letter of Aug. 22, 1853.

²⁸⁵ See note 154.

absence of grass or water, and rest Sabbaths, except where water and grass is not to be found. I write this that following immigrations may profit by the advice. No doubt many on the route have lost their lives through neglect either in providing a suitable outfit, or through too much haste and irregular habits on the way. It should be proclaimed through the length and breadth of the States that food made up principally of rancid bacon-sides, shoulders and hams, hot biscuits mixed with the fats fried therefrom and water, hot coffee, as strong as it can be made, mornings, noon and night, with no vegetables and little dried fruit for four or five months in succession, is enough to generate fatal diseases in any climate, but especially where all, both male and female, are exposed to extreme fatigue and constant anxiety of mind. I shall leave in about two weeks for the Rogue River, if the rains do not become too severe. In the meantime I shall attend a yearly meeting in Polk Co. with the LaCreole church.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Sept. 30, 1852.

Oregon City, O. T., Oct. 16, 1852.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Herein I send you a bill of goods which I wish you to purchase for me and forward as soon as you can ship direct to Portland, Oregon, as follows:

1 large cooking stove, furniture and ten pieces of pipe. Let the pipe be bent for locking and be left open so that it can be packed close; it can be put together here. 1 good patent lever watch, full jeweled, chain and key. I want a good time keeper. 1 small timepiece. Let it not cost more than \$10 or \$12. 1 good hat for riding, rather wide-brimmed, 23½ inches around the outside of the hat at the head. 1 travelling overcoat, suitable for my business in a wet

Oregon winter, thick and firm, not coarse. 1 pair stout cassimere pantaloons, lined throughout. 1 stout cassimere frock coat; coats rather large for you will fit me. 1 good double-breasted cassimere vest for winter travelling. 1 substantial black summer vest. One vest for a young man, middling size. 25 or 30 yds. of woolen plaid; if not in the market, linsey, green and black or green and red. One web of bleached sheeting, fine and firm. 2 bolts of unbleached cotton sheeting, not coarse. 1 bolt good, dark calico. 25 yds. of worsted delaine, figured, not light colored; if no worsted delaine in market, get the amount in worsted goods for women's dresses. 8 yards of white muslin for young ladies' dresses. 1 bolt of good gingham, not very light colored.

1 parasol, suitable for a young lady, not very light.

16 yards cambric for lining. 6 yards brown holland.

2 good brown linen tablecloths, 6 feet square.

10 yards good brown linen toweling, all linen.

Half-pound black Italian sewing silk, good.

18 yards good, fine twilled red flannel. 6 papers of pins, different sizes.

1 pound black linen thread.

6 cards good hooks and eyes. 12 fine ivory combs, large. 6 tucking combs. 1 roll of black ribbon, 1¼ inches wide. 1 box adamantine candles. 1 good glass lantern. Fourth gross matches. 1 barrel New Orleans sugar, good. 200 letter envelopes. Half-ream letter paper, best article.

One dozen cut glass tumblers. 2 ladies' bonnets, one of which is for a girl of 11 years, each trimmed. 2 copies Downing's work on Horticulture.²⁸⁶ 1 copy Preacher's Manual by Rev. S. T. Sturtevant.²⁸⁷ 1 copy of Williams' Miscellaneous.²⁸⁸ 1 pair fine calf boots, number 10's. 1 do. No. 11's, high in the instep. 1 pair water-proof calf boots, double sole and feet, lined with good calf, not very heavy. 1

²⁸⁶ Andrew Jackson Downing's "Fruit and Fruit Trees of America" was first published in 1845, and passed through many editions.

²⁸⁷ S. F. Sturtevant, Preacher's Manual, published by John C. Riker, New York, 8vo., \$2.50. O. A. Roorbach. Bibliotheca Americana, p. 525.

²⁸⁸ William R. Williams, *Miscellanies*. New York, 1850. See also note 237.

pair calf shoes, fine, No. 9. 1 do. No. 10, good article. 2 pair little boys' calfskin shoes, No. 9. 1 pair ladies' gaiters, drab or slate colored, No. 4's. 1 do. black, No. 4½. 2 pairs morocco boots. No. 4½. 2 do., one morocco and one enameled, No. 4. 1 pair ladies' calfskin boots, No. 4. 1 pair misses' enameled boots, No. 12. 1 pair morocco do. No. 12. 1 pair calfskin do. No. 12. 2 pair ladies' India rubber boots, Nos. 6 and 7, rough bottoms. 10 pairs good, long-legged men's half hose. 6 pairs lamb's wool ladies' hose. 2 pairs colored cotton do. and 2 pairs white cotton do. 3 pairs boys' half hose, boy 6 yrs. old. 2 bandana silk handkerchiefs. 2 ladies' dress collars. 1 pair large ladies' silk gloves, drab or snuff color. 2 dozen nutmegs, 1 pound cinnamon, be sure it is good; 1 glass jar, about 1 gallon; 8 lbs. salsoda; 6 pounds saleratus, 1 good razor, 2 washing tubs, one to fit inside other; 1 waiter for tea table, medium size; 1 flatiron, large; 3 good cotton umbrellas; 1 good steel blade shovel, round pointed; 12 sheets perforated cardboard for ladies' marking, white, pink, blue, green. Worsted for working different colors. 15 skeins silk of different colors for marking. 1 pair saddle bags for riding, rather large size; 1 large travelling trunk; pack it full before boxing it. 65 pounds of nails, 15 lbs. 4's, 25 lbs. 6's, 15 lbs. 8's and 10 lbs. of 10 pennys. 1 good walking cane, good length. 1 good ladies' winter shawl. 1 silk scarf for young lady, changeable blue and pink or blue and white. 1 pair good spectacles set in silver for a man 53 years old. 3 boxes water-proof boot blacking.

Received Nov. 29, 1852.

Oregon City, Oct. 18, 1852.

Dear Br. Hill:

In my last quarterly report I omitted to state the amount I received for my support, which was twenty-five dollars (\$25.00). This was occasioned by my haste to get my report to the office before the mail closed. I have made out a bill rather large, but it falls short of the wants of the family. I have thought that, in the event it exceeds the amount due

me for the time I have reported, you might perhaps accommodate me with the amount and forward the goods by the first vessel up for Oregon and wait for the balance till I report again, as it is inconvenient for me to order my family supplies oftener than once a year.

I wish you also to order on my account one copy of the New York Recorder, or the Christian Chronicle, as it may suit your convenience, and pay for the same in advance, for J. M. Barnes, to be directed to Cincinnati Post-office, Oregon Ter.

I believe I acknowledged receipt of yours under date of June 25, 1852. I shall leave today for a yearly meeting on the French Prairie and shall not return till I have visited Rogue River settlements, unless the rains should swell the streams so as to make travelling dangerous.

As ever yours in Christ,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Nov. 29, 1852.

Lebanon, twelve miles east of Salem, Marion Co., Oregon Ter., Nov. 22, 1852.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Owing to the winter rains coming down with so much frequency just at the time I got in readiness to make a tour to Rogue River, the fact that the immigration was moving on in that direction in such numbers and the great scarcity of provisions in that country, all of which would contribute to throw the community in an unsettled condition, I concluded to spend the rainy season in the older and more settled parts of Oregon and defer my visit to Rogue River and Puget Sound till the opening of the spring. At that time the immigrants will find their homes and begin to look around them with desire to secure the necessary appendages of civilization and a means of grace. From all the facts that

have fallen under my observation I have not the least doubt there is an important opening for the constitution of a Baptist church at the Indian agency only seven miles from Jacksonville, a rising mining town near Rogue River.²⁸⁹ Judge Rice²⁹⁰ and wife and some two or more members besides are located near the agency and will do what they can to sustain Baptist preaching. Br. James S. Read is in the Umpqua at Winchester, and I learn by a letter that he will soon constitute a church at that place. He should be reappointed to labor at Winchester and other parts of the Umpqua Valley. I am unable to say what will be necessary to enable him to give himself to the ministry. He will be able to give you the necessary information. I think he will not be able to sustain himself on less than \$500 or \$600. Br. Read is a devoted, studious, thinking, exemplary man and wishes ardently to give himself wholly to the ministry. Br. Chandler has moved onto a claim twelve miles south from Oregon City.²⁹¹ This he did with a view of securing his family the means of sustenance. We do not blame him for making the move, but regret that our best men must take their families onto farms because they cannot be sustained in the towns. We expect he will preach to the church at Oregon City this year. We have at this time not a single minister located in a town as pastor, unless Winchester may be called a town. It seems that we must have a minister sustained at Oregon City, Portland and Salem, each, if it is possible. We need to have the example given to our churches of an efficient, devoted ministry, and this influence should go out from our towns. Yet in our towns we have few members, and they are not able like our landholders. We can find no self-denying man who will leave a flourishing church in N. York or N. England and move to our new

²⁸⁹ In February, 1852, gold was discovered near the present Jacksonville, the beginning of successful mining in the Rogue River. Other discoveries soon followed, and there was a large influx of miners.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* II:186.

²⁹⁰ This was L. A. Rice. He was County Judge for two years.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:137.

²⁹¹ This claim, known on government maps as the G. C. Chandler Donation Land Claim, is in Township 4 South, Range 2 East, of the Willamette Meridian, and is on Milk Creek, about three miles southeast of Mulino, Clackamas County.

towns in Oregon without seeing a prospect of having his family sustained. Till some provisions are made adequate to the support of the ministry, if they are induced to move to Oregon with a prospect of sustaining the cause in a rising town, they will not long stay where want stares them in the face while they see that their wants may be easily met by laboring three or four days in a week with their hands in the country. At this time wheat is worth from \$3.00 to \$4.00 per bushel, flour \$14.00 to \$15.00 per hundred pounds; fresh beef 14 to 16 cents per pound, rice 25, sugar about 20, eggs from 50 cents to a dollar per dozen. A good cow and calf \$100. Wood from \$7.00 to \$9.00 per cord. With these prices, no minister in Oregon with a small family can support his family and give himself entirely to the ministry of the word short of \$1000 per year. In Umpqua and Rogue rivers we must add from 25 to 100 per cent to these prices. With all these embarrassments staring the ministry in the face and with all these temptations to leave the ministry to serve tables we need tried and devoted men. And it does seem to me that such men should not be forsaken. Yet we have the promise of the Good Shepherd, "Lo, I am with you," and we still pray and trust Him and work on, if we have to do as Paul did for the Corinthian Church. Our country churches are advancing in pecuniary ability and I think I can say, too, in willingness to sustain the ministry. If our churches are rightly trained, they will soon give liberally for the support of the gospel, both at home and abroad. I spent Saturday and Sabbath with this church. Sabbath was unusually rainy; few persons were out, not more than fifteen, yet it was thought best to take up a collection in favor of the Home Mission Society. Accordingly the hat was passed. It was rather a family circle than a church. The collection amounted to (\$3.50) three dollars and fifty cents. I shall be unable to take up collections this winter, but hope the churches will begin to sympathize deeply with your Society's operations by contributing liberally to its support. I shall spend most of my time with the churches and destitute settle-

ments in the Willamette Valley and the valley of the Columbia the coming winter. Probably shall spend a Sabbath at Salem during the coming session of the legislature. Should you appoint a man to preach one year at Oregon City and vicinity who will teach the school, probably he would render effectual service to the church and meet pressing wants in the school with a commission of \$200 or \$300 salary and we would be supplied with a man who could in a great measure superintend the cause of education. Elder Johnson is yet feeble, but able to preach part of the time. We have an accession to the ministry by the last immigration of five or six men, but most of them are far advanced in life and manifestly came to Oregon to settle their families and to find a quiet repose for their declining years.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Jan. 14, 1853.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Dec. 29, '52.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Your letters under date Oct. 5 and Nov. 2 and 3 were received by the last two mails. Having just returned from a tour up the Willamette Valley after a detention at Salem and vicinity of two weeks by rains, high water and snow, I take the earliest opportunity to answer your inquiries touching the cause of Br. Chandler's leaving the school. While he continued connected with the school he gave as general satisfaction, both to the Trustees and supporters, as we could reasonably expect of any man in that station. As far as my knowledge extends, all were desirous that he should continue in that station. Sometime during the summer term (I think) he expressed his doubt whether it could be his duty to confine his labors to a school of boys but little in advance of a common school in the States. The Trustees could not say to a man evidently called to preach the gospel,

"You must continue to teach." We, however, expressed our wishes that he would continue to sustain the relation he held to the school. Near the close of the summer or early in the fall term Br. C. informed us positively that he must leave the school at the close of the year and wished us to look out for another man. At that time the church in the place felt a strong conviction that they needed more pastoral labors performed than Brother C. could do in connection with the school and that it was very desirable that we should have the undivided labors of a minister in this place and vicinity, if we hoped to secure our proportion of influence as a denomination in the place where our school was located. How much this consideration influenced Br. Chandler to leave the work of teaching, I cannot say. Probably somewhat. It was Br. Chandler's decision that it was his duty to leave the department of teaching, and not that of the Trustees. If he erred, it was an error of judgment, not of design.

Br. Read was appointed by your Board, I understand, at Br. Chandler's request, to be associated with him in the school; I am quite sure it was not at the request of the Trustees of the College. But as you had appointed him and made the outfit, we regarded it our duty to remove all the obstacles we could and render every facility to their usefulness as teachers and preachers we could. But I never admired the economy or utility of that part of the arrangement. However, before the close of the second quarter, Brother Read signified to the Trustees his determination to leave the school at the expiration of the year, or as soon as he could be spared from the school, with a strong conviction that it was his duty to devote his labors exclusively to the ministry of the Word. I have no doubt the Trustees would have given him the school when they found Br. Chandler must leave, but he could not for a moment entertain the thought of teaching and we had no control of his convictions of duty. He left the school by mutual consent at the close of the third quarter.

It is true the school did not give an entire support for two men, yet I think, if Br. Chandler's health would have allowed him to teach five days in the week and preach occasionally on Saturday and regularly on Sabbath, that the income of the school, \$200 from your Board and \$100 from the church would have given him a comfortable living. You ask what the school is worth per year. The school last year must have been worth something like \$600 or \$700. It must have averaged about 25 scholars at \$6.00, \$8.00 and \$10.00 per quarter. The average price was a fraction short of \$8 per quarter. I think we may safely calculate that, by the time our teacher will be ready to enter the school, the school will be worth as much the first year as it was last, and from that time forward we hope for a gradual increase.

All practical business men in Oregon give their opinion that Oregon City must become one of the few important places in Oregon. I have no doubt but a good professional teacher, with a small family, would be able to sustain his family from the school, with a prospect of a gradual increase of salary, and find himself admirably situated to exert a general influence on the formation of the civil and religious character of one of the most important future states in the whole union. If we could pay the passage of Br. Post's family out and give him the school when he arrives in the place, we would gladly do it. But it strikes me that this is beyond our power. We have but eleven or twelve feeble churches in the territory and they together number less than 200 members—men, women and children—gathered from all parts of the western states, a few from the old states, but mostly from Missouri. It is no strange thing to me that many of them cannot see clearly what relation our school bears to the future destinies of the cause of Christ in Oregon, in the world. Besides, we must raise \$300 or \$400 the coming summer to glaze our house and thus secure it from the weather, and finish another room or two (and I know of no man who will do this work but myself, and this must be done so as not to interfere with my appropriate duties

as your agent and missionary) and most of this must come from men not connected with our denomination, as I incidentally fall in with them to spend an hour or a night. If the country was a little older or the churches had a few more efficient pastors, this money might be raised. Since Brother Chandler left the school, we have made temporary arrangements for teaching and intend the school shall be kept up from quarter to quarter till we learn the result of your correspondence with Br. Post. We cannot tell Br. Post how much he ought to sacrifice for the cause of Christ and humanity in Oregon. But this I will suggest, that, if he will give his whole soul to God for this work, I think the day will come before he is fifty years old, if his life is spared, that he will find himself connected with relations which should satisfy the most aspiring mind and afford the richest consolation in the decline of life. It is true our beginnings are small, but the destinies of Oregon for the next fifty years, who can calculate?

Very respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Dear Brother:

Will you give me an interest in your fervent prayers that I may do my whole duty to Him who died and intercedes for me with the Father of us all.

Received March 19, 1853.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., Jan. 1st, 1853.

To the Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Herein I send you my report of labor as exploring agent for Oregon for the 3rd quarter ending December 31st, 1852.

I have visited during the quarter, Salem, the seat of government, and Lebanon church, attended the yearly meeting of the French Prairie church; visited Shiloh church, Oregon City church, and Molalla church, and spent a Sabbath with brethren on Butte Creek, 22 miles south of Oregon City.

Travelled 435 miles to and from my appointments, labored 11 weeks during the quarter, collected \$3.50 by collection from Lebanon Church, paid for travelling expenses \$2.50, for postage 12½ cents. Total \$2.62½. Delivered 18 sermons.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

Received March 19, 1853.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., Jan. 6, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. Bap. H. M. Soc., N. Y.

Dear Brother:

During the late high water I spent eight or ten days in Salem and vicinity and preached one Sabbath. As it was the time of the session of the legislature, I availed myself of the opportunity of making myself acquainted with the members from the different parts of the territory and collecting what facts I could relative to the extent of the farming country and the commercial, agricultural and mineral capabilities, the number of population, the prospects of rising towns and the number and character of Baptist members in their respective districts, the results of which I design to embody in a few days, or perhaps weeks, and forward to you.

Salem contains ten drygoods stores, all of which seem to do a very fair business, a flouring mill, two saw-mills, some four or five lawyers, three or four physicians, mechanics of various descriptions and about five hundred souls. The Episcopal Methodists are the prevailing denomination. Here is their Oregon Institute²⁹² in a flourishing condition. Here are five Methodist Episcopal preachers,²⁹³ four of whom hold their land claims, on one of which the town is principally situated, and the others are all adjoining.

²⁹² The Oregon Institute was about to become Willamette University. The latter was incorporated six days after this letter was written.—Bancroft, *Hist of Ore.* II:678.

²⁹³ Three of these Methodist ministers holding land claims were Revs. J. L. Parrish, L. H. Judson and J. D. Boone.—G. H. Himes.

The Protestant Methodists sent out a missionary²⁹⁴ last year overland. He has fixed on this place as the place of his operations and is gathering a small church. The Presbyterians are holding occasional meetings here and contemplate forming a church before long. We have a few Baptist members wintering immediately adjoining the town but they will soon move to the country, perhaps Umpqua. We have two Baptist members living two miles north who were formerly united with others into a small church in the town. But the peculiar features of the land law called them all to their land claims.

I have formerly given you my views of the importance of occupying this place. I will repeat them and perhaps enlarge upon them: First, it is the seat of government and, whether that shall be removed or not, Salem cannot fail to be the center of a large and rich agricultural portion of the Willamette Valley and must have a rapid growth, situated, as it is, on the east bank of the river about midway between the Willamette Falls and the head of river navigation by small river steamers. From all that I know of the people in the place and the surrounding country, I think they are not generally committed to any denomination, although the Episcopal Methodists control a great share of the wealth and a large amount of influence. Yet the field in the immediate vicinity is very large and easy of access to a faithful, common sense, efficient preacher.

But another most important consideration is the fact that we have three young, feeble churches located in important farming portions of this county (Marion),²⁹⁵ all at this time destitute of a minister. Should a Baptist minister be located in Salem and preach but half his time in town, he might receive a portion of his support from one or two of these churches and exert a general influence through the county by way of building up these and other churches which must

²⁹⁴ This was Rev. Daniel Bagley, afterwards prominent in the State of Washington.—G. H. Himes.

²⁹⁵ These were the French Paririe, Shiloh and Lebanon churches.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:9, 16.

spring up soon, should the means of grace be enjoyed and blessed of God.

The churches in this county evince a missionary spirit and would aid liberally in the support of a man in Salem, if they could have his services but one Saturday and Sabbath each month.

The people generally are as much a church going people as is common for new countries. The influence in the churches is generally good in the country and the members have a fair proportion of talents and wealth. But they need (like all churches in new countries) habitual training in practical Christian duties. A minister, with a small family, adapted to fill that place, should be appointed with a salary of \$700 from the Home Mission Society and he might expect the first year to receive \$200 from the churches and people in Salem and vicinity, if he is a man with fair preaching talents in the old States and could command respect from the leading men in the territory and the government officers who will be located at Salem. As I expect soon to present you with some views on the importance of Oregon as a missionary field, I will only add that I conceive it of vast importance to the cause of Christ under God that your Board, as soon as practicable, sustain in the Willamette Valley at least three missionaries—one at Salem, one at Oregon City and one at Portland. If all the churches besides receive little missionary aid, except as they receive it through the influence and labors of these men, we probably can find men on claims who can attend to the wants of the country churches for the present better than that these places go entirely neglected from year to year.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received March 19, 1853.

Oregon City, O. T., Jan. 10th, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Brother:

I wrote Br. James S. Read about eight weeks since suggesting to him the propriety of his representing to you the importance of his field of labor and making timely application for reappointment, at the same time assuring him that I would recommend his appointment as soon as I could learn that he had taken the requisite steps.

I have received no answer and have not learned since what he was doing, but presume he is preaching the Word as far as he can. Br. Read is a modest, studious, prudent, amiable, pious young brother, in my opinion, better adapted to take the charge of a well organized church than to perform the pioneer work of an entirely frontier portion of a country. Yet he seemed determined on his course and I hope the hand of the Lord was in the work. I conversed freely with him relative to his peculiarities in this respect before I gave my consent that he should go alone into a field which seemed to me to call loudly for an offhand, business-like pioneer. Had we anticipated with certainty that Brother Chandler would leave Oregon City, I think we should have thought it advisable, under all circumstances, to have kept Br. Read with us. But you know full well that instability is impressed in indelible marks on many of our most sanguine hopes in a frontier country. May God in His infinite mercy give us grace to meet every emergency like men richly furnished from the Gospel treasury till Christ shall be honored in Oregon.

Br. Read did not preach so much as other ministers in Oregon while he taught. This was his excuse, that he could not preach without some previous preparation and the brethren, as they became acquainted with him, appreciated his apology. But no young man sustains a more unblemished character.

I shall soon write him and encourage him to give himself to the work of the ministry as far as is consistent with his support. May the wisdom of the Most High direct you and us, is the sincere prayer of your unworthy brother,

EZRA FISHER.

Received March 19, 1853.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Jan. 12, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

A. B. H. M. Soc., N. Y.

Dear Brother:

The time has arrived in which it becomes necessary that arrangements be made touching the field of my labor the coming year. To me it is no pleasant task to solicit a re-appointment. Yet it appears to me a matter of increased importance that the Baptists should have a man in the general field in Oregon who shall visit every church and town and opening district, at least Umpqua and Rogue rivers, Puget Sound²⁹⁶ and the mouth of the Columbia and, at each place, spend a sufficient portion of time to learn the respective wants, and follow the openings of Providence in preaching the Word.

Our churches are small and scattered over a large territory and generally have preaching but one Saturday and Sabbath each month, and some only occasionally; numbers of preachers have only limited opportunities and labor through the week for their bread. Now a visit from a minister in whom the churches repose confidence, who will preach the Word, administer counsel when needed, present both publicly and privately the objects contemplated by the Home Mission Society and inculcate the principles of Christian benevolence and the importance of cultivating the Christian graces, would

²⁹⁶ For the early posts of the Hudson Bay Company on the Cowlitz and at Nisqually, see notes 298 and 299. The first American settlements on Puget Sound were in 1845, near Tumwater. They grew gradually during the following few years, but suffered by the exodus to California in 1849. In 1850 a store was erected at Olympia and commerce in American ships began. There were perhaps 100 American citizens on the Sound at this time. In 1851 Port Townsend was laid out; in 1852-3, Seattle. There was steady growth of population from 1850 on.—Bancroft. *Hist. of Wash., Ida. and Mont.*, pp. 2, 4, 16, 17, 24.

no doubt, under God, contribute more to promote the unity and strength of the churches and the earliest establishment of the cause of Christ in places of rising importance than the confinement of all our ministers to a given limit, station or two each. It is to be hoped that something may be done the ensuing year by way of aiding the Society in sustaining the gospel in Oregon. I am far from saying to your Board that I am the man, and still farther from coveting the fatigues and cares and domestic privations incident to the faithful discharge of the appropriate duties of such a mission. Yet, if I know myself, I desire to serve our common Lord in the field he seems to assign me by the counsel of the brethren who seek to understand the wants of Zion and meet them.

Should your Board judge, in the fear of God, that the cause of Christ in Oregon would be judiciously promoted by giving me a re-appointment with a salary of \$600 and travelling expenses, by the grace of God, I will endeavor to devote myself to that ministry. I say \$600, not because I suppose that sum will cover my family expenses, but because I think with that and the means saved by the services of the family and rigid economy we can live, by occasional mortifications and privations such as were common to our blessed Master and immediate followers and always have been to the pioneers in the blessed cause.

(No signature).

Received March 19, 1853.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Jan. 12, 1853.

To the Executive Board of the Am. Bap. Home Mission Society:

The Subscriber desires reappointment as exploring agent of the American Baptist Home Mission Society for Oregon Territory for one year to commence on the first day of April, 1853. The total amount of my salary necessary for my support while exclusively devoted to the labor of said agency is \$1000 per annum; the least amount that will suffice from

the Society in addition to the services performed by my family is \$600 per annum and traveling expenses. Should the Board comply with this request I engage to devote myself wholly to the appropriate duties of the agency in accordance with their instructions.

N. B.—It will be desirable that I should raise \$300 or \$400, sufficient to protect our school building from great exposure to the weather and ceil and seat one room, and this, it is thought, may be better done by me, without seriously interfering with the duties of the agency, than in any other way. I would not ask this but from the scarcity of laborers in the field and the direct influence the accomplishment of this work will have on the public mind in Oregon and consequently upon the cause of missions in and out of our churches.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

This is to certify that I fully accord with the above request in every particular except the amount asked for. \$600 here is no better than \$200 in any place that I have lived in.

GEO. C. CHANDLER.

I certify that I regard Brother E. Fisher as the best minister that we have in this territory for an exploring agent and recommend him as such. The amount that he asks for his services is small.

HEZEKIAH JOHNSON.

Oregon City, Oregon, Jan. 17, 1853.

Dear Br. Hill:

I have made inquiries respecting the expenses of the journey to Pugets Sound from Colonel Eby,²⁹⁷ the member of the legislature from Whitby's Island, and find that such a tour as would enable me to reach the principal settlements

²⁹⁷ This was I. N. Ebey. He came to Oregon in 1848, and after a visit to California, in 1850, settled on Puget Sound and became prominent in the community. He was murdered by Indians in 1857.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Wash., Ida. and Mont.*, pp. 15, 29, 137.

Whidbey Island was first settled in 1848. Ebey settled there in 1850.—*Ibid.*, p. 10.

on the Sound would cost me about six or eight weeks and about \$75 or \$100. The route is first by steam to the mouth of the Cowletz [Cowlitz], thence up that stream to the Hudson Bay Company's post on the Cowletz,²⁹⁸ at this place hire a horse to Nesqually [Nisqually],²⁹⁹ there leave my horse and hire a crew of Indians and canoe to take me to the various places rising up along the Sound, a distance of 80 or 100 miles, and return the same way. From the best information I can obtain, there are from 2500 to 3000 souls in the whole country north of the Columbia River (some estimate the population at 5000) who have never been visited by a Baptist minister. A few of these are said to be respectable Baptist members: This number will doubtless be monthly increased. The question I wish to propound is, Will your Board justify the expenditure of \$100 in traveling expenses to have an agent visit that important portion of the Territory next summer? Before you answer this question I hope to be able to give you the best geographical description of the country I have been able to glean from intelligent residents on the Sound.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received March 19, 1853.

Oregon City, O. T., Jan. 20th, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Brother:

Yours of Dec. 1st, 1852, has just come to hand and was read with deep interest. I have named at two several times in my quarterly reports the amount which I have collected

²⁹⁸ The first Hudson Bay Company's fort on the Cowlitz was one of its old stations, and the company had a large farm there. The Jesuits settled there in 1838.—Bancroft, *Hist. of N. W. Coast*, 11:613. The post was in the vicinity of the present Toledo.

²⁹⁹ Fort Nisqually, of the Hudson Bay Company, was established in 1833, four or five miles northeast of the Nisqually River. The company had a large sheep and cattle farm there. It was a center of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, an organization closely allied to the Hudson Bay Company, and was the depot for curing meat and loading vessels for Russian-American posts.—Bancroft, *Hist of N. W. Coast*, 11:525, 614.

for the Oregon City College, not because I regarded this a part of my direct duties I owed to the Home Mission Society, but because I had reason to suppose it would be a matter of gratification to the Board to learn that the cause of education was not neglected with the Baptists in Oregon. A few of the many reasons for the course I have pursued I beg leave to name in this. In Aug. of '49, on my return from California, I found a letter from you, pressing upon me the importance of the Baptists securing a suitable amount of land at some favorable point and commencing a school which should eventually take its place among the colleges of the land. I acted accordingly. It was finally judged expedient to locate that school at Oregon City. My interests must be identified with the school till a suitable teacher could be found. In this work I think I do not exaggerate when I say that I deliberately sacrificed in dollars and cents more than half the little property I then had, most of which I had dug with my own hands out of the California sandbars and gulches in the space of eight weeks. I knew the Board, in view of all the circumstances, approved of my teaching, preaching Saturdays and Sabbaths and collecting funds whenever opportunities presented; not in the abstract, but from necessity, just as the farmer in a new country makes his sled and his plough and repairs his clock. I understand, too, that your Board had somewhat departed from their ordinary course by appointing for said school two teachers and preachers in the same men, paying for^d their outfit and sustaining them in part in this two-fold relation. I looked upon this, under the circumstances, as the best thing that could be done, although I regretted the necessity of giving one man the work of two or three. Upon entering upon the work of exploring agent I did contemplate doing something for the school and I think I wrote you on that subject, and I had the impression that I received from you in substance this reply, that the Board could not consent that their agents should enter into the services of any other society so as to interfere with their official duties as agents. But, upon

referring to your letters, I find nothing on that subject except the instructions given in connection with the two commissions, the one in Nov. '51 and the other in Apr. '52. I understood those instructions would justify me in co-operating with any benevolent society, whenever it could be done without sacrificing the interests of the Baptist Home Mission Soc.

In this work which I have performed I have studiously avoided encroaching upon the time and duties of every department of my agency. Probably in doing this work I have not consumed the amount of two days' time, when I could have done anything for the Mission Society. Almost every man in Oregon had formerly known me as identified with the school, and, while in that relation, I always carried our building subscription paper in my pocket and, whenever I found a friend of education, I introduced our building enterprise and solicited his aid. Thus I have secured many subscriptions in various parts of Oregon. Numbers of these were unpaid when I entered upon the work of exploring agent. At that time we had about \$4000 invested in the house. The house was enclosed, except the doors and windows—not one of them made. Our lumber was on hand for flooring and ceiling in part. Our school was still in a small Baptist meeting house, thus rendering the house unfit for a place of worship. Br. Johnson was sick, Br. Chandler confined to the school and no man to engage in collecting funds; all said that I could do something without interfering with my official duties and I must do what I could or the work would stop and we as a denomination would suffer public reproach. With all these difficulties to meet, what could I do in the fear of God other than to pursue the work by littles, without interfering with the appropriate duties of my mission? I know it is not my business to over-reach the instructions, when I have sold my time, unless I am permitted to exercise some discretionary power. Yet it is my deliberate conviction that the cause of Home Missions has been aided indirectly instead of retarded in the work

I have performed for the school. I have sought my time when travelling on steamers, or spending the night with friends, to introduce this subject as incidental business, thus adding variety and giving importance to my work rather than seriously impeding it. I have informed you in another letter that by far the greater part of the funds collected for the school building has been from men not directly members of Baptist churches, whose sympathies become enlisted for the Baptists somewhat in proportion as they find them engaged in promoting the great interests of humanity. I have not entered upon this work from pecuniary considerations, nor from any inclination to covet the thankless drudgery of begging as some are pleased to term it. But it has been because I could not help it while all these and many kindred considerations were pressing upon me and sometimes preying upon my spirits.

I have just written your Board requesting a reappointment, with privilege of performing a little more of the same kind of work, sincerely hoping when that is done this part of the cause of education may rest a few years. I know not what kind of a reception the educational part of the request will meet in the Board, but I believe they are all good men and wise and, if they could be here and see things as they are, they would to a man judge of this matter as we do here. I sincerely hope the Board will weigh this subject well and allow me to do this work in connection with the work of exploring agent, so as not to interfere with my official duties. I will try to the utmost of my ability to prevent interference. I seriously fear that the work must remain undone unless it is done this way by me. If another man could be found here to do it, I would sincerely rejoice, probably more than you all.

Yours with sincere esteem,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Cannot Br. Post's passage out in the mail steamer be secured free? When Mr. Atkinson returned to the States to solicit funds for liquidating the debts of the female

seminary building in this place his passage was secured free or nearly so. We have built our house without asking help from the churches at home and we ask for a man to be sent to bless Oregon in sustaining the teaching department of a public school of much greater moment than a county female school. Will our suit be denied by men making money by the hundred thousands? EZRA FISHER.

Received March 19, 1853.

Oregon City, O. T., Feb. 3d, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Brother:

I noticed an article in the Christian Chronicle, under the editorial head, with the title "A Field of Promise," in which some extraordinary assertions were made, such as the following: "Oregon, California and New Mexico are all thrown into our hands inviting us to send into that vast region the missionary, the school teacher and the pious layman to preach and labor for God and His church; there are our mountains and rivers of gold and to them our Eastern population are directing their course and pouring in by multitudes; in a very few years this newly acquired territory may accommodate a population as large as that which the whole country now sustains; there will be the wealth and the people and thence will emanate our laws and the great controlling influence."

Now, dear brother, these are certainly startling assertions and seem to come from a very respectable source. Were I prepared to believe all this, how should I as a missionary feel, in view of my responsibility, being one of the few Baptist ministers in all this region so full of promise, and everywhere so richly endowed with schools of vice? And how should I tremble under the vastness of the responsibility imposed upon not more than eight or ten missionaries who give themselves wholly to the ministry in this field of so much promise? It must be that these assertions are not

true or that our old and wealthy churches have not the map of the field before them, enquiring, like Daniel, after the time and place of the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, or we should see more self-denying soldiers of the Cross directing their course to this field. I have thought, if half of these statements were believed to be true in the able and numerous churches, they would gird themselves for this work and quadruple their efforts to give the bread of life to the feeble rising interests everywhere struggling for existence in the settlements as they are rapidly forming through this field of promise. I propose giving in these sheets some geographical facts relative to the extent of that portion of the field embraced in Oregon, which must be crowded with immortal beings in the short space of twenty-five or thirty years. Oregon includes seven degrees of latitude, eight hundred miles of seaboard, with bays and harbors every sixty miles and sometimes more contiguous, and more than fifteen degrees of longitude, making an area of somewhat more than 364,000 square miles.³⁰⁰ After deducting one-third for waste land, we have then a territory large enough for five states as large as New York or 32 as large as Massachusetts. It has formerly been supposed that the Willamette Valley comprised almost all the desirable resources of Oregon which were attractive to the immigrant seeking a home for himself and family west of the Rocky Mountains. But instead of this being the fact, it is becoming a matter of doubt by our best informed, practical men whether this valley will even hold the first place in point of importance with various divisions now being occupied by the enterprise and daring of the hardy, adventurous pioneers of the Pacific Coast. This valley, however, from the extreme south, where the prairies begin to open out along the principal streams and their tributaries, to the junction of the main river with the Columbia, is about 170 miles [in length] and varies in breadth from 20 to 65 miles; and even far beyond this, up

³⁰⁰ The Oregon of this time, of course, consisted of all the territory west of the Rocky Mountains between the parallels of latitude 42 and 49 degrees. The area is overstated.

the sides of the mountains, large bodies of arable lands are found which would be sought with great eagerness, if they lay unoccupied in the Green Mountains, with the mildness of this climate and fertility of its soil. Aside from this, the inexhaustible water power and the unexplored mineral resources of its mountains and its agricultural capabilities equal, if not exceed, that of the same number of square miles of the most productive parts of Illinois or Missouri. Leaving this valley, the traveler passes over a transverse ridge of mountains eight miles and enters the Umpqua Valley. It is said that a pass has been discovered, but one or two miles east of the road, sufficiently level to lay a railroad track without grading.³⁰¹ The Umpqua Valley is about 75 miles from north to south and from 15 to 40 from east to west and forms a succession of high hills covered with grass and scattering oaks, and valleys, ranging from a few rods to three or four miles in breadth, with a rich deep soil, which extends to the tops of the highest hills. This country lies contiguous to the gold mines and is settling with astonishing rapidity. Below the Coast Range, on the river bearing the name of the valley above, a commercial town is springing up by the name of Scottsburg.³⁰² In all this country there is but one Baptist and one Methodist minister. As the traveler proceeds south from this valley he passes through a narrow defile of another transverse range of mountains ten or twelve miles. This pass is called the Canon (pronounced kenyon)³⁰³ and opens into the Rogue River Valley. This is surrounded by some of the richest gold diggings in the whole gold region of California and Oregon, and is said to contain nearly as much farming land as the Umpqua Valley. In this valley already 2000 or 3000 souls have taken up their residence; among this number two or three families of the first respectability are known to be Baptists. Here the Methodists have established a circuit occupied by two travelling preachers.

301 This is probably the pass now followed by the Southern Pacific.

302 See note 277.

303 This is the present Cow Creek Canon.

Two years ago not a white man was found in all this valley. From this to the California line is a mining country, interspersed with some good land.

Along the coast, south of the Columbia and west of the Coast Range, are numerous streams emptying into the ocean, on several of which are fine bodies of land, large enough to form small counties, generally lying about fine bays whose entrances are sufficiently large to admit brigs and schooners to enter with safety. These streams furnish a vast amount of water power and are skirted with immense forests of the best fir and spruce in Oregon. At the mouths of these streams settlements are being made such as Port Orford, the mouth of the Umpqua and Tillamook. But not a single gospel minister has ever visited one of these places since their settlement.

Let us now take a brief view of that portion of country formerly embraced in Oregon situated north of the Columbia and west of the Cascade Mountains. This territory extends more than 200 miles from the Columbia to our northern boundary and about 140 from the Pacific to the summit of the Cascade ridge, having about 300 miles of seacoast, with three fine harbors and a small land sea 180 miles in length, with an almost endless number of harbors entirely secure from storm. And then the majestic Columbia, whose tides daily ebb and flow to the Cascade falls, rolls her deep, broad column of water along the southern border.

I know of no state in the union which combines within its own limits so many sources of wealth. Timber of an excellent quality and in vast quantities abounds on Puget Sound, along the coast and on the Columbia, and water power is nowhere wanting to drive the machinery to cut it into lumber. Along the Chehalis and south and east from the Sound, the country opens into extensive prairies, the northern portion of which the white man has not yet explored. The Sound abounds with islands, among which Whitby's is said to be 60 miles in length and on an average

seven in breadth, with a soil unsurpassed in fertility. The people residing in this division give it as their conviction that the soil as a whole is equal, if not superior, to that of the Willamette Valley. Colonel Eby, the member of the legislature from Thurston County, informs me that two navigable rivers (the Duwamish³⁰⁴ and the Snohomish) empty into the Sound from the southeast and flow through the extensive prairies west of the Cascade Mountains. Between the Sound and the ocean much of the land is good, but prairies are said to be small. This county, which scarcely numbered 300 souls in 1850, except the government troops, contains at this time a population estimated from 3000 to 5000, and the present session of the legislature has passed bills to organize four new counties, making in all seven counties in this new portion of Oregon.³⁰⁵ In this district not less than ten or twelve towns of importance will soon be the result of the enterprise of the present citizens. Saw-mills are being put in requisition, and already a considerable trade in lumber is carried on from the Sound and the Columbia. One Methodist minister³⁰⁶ affords all the evangelical preaching the pioneers of this whole district receive. He entered this vast field but last December.

As we leave this district and pass through the Cascade Mountains by the uninterrupted channel of the Columbia, sufficiently deep at all seasons to float the largest class of river steamers, we arrive at the Dalles east of the Cascade Mountains. This may be said to be the head of steam navigation of this great river. Here we enter a region of country which has been generally described as altogether unfit for settlement by civilized man. But instead of this being one vast plain of sands covered with little else but sedge and artemesia, that portion of the country lying between the Cascade and the Blue mountains affords one of

³⁰⁴ This was the Duwamish or White River.

³⁰⁵ These seven counties were: Lewis, organized by the legislature of 1845-6; Clarke; Thurston, organized by the legislature of 1851-2; Jefferson; Pierce; King and Island.

³⁰⁶ Rev. John F. DeVore was formally transferred from the Rock River Conference to the Oregon Conference in 1853, and was the apostle of Methodism to Puget Sound.—Hines, *Missionary Hist. of the Pac. N. W.*, p. 418.

the finest grazing countries in North America, with a soil capable of producing all the products raised in the northern and middle states in great profusion. The only serious obstacle to the speedy settlement of all this region of country is the scarcity of timber in the more southern and eastern portions and, in some parts, scarcity of water. Yet large portions of the north and west of this region are represented as possessing both of these advantages.

That portion of this division lying north of the Columbia and east of the Cascade range is represented by those who have travelled through it as a most desirable region, to which immigrants will soon be attracted in crowds. The Rev. Mr. Waller³⁰⁷ who resided some eight years at the Dalles represents this section of the country as one hundred miles long and varying from 15 to 50 miles in breadth and embracing large bottoms, with timber crowning the hills and mountain sides in abundance, also skirting the streams. The Rev. Mr. Parrish,³⁰⁸ one of the Indian agents, travelled over a portion of this region in May and June of 1850. By his journals, he travelled one hundred and fifty miles in a course first northeast and then northwest. He says he passed 17 mill streams and, at the end of his journey, the plain appeared so broad that he could see no appearances of mountains as far as the eye could stretch its vision. He gives it as his opinion that this is a larger body of land and more productive than the Willamette Valley. Others who have travelled through this region give a similar description of the country. Some represent it 100 miles wide in the broadest place; others represent it 150 miles across in every direction.

A settlement is now being formed at the Dalles³⁰⁹ and

³⁰⁷ Rev. Alvan F. Waller came to Oregon as a member of the Methodist Mission in 1840.—Bancroft, *Hist of Ore.* I: 177, 190.

³⁰⁸ Rev. Josiah L. Parrish came to Oregon in 1840 under the Methodist Mission.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:177; II:213.

³⁰⁹ The Dalles was occupied as a mission station by the Methodists in 1838.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.* I:162. It was transferred to the American Board in 1847. The place was abandoned after the Cayuse war in 1847-8, and only one or two persons lived there until the establishment of the government military post in 1850. A trading post was then soon established and a town began to grow up.—*Ibid.*, II:91, 252, 289, 290. See also the letter of Jan. 15, 1855.

another is contemplated on the Umatilla the next summer, and the time is near when flourishing states will spring into existence above the Cascade Mountains on the waters of the Columbia and Snake rivers and their tributaries. The missionaries who were stationed among the Nez Perces and Flathead Indians³¹⁰ represent much of the land occupied by those tribes as exceedingly productive in grasses, small grains, Indian corn and all the varieties of vegetables grown in New York and New Jersey, while it possesses a mildness and salubrity of climate nowhere else enjoyed in North America. The mineral resources of this country are yet unexplored, yet gold has been washed from the sands of the rivers, 60 or 70 miles north of the Columbia, which indicates the probability that the precious metals, in greater or less quantities, lie buried in the sides of all the surrounding mountains.

Now with all these facts spread out before us, shall not the spirit of immigration to the Pacific Coast pervading the whole country east of the Rocky Mountains be regarded as the opening of God's providence to give the commerce of Asia and the Pacific Isles into the hands of that nation which has displayed the banner of liberty to the nations of the earth and which is first of all nations in giving the Bible and the devoted missionary to Jew and Gentile sunk in degradation and reduced to a stupidity of which the heathen gods are too fit an illustration? I leave others to tell the growing numbers which crowd every steamer and clipper ship up from California. It is sufficient for me to say that Oregon now numbers between 30,000 and 40,000 American citizens and it is a moderate estimate to predict that she will double her population every two years for the next quarter of a century.³¹¹

Who then will give the bread of life to the thousands

³¹⁰ These were the missionaries of the American Board in the present north-eastern Oregon, southeastern Washington and northern Idaho.

³¹¹ This prediction was hardly fulfilled. The Federal census gave Oregon in 1850 a population of 13,294; in 1860 it gave Oregon and Washington, which then included part of Idaho, 64,000, and in 1870 it gave the three states and territories 130,000.

hastening to our borders? Who are to build our school-houses and put our rising generations under the tuition of pious, efficient teachers instead of leaving them to the sport of all the baser passions of the human soul, while schools of vice are everywhere spreading wide their desolating, debasing influence over the unsuspecting and unguarded youthful mind? To me it seems just as important that the missionary school teacher should accompany the home missionary to the frontier settlements of all our new territories as that the foreign missionary should be attended with such auxiliaries. I have felt for years that the right arm of the Home Mission Society is measurably palsied by attempting to separate these essential constituents. If the church is commissioned to go and teach all nations, why should not the youthful mind be imbued with the principles of the gospel in all its acquisitions? I have no doubt our brethren at home who contribute liberally to sustain the missionary in these new and opening fields desire and pray that this cause may want none of the agencies necessary to crown the efforts with complete success. Why then should not the Home Mission Society assume the responsibility at once of seeing at least one school sustained by efficient, pious teachers in each of the territories on the coast, in direct connection with the missionaries there laboring, and that school grow with the growth of that territory and be so conducted as to meet the educational wants of our denomination there? I believe that such an organization under God would add fifty or one hundred per cent to the efficiency and permanency of the Home Mission work on the Pacific shores. No doubt our field is one of great promise, and, being one of so much promise, it demands laborers adapted to its culture, and will soon justify the outlays. May God direct in devising and executing plans precisely adapted to accomplish most harmoniously and efficiently His heaven born purpose so wonderfully opening in this field for the labor and faith and patience of the

American churches.

Respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received March 29, 1853.

Oregon City, O. Ter., March 16, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. Bapt. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Brother:

Yours and Br. Whitehead's bearing date Jan. 14, together with an invoice of goods and bill of lading, were received by the last mail. I did not design to recommend Br. Read for an appointment by the Board of the Home Mission Society till he had made an application in form according to directions in the annual report. But as our field is so wide and our mails so irregular, I thought best to have the way open so that your Board might be prepared to act understandingly, should he make an application for reappointment in the Umpqua in due form and give your Board necessary intelligence respecting the field.

Br. Read has left the Umpqua and I am informed he is at Jacksonville, a flourishing mining town in Rogue River Valley. There are two or three Baptist families of his acquaintance in the vicinity of Jacksonville, and one or more others have moved there this spring. I think that he was making an effort to build a Baptist meeting house in Jacksonville in Dec. Should he succeed in the attempt (and God grant that he may), he will undoubtedly find it his duty to make that his field of labor, I trust, for coming years. The church in this place have so much confidence in Br. Read that they unanimously voted to invite him to return and take charge of the church as pastor before they knew he had left the Umpqua. But now they have little hope that he will accept their invitation. I have, in another letter, given you my views respecting Br. Read's talents and character as a minister. I presume his extreme modesty, blended with his spirit of independence, will not prompt him to ask of your Board a reappointment till I either see him

or receive some communication from him by letter. By this move of Br. Read, the whole of Umpqua Valley is left without a Baptist minister of any description. I trust, however, that a self-sustaining minister at least will find his way into the valley and gather up the scattered members into a church,³¹² if nothing more efficient can be done for that most inviting field.

SANTIAM CHURCH

I visited this church and attended their yearly meeting, commencing Friday before the second Saturday in February, which continued four days. Fifteen miles before I reached the place, my horse took fright and dashed me to the ground with such violence that, falling upon my umbrella, I had six ribs fractured, two in two places each. I however proceeded the next day and by walking my horse was able to ride to the place; preached four sermons the three following days, but it was attended with much pain in the flesh. Meeting was well attended, church seemed much revived and a few persons manifested unusual concern for their soul's salvation. Br. Stevens,³¹³ now near Marysville, was present. Br. Cheadle is pastor of the church. This church has passed through a long series of trials, but seems to be in a healthy and promising condition. I should have taken up a collection in favor of the Home Mission Society but for the fact that the church felt bound to relieve the wants of Br. Stevens. On Sabbath, after preaching, Br. Cheadle made known the wants of Br. Stevens and a collection of \$48.50 was taken up in his favor.

WEST UNION CHURCH

Last Saturday and Sabbath I spent with the West Union Church, 27 miles west of this place near the seat of justice for Washington County. Here I met Br. Weston,³¹⁴ who is preaching to the church every Sabbath. He reached Oregon last Nov. extremely poor, having left his wife above

³¹² See note 328.

³¹³ See note 284.

³¹⁴ Rev. Rodolphus Weston was pastor until 1854. He was a missionary of the Willamette Association in 1859.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:4, 148.

the Cascade Mountains with a travelling companion till he could come into the Willamette Valley and raise means to bring his family down. The West Union Church helped him to \$100, sent him back for his family, have fixed him on a claim of 320 acres of land near the place of meeting and one brother has furnished him his breadstuff and vegetables ever since. This church are engaged in building a frame meeting house, 30 feet by 40, with 13 feet posts, the present year. Last Saturday they invited Br. Weston to become their pastor and will probably pay him about \$300. The question of the expediency of their applying to the Home Mission Soc. for aid was raised. A leading brother from the other church in the Tualatin plains³¹⁵ being present, I advised that the two churches should unite and support Br. Weston, and, through that means, leave your Board to appropriate the amount which would be asked for Br. Weston to sustain a preacher at Portland. The subject seemed to strike them favorably. I hope these churches will take up and sustain Br. W. and think, should you send the right sort of a man to Portland, I can raise \$50 from these two churches the first year for his support.

After preaching on Sab., I presented in brief the claims of the Home Mission Soc. and took up a collection of \$9.00.

Respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received April 29, 1853.

Oregon City, March 17, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

I wrote you about six weeks since, giving the reasons of Br. Chandler's removal from this place as near as I could. Be assured we have no designs to keep the affairs of the school a secret. I feel that it has been a serious misfortune

³¹⁵ This was the West Tualatin (Forest Grove) Baptist church, which was organized May 22, 1852.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* I:11.

to the school that Br. Chandler left it. The two last quarters the school has been in the hands of men interested in making a living for themselves, who went into the school till they could find a more lucrative employment. The school has not numbered more than fifteen, and in its most prosperous condition eighteen scholars. The second man, a graduate of Brown's University, left the school in the middle of the term. Had he continued, he would have lost all his school. We have now put the school into the hands of Professor Shattuck,³¹⁶ the principal of the female seminary of this place, and think we shall make no more changes till we can get a man to take charge of the school and identify his interests with the prosperity of it. The school has just opened and scholars are beginning to return, but it will require at least a quarter to bring the school to 25. Business is beginning to increase in town and I have no doubt but by next winter the school will pay a man a fair living. We need just such a man as you represent Br. Post to be and, were he here, he would, in his appropriate work, do more for the general influence of the Bap. cause than any one minister can while we leave the school in other hands. I wish with all my heart I could say to Br. Post, Come out and I will pay the passage for you and family and ensure you a salary of \$1500 the first year. But I am poor in available means and cannot do anything till after the meeting of the Association in June. Then we hope to have our educational interest canvassed and it may be that we can secure a denominational pledge. I dare not hope for great things, but I will try and do what I can, by God's grace, for this as well as for every other interest connected with the advancement of the cause of Christ and humanity in Oregon. I sometimes almost wish I could be permitted to plead the cause of education and religion in Oregon before a thousand of our wealthy brethren in our old churches and, heaven approving, I would have the money to send a teacher

³¹⁶ This was E. D. Shattuck, a native of Vermont, and a graduate of the University of Vermont, who was later prominent as a judge, and as a member of the Republican party.—*Hist. of Portland*, ed. by H. W. Scott, p. 514.

to Oregon and furnish him his tools to do his work to the credit of the cause of Christ in Oregon. But duty calls me to labor on here under all the embarrassments incident to a new country, and I will try and do it as to Christ.

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Some of our brethren here want me to obtain permission to return to the States and present the claims of Oregon as a missionary field and at the same time do what I can for our school. But I have no desire on this subject aside from duty. Oregon is my home and I expect to do what little I do in the cause of Christ principally for this field. I have no curiosity to gratify and wish not to multiply labors to no effect.

E. FISHER.

Received April 29, 1853.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Apr. 1, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Herein I send you my report of labor as general itinerant under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the fourth quarter ending Mar. 31, 1853. I have labored 13 weeks this quarter; preached 19 sermons, delivered two lectures to the Sabbath school in Oregon City, attended two prayer meetings and four covenant meetings, visited religiously 49 families and individuals, visited one common school, traveled to and from my appointments 325 miles.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

General Itinerant.

N. B.—But one Sabbath school is regularly sustained through the year in all the Baptist churches in Oregon. The church at Oregon City is temporarily supplied by Elders Chandler and Johnson. When at home I supply the place part or all the day.

E. FISHER.

P. S. (Private)—The churches of the association which were opposed to benevolent operations seem more impressed with the conviction that the ministry at home must be sustained or the churches must decline and give place to other denominations who will sustain and have a devoted ministry.

* * *

E. FISHER.

Received May 9, 1853.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Apr. 1, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Br.:

Herein I send you my report of labor as exploring agent under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the 4th quarter ending March 31st, 1853. During the quarter I have visited Portland and Milwaukie, towns on the Willamette, and Santiam, French Prairie, West Union and Yam Hill churches. Traveled to and from my appointments 325 miles; labored 13 weeks during the quarter; collected \$9.00 cash by a collection taken up in the West Union Church. Paid \$4.00 for travelling expenses, 25 cents postage.

Preached 19 sermons and addressed the Sabbath school in Oregon City twice and taught the Bible class when I have been at home on the Sabbath.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., May 13th, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Br. Hill:

Yours of March 19th was received by last mail. I will now answer in brief the interrogations respecting our school, some of which I think I anticipated in one of my last. Br. Chandler holds no relation to the Oregon City College other

than any other Baptist minister in the territory, except that he is deeply interested in the cause of education and religion in Oregon. He even declined becoming a member of the Board of Trustees while he taught and since he left the school the Board has had no annual meeting.

We have no president of the school. I am president of the Board of Trustees. The school is in a feeble state of operation under the care of Mr. Shattuck, the principal of the county female seminary located at this place. He teaches the large boys and has an assistant who teaches the small boys and geography, etc. The school at present does not meet the wants of the community. But we see no way of doing better than to let it be in Mr. Shattuck's hands one quarter more. Brs. Johnson and Chandler have both requested me to go into the school again, but I cannot think of making teaching my business for life and, then, this season is a time which demands my services with the churches and the new portions of the territory to aid as far as possible in giving a healthy direction to the partially organized and the unorganized interests in our rapidly increasing population. We would be glad to make no more changes in the school till we can get a permanent teacher who will identify himself with the school. But we cannot see the school entirely run down or, what is worse, let it slide out of our hands into others, which may be the case unless we keep a good man teacher in the school. We cannot, as a Board, pledge a certain definite salary to a teacher. We do not know how to do this while a very few men in the denomination will assume responsibilities. Brs. Johnson, Chandler and myself will have to meet most of the responsibilities, should the effort prove a failure, and we are all poor and have sacrificed hundreds of dollars each to keep the school alive. We however intend to lay the whole business of the school before the friends of education next month at the annual meeting of the Association and see what we can do by way of bringing the school more immediately under the control of the denomination. We now want to commit the

denomination more directly to the cause of the school. More than two-thirds of the funds which have been raised for the school have been raised out of the denomination. The school must languish, or its whole prosperity must rest on a very few men of energy, till the Baptists of Oregon become committed to the cause. We are amply able to carry on the work, if we can call out the surplus means, but we are a new people and not much accustomed to systematic work and systematic responsibility. Our town has received a new impulse in business this spring and will probably increase in numbers and in wealth gradually from this time. We shall have four or five wholesale houses in the place in four or five weeks and about fifteen retail drygoods stores, and all the relative branches of business are fast moving forward, such as steamboat building, foundries, tanners', smiths', carpenters', millers', bakers', butchers', watch makers', lawyers', clerks', physicians', etc. I wish you would still have the goodness to look out for a teacher. I have no doubt but I could support my family by the school the first year, should the Lord direct my labor to that employment, and now is the time for us to commence, with the present permanent increase of population in our towns.

I have been travelling through the churches the last five weeks and shall write you on the subject of the state of the churches by the next mail.

Very respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received June 22, 1853.

Oregon City, O. Ter., June 13th, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., N. York.

Dear Br.:

Yours of March 19th was received, as you will learn before the receipt of this; also yours bearing date April 2d, and I now haste to answer definitely some enquiries in that, before giving you an outline of my labor the past six or eight

weeks, hoping however to have them both ready before the departure of the next mail. While I cherish a high regard for the piety and talents of Br. Chandler, as your agent I will state to you confidentially that I regard Brother Chandler's removal from the school an unfortunate one both for himself as a public man and for the school. Yet there is an apology. Brs. Johnson and Chandler have not always had the best understanding. Brother Johnson, from the earliest public labors of Br. Chandler, did not regard him as the man either for the care of the church or the school. Although Br. Johnson was passive and too wise to interfere, yet Chandler soon found him rather cool and reserved. Br. Chandler had not long been in the place before he expressed a desire to settle permanently, if he continued in the church and in connection with the school after the first year. This doctrine did not meet with a very cordial reception with Br. Johnson. I assured Br. C. that it was desirable that our situations be made as permanent as the nature of the case would admit; yet permanency could only be obtained by securing the confidence of our employers, whether we were employed yearly or during life. No man laboring for the honour of the cause of Christ would wish to become burdensome to his friends and the public mind would always judge of the usefulness of a man's labors. In the end Br. Chandler became convinced that he could not live happily as the pastor of the church and president of the school . . . he also learned that he could not receive such an appropriation from your Board as would sustain his family in town, and I think he became too precipitate in selecting him a home. I have done what I could, without too much interference, to induce him to go to Marysville and visit that church, if he must leave Oregon City for a claim. But he saw differently. The public mind is in a great measure ignorant of the causes that operated on Br. Chandler's mind to induce him to the removal. I have no doubt from all I hear that the public mind regards Br. Chandler as erring in judgment in leaving the school and Oregon City. In confidence, I

think Br. Chandler never intended to take upon himself all the labor of teaching the small scholars, and he found the school would not sustain two teachers. Br. Chandler's present position is about fourteen miles south of Oregon City in a settlement where most of the community cannot thrive in business as the farming community will generally in a prairie country. He cannot leave his claim now for more than three years, without sacrificing almost all he has in this world, and he feels strongly disposed to labor near home and raise up a religious community around him. He means to be a faithful minister of Christ, labors hard with his hands through the week, preaches every Sabbath, and, what is better, I think he is growing in some of the essential Christian graces. But I deeply regret that his influence must be shut up in a corner for the present. I have two or three times asked him if he would not receive an appointment at Salem, or at this place, spend three or four days each week in town as pastor and do his studying at home, but he seems at present not inclined to receive any appointment from the Board, unless he can receive an amount that, in his estimation, is about equivalent to the value of his labor. I have now stated the case as nearly as I can, without going into details, and trust your Board will not use this communication either to the detriment of Br. Chandler or Br. Johnson. They are both valuable, tried Baptist ministers. Br. Chandler would succeed well at Salem or Oregon City, with the above named exception, and also in Marysville, that place being again suddenly vacated by the removal of Br. Stevens to the Umpqua Valley. By this removal that young church is left in a bad condition in a critical period of their history. But you must send an efficient, engaging preacher to Portland, if you can find the man. He should be a man of capacity, to meet the emergencies of building up a church in a rising city. Br. Read, as you have learned before this, was invited last fall to take the pastoral care of this church (Oregon City). He is now in the place and will probably give the church

his answer this week, which will be to decline the invitation. He has spent the winter in Rogue River Valley near Jacksonville, the principal mining town on the waters of that river; has collected a small church³¹⁷ of twelve members, five of whom are efficient working brethren of the right stamp. That church have invited him to become their pastor. They propose to pay him \$250 and hope to add \$50 more during the year. They also propose to build a house of worship in the town the present year, if he will settle with them. The Methodist church sustained two ministers in that valley last fall and winter, but have left the field and, should Br. Read leave, that valley with about 10,000 souls would be without a gospel minister of any kind. I dare not advise Br. Read to leave that field, although he would be acceptable here. He endured great privations last winter for Christ's sake, paying his board while flour was \$1.50 per pound and fresh beef fifty cents. Sold his horse to pay his board. He needs immediate aid from your Board, although I am unprepared to say how much till I visit the place and see for myself. He is pious, modest, studious and unassuming and wishes to know nothing else among the people but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He wants no land claim, if he can live as a minister and avoid it and be honest. He tells me the church proposed to ask the Board to appropriate \$500 to his support, but he persuaded them to ask for but \$400. Should this little church build the coming year, probably that sum should be appropriated to him. \$700 is a small salary for a man in that place and I think in a very few years the church will be able to sustain their own minister entirely.

Respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

N. B.—The church at Marysville needs immediate attention. They are able to support a minister, if they fully

³¹⁷ This was the Table Rock (Jacksonville) Baptist Church, organized May 28, 1853.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.* 1:12.

understood the value of the ministry. But they are young members, mostly from the western states. Yet they have paid Br. Stevens during the last nine months. One brother told me two months ago that he had paid him in money and otherwise \$209 and he still expected to help him. The same brother told me that he had paid the past year over \$500 for building their meeting house and supporting the ministry. Another brother told me he had paid Br. Stevens \$140 since last October.

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received July 30, 1853.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., June 14, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., N. Y.

Dear Br.:

I shall now only have time to communicate the state of things in connection with my labors in Tualatin Plains the past month. I attended the yearly meetings of the West Tualatin Church on Friday, Saturday and Sabbath, the 22, 23d and 24th of April. The weather was very rainy on Friday and but four persons were in attendance. On Saturday and Sabbath our congregation became unusually large, although the weather continued wet and cool, and the house being an open log school house (a thing noways uncommon in Oregon), the congregation were in a very unfavorable condition to be benefited by the gospel; yet the meeting became interesting and, after the public service closed, Christians of various denominations expressed a regret that the meetings had not been continued through the week. So much solicitude was manifested on the part of professors of religion that Br. Weston and myself consented to visit the church in four weeks and labor three days with that people.

On the second Friday, Saturday and Sabbath in May the yearly meeting of the West Union church, ten miles east from the West Tualatin Church, in another [part] of the Tualatin Plains, was held. Br. Weston, their pastor, and

myself were the only ministers present till the evening of the last day. Although a political meeting was held in the neighborhood on Saturday and the political excitement preceding the general election was waxing warm,³¹⁸ our meetings were solemn. The brethren began to confess their wanderings and give tokens of true penitence for past remissness in duty. On Sabbath some of the impenitent manifested unusual interest in the preached word and their hearts appeared softened. The meeting closed without any evidence that any souls were savingly converted. On Friday before the fourth Sabbath in May a meeting was commenced with the West Tualatin Church and the first day had not passed before we began to witness tokens of Divine favor with the brethren who were convened from both the aforementioned churches, as well as with the brethren from other churches. Sinners manifested solicitude for the salvation of their souls and on Sabbath a young man and his wife asked for baptism. The wife dated her conversion from the time of the meeting two weeks previous in West Union Church, she and her husband having attended that meeting. At three o'clock the congregation repaired to one of the branches of Tualatin³¹⁹ River, in which I had the happiness of burying these candidates in the watery grave and raising them up, I trust, to walk in newness of life. The scene was solemn. Before closing the public exercises of the day the question was propounded to the church and congregation, Will you have this meeting continued? Almost the whole congregation, consisting of about 130, rose to their feet as an expression of their wish that the meeting should be continued. The meeting was continued with increasing interest through the week; by Saturday the congregation had increased to nearly 200. During the prayer meeting before preaching a brother, who had left the church six years before and joined the sect generally known as the Campbellites,

318 This was the campaign preceding the general state election of 1853.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:309. W. C. Woodward, *Political Parties in Oregon*, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.*, XII:55.

319 This branch was probably Gale's Creek, which rises west of Forest Grove.

rose and confessed his wanderings with deep emotions and said he had no other home but in the Baptist church, and closed by saying, "I now knock for admittance at the door of the church, if you can receive me." He was followed by his wife and three others who had been in similar condition. Two others came forward with letters, all of whom were received into fellowship with the church. An opportunity was then given for any who wished to unite with the church by baptism; three young converts came forward and related what God had done for their souls and were likewise received for baptism; all young men. The next Monday two of these young men were baptized by Br. Weston. The other will join the West Union Church very soon. There were several other cases of hopeful conversion and the meeting closed at the end of eleven days, apparently with as much interest in the minds of the impenitent as at any period of the meeting. The labors were performed mostly by Br. Weston and myself, in connection with Elder Porter,³²⁰ the pastor of the church, and the lay brethren present. A meeting was appointed for Br. Weston to preach the next Saturday and Sabbath, at which time probably others will go forward in the ordinance of baptism. The subjects of our discussions were mostly such as the following: The Nature and Consequence of Sin, The Nature of Penitence, The Exclusive Claims of the Gospel, The Office of Christ as the Atoning Sacrifice and Mediator, In What the New Birth Consists and In What the Work of the Disciples of Christ Consists. The church will probably make arrangements to secure the labors of Br. Weston half the time from this time and the two above-named churches will make arrangements to pay him about \$600 salary and liberate him from his blacksmith shop entirely. This church are making arrangements to build a good, neat house of

³²⁰ Rev. William Porter came to Oregon from Ohio in 1847 and was for a time pastor of the West Union Church. He helped organize the West Tualatin Church, near which he had a donation land claim, and was its pastor for some years. He died in 1872.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:3, 11, 192.

worship at Forest Grove,³²¹ a little village springing up in connection with a school designed to be the literary organ of the Congregational churches in Oregon. On the whole, our Zion seems to have an onward tendency in Oregon, notwithstanding the many opposing barriers the enemy raises in our way. Pray for us that our faith may increase more and more and that we may abound more and more in every gospel labor.

Yours affectionately,

EZRA FISHER,
Exploring Agent.

Received Aug. 9, 1853.

Marysville, Ore. Ter., June 27th, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Br. Hill:

The meetings of the Willamette Baptist Association closed yesterday. All the churches except two were represented. One of that number was the LaCreole Church, some of whose delegates last year took the lead in opposing benevolent operations. All the deliberations were conducted with the utmost harmony and resolutions were passed in favor of the American Baptist Publication Society, the A. B. H. Mission Soc., Sunday schools, Oregon City College and religious periodicals. Subscribers were obtained for the latter and books sold by the agents of the American Baptist Publication Society. The subject of the importance of the Baptists in Oregon and Washington territories sustaining a religious periodical at an early period was discussed and a committee was appointed to correspond with printers and editors on this subject and report at the next anniversary.³²² Two churches were received into the body, one of which is the Table Rock Church located at Table Rock or Jackson-

³²¹ The town grew up on the claim of Rev. Harvey Clark, who gave the town-site for the benefit of the college. Tualatin Academy was incorporated in 1849, and Pacific University a few years later.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:32-35.

³²² This agitation resulted in 1856 in "The Religious Expositor," which suspended after twenty-six issues.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:24.

ville, in Rogue River Valley, the other on the forks of the Santiam River.³²³ Two other churches are organized, which will unite with the Association next year.

The preaching through the sittings was instructing and impressive, the congregations good and seriously attentive. The exercises will not fail to make a good impression on the public mind. We have now arrived at the long prayed for period when this body may pass beyond a blighting anti-missionary influence.

At the close of the morning services the claims of the Home Mission Society were presented for about five minutes and a collection of forty dollars and twelve and a half cents (\$40.12½) was taken up in favor of that Society and this morning Sister Margaret Robinson gave ten dollars for that object. The churches are small, but are becoming convinced that the ministry should abide in their calling and that it is the privilege of the churches to sustain their spiritual servants, and are fast coming up with the work.

The churches of the Association have received, the past year, 14 by baptism, 38 by letter and relation. Total number is 245, number of churches 13, making in all 15 churches nominally missionary.

Yours sincerely

EZRA FISHER.

Received Aug. 30, 1853.

Marysville, O. Ter., June the 27, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A .B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Br. Hill:

Herein I send you my report of labor as General Itinerant under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the first (1st) quarter ending June the 30th, 1853.

I have labored thirteen weeks in the quarter. Preached twenty-eight sermons, attended twenty-six (26) prayer meet-

³²³ This was the Providence Baptist Church, organized April 9, 1853.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, 1:12.

ings, eleven covenant meetings (11), visited religiously sixty-two families and other individuals, two common schools, baptized two (2) persons, traveled to and from my appointments five hundred and forty-five miles (545); ten have been received by letter and one by experience and eight have been hopefully converted.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

General Itinerant.

Marysville, O. Ter., June the 27, 1853.

To the Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br. Hill:

Herein I send you my report of labor as exploring and collecting agent under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the first quarter ending June 30th, 1853.

I have visited as towns Portland, Oregon City, Marysville and Albany and Shilo, Lebanon, West Union, West Tualatin and Marysville churches. Have travelled to and from my appointments five hundred and forty-five (545) miles. Have labored thirteen (13) weeks. Have collected fifty dollars and twelve and a half cents (\$50.12½). Have paid one dollar and twelve and a half cents (\$1.12½) for traveling expenses and twenty-five cents for postage (25)—\$1.37½. Delivered twenty-eight sermons (28). Baptized two (2) persons. Attended a meeting of eleven days (11) with the West Tualatin Church in which my labors were almost incessant.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

N. B.—Received by collection at the Marysville Association \$40.12½. Mrs. Margaret Robinson's donation, \$10.00.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., Aug. 10th, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., N. Y.

Dear Br. Hill:

I have just returned from a seven weeks' tour to our Association and thence to Umpqua and Rogue River valleys. I found yours of May 4th and 28th on my return. Rejoice to learn that Br. Post is finally appointed by your Board to the charge of our school, and prayerfully hope nothing but God's special providences will prevent his immediately taking the steamer for Oregon.

Yesterday I attended the quarterly examination of our school, found that there had been over forty students during the quarter and that the average attendance was something over thirty. We have employed the same teacher for next quarter, hoping that Br. Post will arrive soon enough to commence the winter term.

I shall leave for Washington Ter., especially that part bordering upon Puget Sound, in a few days. The tour will occupy six or eight weeks. I regret that I could not have delayed this tour till next summer as Sept. is the month in which the yearly meetings of the churches are mostly appointed, except those that are deferred till spring. My presence would contribute somewhat to the furtherance of the cause of Christ as it relates to the interests of Home Missions, our school, and the revival of religion in the churches, but God is not limited and I withheld my name from attending those meetings in reference to the above-named tour, knowing that our rainy seasons commence sometime in October and a delay from that tour till after these meetings would throw me in heavy rains and open boats in a new and sparsely settled country, with nothing but natural roads and subject to the necessity of camping out some of the nights. My personal attention is much needed in this vicinity with the churches to raise some funds for the school building while the hearts of the brethren are opened by the spirit of the Most High to Christian enterprise. But I can

only do what I can and leave the event with Him who sympathizes with all our desires to see His cause advanced in the midst of error, where all our organizations are new and feeble. Yet I often, nay daily, cry to Him for more laborers who can give themselves to the ministry of the Word, in the most liberal sense, to every good work. In this I must not fail to request the Board to appoint Rev. Jas. S. Read their missionary to Table Rock Church and town, more generally known by the name of Jacksonville, the seat of justice for [Jackson] County, lying in Rogue River Valley. This valley contains about the amount of six townships of farming prairie land, about half of which is exceedingly rich and fertile; the remainder is comparatively unfit for cultivation. Portions of the hill and mountain sides afford good grazing six or eight months in the year, while other portions are sterile, except that here and there a solitary, long-leaved pine towers above a scattered growth of chaparral and manzanita, sure index of desert land. But through all these mountains are deposited by the Master hand rich treasures of gold, and thousands of our countrymen are here employed in digging and washing it from the otherwise almost valueless earth. In this place Br. Read found a number of valuable brethren last Oct. or Nov., who solicited his sojourn with them through the winter. In May he organized a church of twelve, including himself. The members of the church, without exception, are among the most influential citizens in the county and seem to understand remarkably well for a new settlement the duties and responsibilities of a church. At present there is no other minister of any order in the county. Br. Read's influence with the citizens and miners is decidedly good. The church are about building a meetinghouse in Table Rock or Jacksonville, as it is called this season. Have agreed to raise \$250 for Br. Read's support and say they intend to make it \$300. Br. Clinton says he will give him his board and washing and furnish him his horse to ride for the year for his part. The church evinces a true mis-

sionary spirit. Were the church supplied with a house of worship and their own houses and barns built, as is the case with churches in older countries, they say they could support their own minister. I think Br. Read needs \$700 salary in order to sustain him in the place. Provisions and clothing are at least 50 per cent higher than at Oregon City.

I cannot predict what will be the final result of the mining business but it will pay large wages to the laborer for years to come. I think it would be a judicious arrangement to appropriate \$300 or \$400 to Br. Read's support for one year in Table Rock and vicinity. Our new counties are more fluctuating than older, yet there is an appearance of stability sufficient to warrant the appropriation. The principal drawbacks to the hope of usefulness will be the instability of the mining part of the population. Yet the agricultural interests, and even manufacturing interests, will be stable, should the mines fail.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Sept. 12, 1853.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., Aug. 22, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., N. Y.

Dear Brother:

I wrote you by the last mail describing as nearly as I could the geographical position and relative importance of Rogue River Valley as a missionary field. In that letter I recommended the appointment of Br. James S. Read as a missionary for Jacksonville (Table Rock) and vicinity. In this I wish to give you a brief definite view of the Umpqua Valley. The rim of this basin is formed by the Cascade Mountains on the east, the Umpqua on the south, the Coast Range on the west and the Calapooia Mountains on the north. The distance from the south base of the Calapooia Mts. to the north base of the Umpqua Mts. varies from sixty to eighty or eighty-five miles, and from east to west from

twenty to thirty or thirty-five miles. This basin is little else than a concatenation of hills and low mountains interspersed in every direction with valleys varying in breadth from a few yards to three or four miles and in length from two or three miles to one hundred and thirty, by the meanderings of the streams. The valleys are almost uniformly prairie, except occasionally a grove immediately skirting the margin of the streams, and are uniformly rich and well adapted to every branch of agricultural pursuits. Every twenty acres, under a good state of cultivation, would produce enough to support any ordinary family. The hills are generally covered with a fine growth of nutritious grasses and studded with groves of branched oaks resembling in appearance large orchards of old apple trees more than a forest of straight, upright trees. These are interspersed with an occasional long-leafed pine, while here and there in the defiles of the high hills and along the water courses are found groves of excellent fir well adapted to fencing and building purposes. The valleys are generally too small to render all the purposes of religious society convenient, while each family claims from 320 to 640 acres of land. Consequently the minister must travel great distances and preach to small congregations embracing a great variety of religious views. But the large land claims will soon become divided and subdivided as lands become scarce and the prices high. This valley will have its own ports and its commerce will soon become as distinct from the Willamette as Connecticut is from Massachusetts. A few miles from the mouth of the Umpqua, on the tide water, a small commercial town has sprung into existence by the name of Scottsburg, which is approached from the main valley by a pack trail. Twenty miles south of the mouth of the Umpqua is an entrance into a bay called Cowes Bay (pronounced Coos Bay³²⁴) which extends into the interior about 30 miles. At the head of this

³²⁴ The name now spelled Coos is of Indian origin, and was the name of a tribe and of the Bay. It was variously spelled Cowis, Cowes, Kowes and Coose.—F. V. Holman, *Hist. of the Counties of Oregon*, in *Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.*, XI:39.

bay a town is soon to be laid off³²⁵ and a wagon road constructed to the southern part of the Umpqua Valley so as to intersect the road leading from the Willamette Valley to the mining district. Around the several arms of the bay it is said there is a large tract of rich, level, timbered land, sufficient to form a small county. Umpqua Valley now contains 3000 souls and about twelve or fifteen Baptist members, mostly from Missouri and Ohio. Among this number is Elder Thomas Stevens,³²⁶ of Welch origin, who formerly preached in or near Utica, N. Y., and, for the last fifteen years, near Sandusky City, Ohio. He says he is personally acquainted with W. R. Williams, D. D.,³²⁷ of your city. I spent two Sabbaths in the Umpqua Valley on my tour to Rogue River. On my return, I assisted Brother Stevens in constituting a small church at the mouth of Deer Creek.³²⁸ The point is one of as much apparent importance as any in the valley and it is spoken of as the most probable place for the permanent county seat. A large flouring mill is just erected at the place and there are two small stores and a post office at the place. Br. Stevens retains many of the Welch peculiarities, especially in his preaching—full of figures, imagination lively and never fails to interest his hearers. Seems not over prudent in the control of his tongue; yet if he could live in the midst of an affectionate church which could appreciate the importance of a living ministry, I think he would be a rich acquisition to the cause of Christ. I have my difficulties in recommending him for an appointment, yet my prevailing opinion is that he should be appointed to preach to the church at the mouth of Deer Creek, with liberty to fix his outstations in Umpqua Valley according to his own judgment, with a salary of \$300 or \$400, if he apply. I have named this sum because he has a good

325 The Coos Bay Company was formed in May, 1853, and the first settlement in the Coos Bay country was made that summer. The town referred to as about to be laid out was Empire City. Marshfield was laid off later.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:331, 332.

326 See note 284.

327 See note 236.

328 This was ten miles east of Roseburg. It was organized July 24, 1853, in the house of William Perry.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:13.

claim, with a few cows and a team of oxen, within one mile of the place where the village will be built; this his family and a brother can manage without materially engrossing his care or time, so that that sum will be as much for him as \$600 will be for Br. Read at Jacksonville. . . .

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—The Methodists have two ministers in Umpqua. Besides these there is no minister of any order except Br. Stevens. I trust one of the six or eight Baptist ministers now on their way overland for Oregon³³⁰ will find a home in Umpqua Valley and help in sowing the seed and reaping the harvest in promising fields. The climate in this valley is mild and remarkably salubrious.

Received Oct. 6, 1853.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., Aug. 23d, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., N. Y.

Dear Brother:

In this I design to write you a general letter touching our affairs in Oregon. I will begin with the state of things in Oregon City. Our city or rather town has undergone a great change in its business appearance during the last four months. We have now four wholesale stores and fourteen retail drygoods stores, and probably four times the amount of goods are sold in a month as in the same month last year. We have now a large foundry in operation, where mill irons and all the castings for our river steamboats may be made. On the opposite side of the river a permanent breakwater is being constructed for the double purpose of rendering available the water power and putting it in requisition, and letting the boats from the upper trade down to receive the merchandise at the foot of the falls. Two steamboats are now building in our city and one just above the falls, in a

³³⁰ Among these Baptist ministers were Revs. C. C. Riley, J. Bond, W. M. Davis, G. W. Bond, D. Hubbard, R. D. Gray, J. D. South and W. P. Koger.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, 1:100-07, 10, 14.

village, half a mile above the place, called Canema, in which place there are two or three drygoods stores, an extensive plough factory and other mechanic shops. Our population are all the while changing, yet the tendency is toward a permanent increase. Several large business houses have been built this season; three or four more are now on the way and will be completed in five or six weeks, and it is said that the number does not meet the demand. It appears to me that, under these circumstances, the demand for a good professional teacher in our school is imperious. In the department of teaching, and, as a member of our feeble church, acting as superintendent of our Sunday school, such a man's influence will no doubt be felt in Oregon more than the labors of any pastor of any of our churches. I know not how to cherish the thought that Br. Post must stop at San Francisco for want of means to bring his family from that to this place. I know not how cheaply Br. Thomas carries his goods to San Francisco, but I do know that it costs nearly half as much to ship them from that place to Oregon as it does to ship from N. Y. to Oregon. Br. Post, in my estimation, had better have shipped himself and family on board the clipper Hurricane for Oregon than to leave half his family in N. Y., take the other half and his furniture to San Francisco and a few cases of books to Oregon. To me this does not look quite enough like burning the ship. However, I will do what I can in the case. But the circumstances are rather embarrassing. We feel inclined to the opinion that it will operate against the interests of the school in our immediate community, if we appeal to the public liberality to pay his passage and that of his family from San Francisco just at the time when their benevolence is highly taxed every year to meet the sufferings of the overland immigration by sending them provisions above the Cascade Mountains and aiding the poor after their arrival in the valley. If we apply to the churches, they are scattered over a country almost half as large as the state of N. Y. I think, however, an appeal to the churches would meet with a

tolerably cordial response. But this I must make, if it is done this year. Then your Board are growing impatient for me to visit Pugets Sound and, should I delay this journey five or six weeks, the rainy season, high waters, difficult travelling and the embarrassments attendant to an exploring agent's business in the winter, would be the result. By advising with the brethren, they say, Delay your tour to the Sound till this object is secured. And this is the course I should regard Providence marking out for me but for the fact that your Board are looking to the Sound with a deep interest and I am unwilling to disappoint them. I shall endeavor to see the agent of the Howland and Aspenwall Company³³¹ and do what I can for Br. Post in a few days, attend the yearly meeting of the Oregon City Church commencing Friday before the first Sabbath in Sept., and leave for the Sound just as soon as this meeting closes, take the first part of the rainy season into the tour and leave the event with Him who does all things well.

I wish to state that Marion County, with Salem for its shire, which is the capital of the Territory, has no Baptist minister within its bounds. In this county are three missionary and two anti-missionary Baptist churches. The three missionary churches are about twelve miles from Salem. The three churches are nearly able to sustain one minister. Now I think your Board would do well to appoint a minister for Salem and vicinity. He will be sure to be taken up in part by these churches and receive at least half his support from them before he has been three months in Oregon, if he is a man in any degree adapted to the work in Salem. These churches may despair of finding an immigrant preacher to settle on the public lands and preach to them, as the public lands are all taken up in their vicinity. These churches, at least two of them, are feeling the importance of an efficient ministry given to the work. I know of no Baptist member in Salem, yet other denominations, with

³³¹ The Howland and Aspenwall Company operated steamships from New York to the Isthmus of Panama.—G. H. Himes.

little strength in the country, are laboring to build up an interest here. Salem is growing with the rapidity of western towns on navigable waters.

Albany, also, about 25 miles above Salem, is growing fast. In this town we have a feeble church. Albany is the county seat for Lynn County.³³² The church in this place has only occasional preaching. I think a good opening for a minister will be made in this place before next spring.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Oct. 6, 1853.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., Sept. 6th, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Brother:

I received yours of July 5th, principally in reference to Br. Post's outfit, by the last mail. I had just written you that I should be on my way to the Sound immediately upon the close of the yearly meeting at this place, but the tenor of your last letter inclined me to delay the tour to the Sound four or five weeks, attend the yearly meetings of two or three churches in the valley and perform the double service of laboring in these meetings and raising what I can to aid Brother Post in his passage from San Francisco to this place. At the close of the forenoon service in the Baptist meeting-house last Lord's day, the subject of Brother Post's wants was presented, and we took up a collection of \$25.35, which we shall apply to that object and, as you have now an educational department to the Home Mission Society, if it is consistent with your rules, you will credit this amount and charge it to Brother Post as part of his fare from San Francisco to Oregon City. I think we shall be able to raise \$100 or \$150 more without materially interfering with my official duties, if these are not a part of them, and reach the Sound so as to visit most of the important settlements in Wash-

³³² Linn County was organized in 1847.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:715.

ington Territory and return by the middle of December, which will give me five or six weeks of exposure to the heavy rains of the winter, unless it should be unusually mild. But the cause of our blessed Lord demands this service and I shall leave the event with Him and explore that territory as soon as I have performed the other service. To human probability, a failure of securing Brother Post to this station would prove a calamity too great for us to sustain in Oregon, although our brethren do not justly appreciate the importance of this enterprise upon the future interests of the denomination on the Pacific Coast.

Our yearly meeting with the Oregon City church has just closed. The meetings were well attended, even to a crowded house on the Sabbath; at all the services the congregations were attentive and solemn, even to weeping, in numbers of instances; yet we have learned of no cases of conversion. Brother Johnson preached in the morning; Brother Chandler at 3 P. M., and I in the evening.

The Sabbath before, I preached and baptized a young brother who has been led to submit to the Messiah's reign within the last three months. The Sabbath school and Bible class in this church are still quite interesting, although we are destitute of teachers. Mrs. Fisher is the only permanent teacher in the female classes. Whenever I am at home, I superintend the school and teach the male Bible class. Since Brother Chandler closed his labors with the church, Brother Johnson is our supply, but his health is so poor that he can perform no pastoral labors.

I will here introduce another subject. The long expected Coloma has arrived at last, having been out somewhat over eight months. Our goods all arrived in good order except such as were damaged by the action of the salsoda as it contracted moisture, dissolved and ran promiscuously through the goods. Of the eight pounds of the salsoda put up, we found about one-fourth of a pound in the paper. The rest had been converted into a fluid and stood in crystalization

on the old books, my hat, frock coat, flannel and both the bolts of cotton sheeting. About half the hat was as rotten as brown paper. The back and part of one sleeve of the coat were saturated with salsoda, the colour changed to a pale snuff and the texture destroyed; also a place about the size of the palm of my hand in each fold of the coat. The coat was literally ruined. The soda saturated through the folds of about half of the red flannel, so as to entirely ruin about one-third of the bolt, or six yards. We shall lose about one-third of both bolts of sheeting, one bleached and one unbleached. I have estimated the damage as follows:

| | |
|---|---------|
| 1 hat, dead loss, \$2.00..... | \$ 2.00 |
| 1 frock coat, damaged, \$12.00..... | 12.00 |
| 1 bolt of bleached cotton, damaged, \$1.29..... | 1.29 |
| 1 do unbleached do, do, \$1.23..... | 1.23 |
| 8 pounds of salsoda, dead loss, \$0.33..... | .33 |
| 6 yards flannel, @ \$0.25 per yard, \$1.50..... | 1.50 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total | \$18.35 |

I am ignorant of the rules regulating insurance offices. But this one thing I will say, that I should never have thought of packing old books with leather covers around a bundle of salsoda and another of saleratus, wrapped in paper, and then packed on the top of or underneath a good coat, a hat, a piece of flannel and cotton goods, for a voyage of twenty thousand miles. It seems that the box was stowed away in the ship bottom side up, so that all the liquid salsoda as it contracted moisture settled into the above named goods. I have no doubt the vessel was loaded too deep for so long a voyage, but I have no expectation that the insurance company will pay for damages occurring under such circumstances. I have stated the facts as nearly as I can as they appear to me and leave the matter for you to adjust as nearly right as the case may appear in your judgment. I will say, however, that I had rather pay for the freight of good, clean, dry, white pine shavings than for old school books, for in the nature of the case one is worth just as

much as the other. The shavings will contract little moisture; the books with leather bindings will always mold in the hold of a ship. I have learned a profitable lesson in this matter (yet it is rather an expensive one for somebody), that, should I in coming time order saleratus and salsoda, I shall order them put up in tight vessels and packed apart from valuable clothing.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Oct. 29, 1853.

Oregon City, Oct. 1st, 1853.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Brother:

Herein I send my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as their exploring agent for Oregon Ter. for the 2nd. quarter, ending Sept. 30th, 1853.

During the quarter I visited Umpqua and Rogue River valleys, and the towns of Jacksonville, or Table Rock, in Rogue River Valley; Winchester, on the Umpqua River, Marysville, county seat of Benton County, Albany, county seat of Lynn County; Portland, Washington County, Marysville, Santiam, Lebanon, French Prairie and Oregon City churches. Labored 13 weeks during the quarter. Paid \$12.75 for travelling expenses and twenty-four cents for postage. Delivered twenty-seven sermons and fifteen addresses, mostly in the yearly meetings. Baptized one person, a young man, at Oregon City, and four in the Santiam church. Have labored three weeks in the yearly meetings with the Lebanon, Santiam and French Prairie churches.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER, Exp. Agt.

N. B.—If time permits, I intend to give you a brief view of the influence of the yearly meetings on the churches.

Oregon City, Oct. 1st, 1853.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Brother:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as general itinerant for the 2nd quarter ending Sept. 30th, 1853. I have labored 13 weeks in the quarter; preached 27 sermons and delivered 15 addresses; attended six church and covenant meetings; eight prayer meetings and visited religiously 98 families and other persons; baptized five persons; assisted in the organization of one church on Deer Creek in the Umpqua Valley; traveled to and from my appointments 849 miles. In connection with the labors of other brethren in the ministry where I labored in yearly meeting, which will not be reported to your Board, eight persons have been received by letter, three by experience, 12 by baptism and two more were received as candidates for baptism,³³³ who will soon be baptized by the pastor, Rev. Geo. C. Chandler. In connection with the labors of other brethren where I have labored, there have been eleven cases of hopeful conversion. One young man of promise is preparing for the ministry within the Willamette Baptist Association. Three Sabbath schools are sustained in the churches in the Willamette Valley and Br. Chandler sustains one at one of his outposts.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

General Itinerant.

Received Nov. 29, 1853.

Oregon City, Oregon, Oct. 3rd, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

I wish to give you a birdseye view of things as they are connected with the Baptist cause in Oregon. And first, I

³³³ One of these two candidates was a Mr. Jackson.—Mss. Records of the Oregon City Church. His initials and the other's name are not given in the records.

will give you a brief history of the yearly meetings of the past summer and autumn, or rather of the season now passing, as they have occurred, a part of which you have reported in your last associational minutes. The darkness which has hung over our feeble churches for the past four years has been truly alarming, not on account of any serious outbreaks among the members, neither on account of any sinful strife and rending divisions occasioned by agitation of naughty doctrinal debates. But the four years may properly be denominated the years of the reign of gold. Worldly mindedness seemed to hold imperious claim upon the throne of the affections. But early last spring our brethren in the ministry began to manifest something like a fresh anointing from the horn of salvation, and almost everywhere it became apparent that the ear could be charmed by the simple story of a Saviour's love. In May, meetings were held with the West Tualatin and West Union churches, during which the one more than doubled its members and the last received four by baptism. The sessions of the Association passed off harmoniously, happily. I then visited Umpqua and Rogue River valleys. I found affairs, on the whole, apparently under the smiles of the great Head of the Church.

Our yearly meetings were now about to be renewed and my mind was distressingly divided between the labors assigned me by your Board to proceed to Puget Sound and explore that important field, hitherto untried by Baptist ministers, and what I held as the no less important duty of laboring with the churches (dearly beloved by me) in the Willamette Valley in their yearly meetings then just coming on. I often went to the throne of grace for direction. Your letter urging the importance of our making immediate efforts to help Br. J. D. Post from California to this place aided me in deciding the path of duty. Yet I found our brethren all of opinion that my duty was to stay and labor in these meetings and at the same time, as I chanced to fall in with a brother, do something if possible for Br. Post.

Our meeting at Oregon City was of but three days' continuance, with favorable indications, but has not as yet resulted in any hopeful cases of conversion. The yearly meeting with the Shilo church, 11 miles south of Salem, continued six days and resulted in five or six hopeful cases of conversion. Five were added to the church by baptism³³⁴ and two or three by experience. Br. J. G. Berkley³³⁵ was the only ordained minister present, but he was assisted by faithful young brethren of the church. The yearly meeting with the Lebanon church followed on the 2nd Saturday of September, which continued till Monday evening. One was received by letter; the church was revived; two backsliders were professedly reclaimed and two or three were inquiring what they must do, when the meeting closed. The engagements of the ministers present were such that we were obliged to close the meetings at the very period when it was becoming increasingly interesting. From Lebanon church I proceeded to the Santiam church as fast as my business would permit, traveling through an unusually heavy rain two days. The meeting had been in progress for six days, conducted by Elder Chandler and assisted by Elder Sperry. The evening of my arrival an interesting young man professed a hope in Christ, some few backsliders had returned to their first love and the church was truly revived. The interest of the meetings daily increased till on Sabbath Br. Chandler baptized three interesting young persons, among whom was a young married lady from Holland who could speak but broken English. She had been a member of the Presbyterian church. She expressed such strong confidence in God and such endearing attachment to her Bible as sent a sensation of sympathy through the congregation, as she exclaimed in broken accents, yet with an eloquence which seemed more than earthly, "My dear blessed Bible, that precious book, I do love to read it every day; it is not like your Bible," re-

³³⁴ One of those baptized was Rev. Andrew J. Hunsaker, since then grown to be very prominent in the Baptist work of the state.

³³⁵ This was Rev. Jesse G. Berkley, 1796-1872. He came to Oregon from Missouri in 1852.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, 1:97.

ferring to the English translation. All the services of Sabbath were deeply solemn. On Monday evening nine persons, mostly children of the members of the church, found peace in believing. On Wednesday following, Br. Sperry and I baptized nine persons in the waters of the Calapooia, among whom was a Presbyterian brother and his wife. I was obliged to leave that evening, yet numbers were still enquiring where they might find ease for their troubled conscience. The meetings of the French Prairie church followed on the next Friday. This was a meeting of unusual interest. Several were found disposed to seek a forgiveness of their sins. The church was revived, although we have no cases of conversion to record.

At the urgent request of some of the leading members of the Santiam church, I consented to spend the 2nd Saturday and Sabbath with Br. Chandler on the south side of the south fork of the Santiam. How long I shall continue will depend upon the indications of Him who sends His people times of refreshing from His presence. Such is the present state of things in general in the churches and such the importance of raising something for Br. Post, together with the fact that several Baptist ministers are now arriving in the valley with the overland immigration who are seeking places for a settlement, where for a season they may be useful as self-supporting ministers and are asking counsel as to the place where they may best serve the cause of Christ and their families, that I cannot think your Board would advise me to leave this field to explore the Sound, with all the exposures and uncertainties of winter, while the country is very new, provisions scarce, settlements scattered and immigrants, just coming in, are all in confusion. Now my plan is to leave the Sound till the waters fall next summer and proceed thither immediately after the Association closes, during the time of our wheat harvest, so as to be in the valley again at the yearly meetings of the churches next fall. The people at the Sound raise but little wheat as yet and during the summer months a new country can be much bet-

ter explored than in the winter and the people will more readily come and hear the preached Word. I fear I shall not be able to raise much more than \$100 for Br. Post's passage from San Francisco to Oregon City. Money is very scarce in Oregon, or rather much more so than it has been since '48, and numbers of the brethren promised to do something for him, but will be unable to do it in time to meet his wants. Many of our forehanded farmers tell me that they have not a dollar to their name. But they have barns full of wheat and oats and plenty of cattle and horses and hogs on the prairies. We have a little money in the Institution treasury, so that I hope to be able to forward Br. Post about \$150 to San Francisco in time.

You have doubtless read accounts of the Indian war in Rogue River Valley³³⁶ and are waiting with anxiety to learn of its influence on our little band of disciples at Jacksonville. I have feared much and prayed oft for those lovely brothers and sisters, and especially for young Brother Read. The Lord has kept them all in the hollow of His hand and I believe not one of them has fallen by the hand of savage barbarity. It was reported that our beloved brother Judge Rice was massacred. But we learned in a few weeks, to our great joy, that it was all a mistaken rumor. No doubt the business relations of those brethren have been much deranged and I fear they will be unable to build a suitable house for worship this fall; but the war is ended, except with a few scattering clans who may annoy the people some. The government will keep a garrison sufficiently strong to keep the Indians quiet hereafter.

I forwarded the letter you sent to Br. Read addressed to this place to my care, immediately on its arrival.

Our school is doing very well this quarter. Mr. Shattuck³³⁷ gives his undivided time to it during the regular school hours. Yet we must have a man in the school who will identify himself with its present and future prosperity

³³⁶ This war broke out early in June, 1853, and ended in September of that year.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:311-321.

³³⁷ This was E. D. Shattuck. See note 316.

and likewise identify himself with the interests of the denomination, if we will secure the confidence and cordial cooperation of all our brethren in the Territory. We must bring our brethren to feel that the school stands connected with all that is promising in the future of our denomination in Oregon and on the Pacific shores, at least, and then we shall have patronage most cheerfully.

But the work of harmonizing discordant materials and developing the spirit of true Christian philanthropy requires the persevering patience and love and prayers of men more than ordinarily devoted to the honor of the King of Zion. O, that I had more grace and adaptedness for this work! But for this work I cheerfully live and in this cause I sometimes feel that I would wish to die, or see the work crowned with complete success. Soon, perhaps very soon, we shall have young men in Oregon looking to the ministry asking instruction from our school, if it continues its existence.

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Nov. 28, 1853.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Oct. 5, 1853.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

The Baptist church in this city last Saturday at their regular church meeting took up the subject of providing themselves with a pastor, which resulted in the following resolutions:

Resolved that this church invite Elder Hezekiah Johnson to become our supply till we can obtain a pastor.

2. Resolved that we appoint a committee of two, in the absence of our deacon, to correspond with the Home Mission Society Board to send us a suitable man to fill this place as a pastor.

The meeting closed without any formal action in relation to the amount necessary to his salary, but I will be responsible that \$100 will be raised toward his salary in this place; perhaps \$150. Now our case is a most urgent one. We have never had but little pastoral labors performed in Oregon City. The fact that our school is located here demands the labors of an effective man every day in the place, who may be always ready to co-operate with the teacher by counsel and action. Since Brother Chandler left, nothing has been done by way of sustaining the Sabbath school, except what is done in the school room at the hour, and when I am absent, which is about three-fourths of the time, the male department is sometimes left without any teacher. . . . In view of all our circumstances, we must have a minister, acceptable to be sure as a preacher, but a practical, pious, common sense pastor.

The Congregational church has such a man here,³³⁸ the Methodists will keep such a man here, the Episcopalians will soon have such a man here and the Baptists must have such a man here, if they sustain no other pastor in the Territory. Taking everything into account, this is the first appointment that should be filled, if I do not greatly err in judgment. I think you should appoint a man with a salary of \$700, \$100 of which the church will pay. . . .

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Nov. 29, 1853.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Jan. 2d, 1854.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Brother:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Soc. as General Itinerant for the 3d quarter ending Dec. 31st, 1853. I have labored 13 weeks during the quarter; preached 15 sermons; delivered ten lec-

³³⁸ Dr. G. H. Atkinson was the Congregationalist.—G. H. Himes.

tures on temperance and to the young in Sabbath schools and to young Christians; attended eleven prayer meetings and six church covenant meetings; visited religiously 41 families and as many more individuals; visited two high schools; baptized one; traveled to and from my appointments four hundred and thirty-eight miles. Eighteen persons have been received by baptism, in connection with the labors of myself and my fellow-laborers, and five by letter. The church in Tualatin Plains, called West Union, have completed a meeting house; most of the work has been done the present quarter.

Connected with the churches I have visited are five Sabbath schools, but they are generally small, averaging about 25 children and four teachers to the school; probably in all about 400 volumes in the libraries.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,
General Itinerant.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Jan. 2d, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. Home Mission Society:

Herein I send you my report under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as Exploring Agent for Oregon and Washington Territories for the third quarter ending the 31st of Dec., 1853. During the quarter I have visited the towns of Marysville, Benton County; Forest Grove and Portland, Washington County; Oregon City, Clackamas County, and Santiam church, Lynn County; Marysville church, Benton County; West Union church twice and West Tualatin church, Washington County; have labored 13 weeks during the quarter; collected one hundred dollars to aid Br. J. D. Post from California to Oregon and paid the same to Br. J. D. Post; have paid two dollars and seventy cents for traveling expenses; twenty-five cents for postage; preached fifteen sermons; delivered ten addresses; baptized one person; at-

tended one meeting of eight days with the Santiam church, during which time Brother Chandler, the pastor, and Br. Cheadle, the father of some of the converts, baptized seventeen converts. I was present and preached the dedication sermon in the new house built by the West Union church, an account of which I shall give you in another letter.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—I wrote you some time since that I had collected something more than \$150 for Br. Post's traveling expenses from Cal. to Oregon. That all things may appear straight, I will state that on the arrival of Br. Post we found that the house must have some work done on it to make it comfortable for his family. He therefore agreed to take \$100 and let the balance be applied to carrying on the work on the school building, as a part of the funds collected were paid over to me to be used at my discretion where it was most needed, either to aid Br. Post or to carry on the work on the house. You will therefore credit the donors to the amount of \$100 and charge the same to Br. Post so that your books may stand fair. I will give you the names and the amount paid by each person or congregation accompanying this report.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Jan 2d, 1854.

Dear Br. Hill:

The following sums were collected to aid Br. J. D. Post from Cal. to Oregon:

| | |
|---|---------|
| Collection taken in the Oregon City church..... | \$25.25 |
| James Hunt | .50 |
| Israel Chamnies | 5.00 |
| Rev. Richmond Cheadle | 8.12½ |
| Joshua Brooks | 1.00 |
| Daniel Smith | 2.00 |
| Collection taken at the Santiam church..... | 12.62½ |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| J. H. Pruett ³³⁹ | 2.00 |
| George Cornelius | 3.00 |
| D. D. Stroud | 5.00 |
| John Trapp | 5.00 |
| Alfred Rinehart | 5.00 |
| Martha Avory | 5.00 |
| Martha Robinson | 2.50 |
| Jeremiah Lewis | 1.50 |
| Arnold Fuller | 2.50 |
| Thomas M. Read | 14.00 |
| Total | \$100.00 |

This hundred dollars you will please credit to the donors on your books and charge it to Br. J. D. Post and not to me, as I have paid it over to him. In yours of Nov. 9th, 1853, I noticed this paragraph, "Ere this I trust Br. Post is with you and entered upon his work. I am glad your people evinced a liberal spirit in aiding him to get from Cal. to Oregon. He is worth and worthy of it. The credit and charge will be made on our books and, if you report more, we will do the same."

Now I suppose you charged that sum to Br. Post and not to me, as I have paid him the \$100 herein reported as collected. If you have charged it to me, you will please correct the mistake.

Received Feb. 10, 1854.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Feb. 24th, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Br.:

Yours under date Dec. 5th, 1853, giving notice of the appointment of Rev. A. B. Cramb for this place, was received last mail. Should he prove adapted to this place, he must be a valuable acquisition to Oregon.

In this I have to announce both afflictive and merciful

³³⁹ Of the above-named donors, J. H. Pruett (1820-1866) came to Oregon from Missouri in 1847 and settled near Gervais.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:65.

dispensations of an infinitely wise providence. God has seen fit to remove my beloved wife from a state of probation to one of ineffable bliss. At the time I last wrote you I was sorely afflicted with boils and detained, much against my inclinations, from a tour into the upper part of the Willamette Valley. On Thursday I told my wife I thought I could possibly ride, but the roads were bad, the waters high, and she persuaded me to stay till the first of the week. On Sabbath morning before we rose she told me that her stomach did not feel right. Before meeting time we consulted whether all should go to meeting, as the roads were bad and we had a mile to walk. I advised her to stay with our little son, not yet six years old. When we returned from meeting about 5 P. M., I found the table spread and, as the family came around the table, she took her seat by the fire. I asked her if she was not intending to come to tea. She replied she was quite unwell and could eat nothing. As I turned my attention particularly to her, I discovered that she was very pale. I was instantly impressed that her sickness would be attended with serious results. (I have never known her to complain of being sick until she was no longer able to sit up.) She went immediately to her bed. . . . Inflammation of the stomach and bowels progressed with a slow but determined pace till the terrible King removed her from all her earthly relations on Friday, the 20th of January, at five minutes past eleven A. M. I do not design to write her obituary now, if ever. She has made her own impression in the silent sphere where the retiring pioneer missionary's wife is always mostly needed. The most important sphere of her Christian usefulness was at home, aiding and ever encouraging her husband in his labors, when his field lay far from home, which occasioned weeks and sometimes months of separation, cheerfully assuming the family responsibilities, with no complaints and few intimations that ours was a mission of privations and trials unknown to pastors' families in the older churches. Here she always saw that the incense was daily burning on the family

altar, so that for almost twenty-four years there has not to my recollection been a day in which the morning and evening prayer has not been offered in my family, our protracted journeys not excepted. As an illustration of her influence in this respect in the family, the night after we deposited her remains in the grave, my little son, to whom I have alluded, after we retired to our lonely lodging, asked me, "Who will pray in the family now when you are gone?" Next to her family, she was ever found taking along with her the entire family to the house of God as often as the Sabbath returned. Thither she repaired as much to honour God in His institutions as to be delighted with an eloquent discourse. The Sabbath school has ever been a sphere of Christian action in which she seemed at home and she has never, except at short intervals, from ill health or causes beyond her control, left her seat as a teacher vacant. I need not state to you, dear brother, that she ever took a deep interest in all the meetings of the church, especially the covenant meetings. The women's prayer-meeting found in her a warm advocate and personal supporter. Although she ever delighted to learn of the progress of missions, both at home and abroad, yet her mind seemed peculiarly formed to exert a maternal influence. The proper education of her own family, in the most general sense of the term, as well as that of the rising generation around her, occupied a large place in her thoughts and labors. Hence she has for years manifested a growing interest in religious education and, with other periodicals which advocate this cause, she manifested a great fondness for the Mothers' Journal. But she is done with her earthly labors and I doubt not but she is now reaping the rewards of those who come up out of great tribulation, although hers was not a martyr's death. But in her last illness her Christian character shone resplendent. From the first day of her illness she expressed doubts of her recovery and frequently conversed freely respecting the interests of religion in Oregon City, and especially in her own family. On Wednesday she called her three children who

had arrived at years of understanding, one by one, into her room and urged upon them the necessity of immediately attending to their souls' salvation and obtained a solemn promise from each one of them that they would immediately seek for pardon through a crucified Redeemer. On Friday morning, about four, she discovered that she was failing and asked me if I thought she was dying. I told her she was evidently failing and unless some favorable change soon took place she could not live long. She immediately called her family, said she must once more recommend the religion of Jesus and give them all the parting kiss. They were called up and came in. She counseled us all, gave us the parting kiss and again obtained the promise from our son, 19, and our daughters, 14 and 11 years of age, that they would immediately seek the salvation of their souls. About this time she said, "O, how unfaithful I have lived! Would to God that I could be instrumental of doing more in my death than I have in my life!" She continued in the agonies of death from about half-past four till five minutes past eleven, yet in the exercise of her reason and able to converse at intervals till within a few moments of her last. If she lived a Christian, she emphatically died a Christian and a soldier of the Cross. Death seemed to be disarmed of his terrors. She seemed to have her feet planted firmly on the Rock of Ages and there she rested and waited patiently for her change, with a calm, firm reliance on the righteousness of Christ for her shelter from the storm that must overtake the impenitent and the Grace of God in Christ for her acceptance with Him. While I found myself bereft of my dearest, best earthly friend, with two daughters and a son, all under the age of fifteen, on my hands, my field of labor seemed closed. All my prospects for the future seemed for the present closed. My path was darkened. It seemed to me that I could do nothing but wait on God. I could not think of breaking up my family. To leave the agency at this period, it seemed to me, would be attended with consequences far from being desirable. On the evening of the burial of Mrs. Fisher I called my

family around me and inquired after the state of their minds and found three of them convicted of sin; also a lad of fourteen then boarding with us.³⁴⁰ The following Sabbath Br. Chandler preached the funeral sermon on the occasion of Mrs. F.'s death. The congregation was large and solemn. Br. C. preached on Monday and Tuesday evenings at 7 and then left for his appointment on the Santiam. By this time the interest was so apparent that it was judged expedient that we keep up nightly meetings. I then entered the work and, with the assistance of Br. Post, who preached frequently evenings, and Br. Johnson, who preached once each Sabbath, the church continued her meetings nightly for something more than two weeks, and, during the present week, we have meetings every night except two. I have already baptized nine, three more are received as candidates for baptism and two more will relate their experience to the Church tomorrow; two of the converts have joined the Congregational Church, being forbidden by their guardians to join the Baptist. Their guardians are a Congregational deacon and wife. Among those who were baptized, three were my own children, one the lad who boarded at my house at the time of Mrs. F.'s death, and one the son of Elder Johnson.³⁴¹ Mrs. F.'s physician³⁴² and wife are received for baptism. We still have a number of inquirers who are regular members of our congregation. The work has extended into the Methodist and Congregational churches and they are holding interesting meetings at this time. This is the first revival of religion that Oregon City has witnessed. Our prayer is that it may pervade the whole town and vicinity. With this state of things and the church having no minister to perform pastoral labors and knowing of no prospect of obtaining a pastor, it resolved to invite me to take the pastoral charge and to ask the Home Missionary Society to appoint me to this place with a salary of \$600, the church to raise \$100 of it.

340 This was Charles Shively, son of the first postmaster at Astoria.

341 This was Hon. William Carey Johnson (1833-1912). He was for many years a prominent attorney and member of the Baptist Church at Oregon City.

342 This was Dr. Majers.

I never have got my consent to accept of the call on account of the importance of the general work which must be performed for Oregon. Yet, from the importance of sustaining this point, my own sympathies for my little, motherless family, of girls in part, who need and must have counsel at this period of life, together with the dying request of my wife that I keep the family together and, added to all the rest, these young disciples who are promising and very much need proper religious training, I have thought your Board would allow me to watch over the interests of this church for a few months and perform such agency labors as I can, and is much needed, in the vicinity till the time of the meeting of our association which occurs in June, after which I hope to be able to leave my family and explore Washington Ter. in the latter part of the summer and fall. By the time our association closes, I hope the work necessary to give our school a vigorous growth will be accomplished, at least so far that Br. Post can manage the financial affairs, in addition to the labor of teaching, for a few months. I trust also that Br. Cramb will be on the ground and meet with a favorable reception with the church and people. In this whole matter I desire to submit myself with prayerful resignation into the hands of Infinite Wisdom. From all I can gather by the opening providences of God, I now think I shall pursue the course above suggested and make a formal application for a reappointment as exploring agent by the next mail. I think this is the judgment of all the brethren, except so far as relates to the members of this church; and even here, their desires for pastoral labor and personal sympathy for me and my family may perhaps sway their judgment. If there is any reasonable prospect of a pastor for this place soon, I am quite sure I shall be the last man to preoccupy the place. The mail must leave before I shall have time to write more.

The good work of Grace has been progressing through the winter in the Shilo church under the labors mostly of

Br. Davis³⁴³ from Indiana. Clackamas³⁴⁴ church had an addition of five last Sabbath by baptism. Elder Hubbard will probably settle with that church.

Affectionately your afflicted brother,
Received April 10, 1854. EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Mar. 9th, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Yours of Jan. 18, '54, was received by last mail. I regret to learn that the principal bill ordering goods was lost, as it will occasion some ten months' delay from this time before my family supplies will reach us, some of which are now needed. But God's ways are all right and we shall soon enough find it true. I will now proceed to order another bill as near like the other as I can by my old memorandum.

* * * *

Respectfully yours, EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Mar. 10, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Herein I send you an application for reappointment as Exploring Agent and General Itinerant for Oregon Ter., with a consent to make the necessary explorations in Washington Ter. during the summer and early part of the fall.

To the Executive Board of the Am. Bap. Home Mission Society: The subscriber desires reappointment as Exploring Agent and General Itinerant for Oregon Ter. for the term of one year from the first day of April next, with permission to spend three or four months mostly in Oregon City and vicinity, in view of the present peculiar condition of the

³⁴³ This was Rev. William M. Davis, who came to Oregon in 1853 from Indiana, and settled near Turner.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:10. (See note 352.)

³⁴⁴ The Clackamas Church, about six miles north of Oregon City, was organized Nov., 1853, by the author and Rev. David Hubbard. The latter was born in Kentucky in 1795, moved to Oregon in 1853, and died in 1866.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:14, 104.

church and the afflicted and unsettled state of my family in the removal of Mrs. Fisher by death, with the same salary as the present year.

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

N. B.—The undersigned concurs in all the terms and statements of the foregoing application. Yours,

JOHN D. POST.

Rev. B. M. Hill, Oregon City, Mar. 10, 1854.
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

The last week has been one of interest to the little church in this place. Our meetings were continued during four intervening evenings of the week. On Saturday at our covenant meeting, four interesting young persons came before the church, related their Christian experience and were received for baptism, and on Sabbath, after the morning services, we repaired to the banks of the Willamette where I was permitted to baptize seven converts. These make sixteen that I have baptized into this church within the past four weeks; one more is received for baptism and we have an interesting state of things in our community at present. The converts are mostly from the youth and are very promising. We have established a weekly church prayer meeting, a young men's weekly prayer meeting, a female prayer meeting, the young ladies' weekly prayer meeting and the monthly concert of prayer, in which a collection for the cause of missions is to be taken up at each meeting. All the converts take part in these religious exercises, and it seems to me that I cannot consistently leave the lambs of the fold long at a time till Br. Cramb arrives, or the church is otherwise supplied with pastoral labors. Other ministers are active in the place and I think your Board would heartily approve of the course I have been led to pursue, if they were here. Indeed I have not directed my steps for the last eight weeks, neither have I tried. Providence in a peculiar manner has marked my way and, although in some respects

deeply afflictive, I have not ventured to say more than this. Lord direct, I will try and follow, although bowed down with grief.

Yours truly,
EZRA FISHER.

* * * *

Received April 26, 1854.

Oregon City, Apr. 1st, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as General Itinerant for Oregon for the fourth quarter ending March 30th, 1854.

I have labored 13 weeks; preached 35 sermons; delivered two temperance lectures, and 23 addresses at the special meetings of Oregon City church and Clackamas church; attended 34 prayer meetings and six other religious meetings; visited religiously 124 families and other persons; visited two public schools in Oregon City; baptized 16 persons into the Oregon City church; traveled to and from my appointments 48 miles; received one person by letter; 22 persons have been hopefully converted in Oregon City in connection with my labors; monthly concert is established at Oregon City church; took up a collection at the monthly concert for March of \$3.75 for missionary purposes, object not yet specified; connected with the church is a Sabbath school, and Bible class of about 25 scholars; more than half of the school are in the Bible class. Three teachers; about 75 volumes in the library.

Our meetings continue interesting. We have a few enquirers and shall probably soon baptize others. I remain most of my time in this place and vicinity, it seeming my duty to look after the interests connected with this church and school, while I can render some service in the important towns on the river and attend two yearly meetings, namely, at Marysville and West Tualatin churches, before the meet-

ing of the association, which will occur the last of June. I trust by that time Br. Cramb will reach this place, so that I can feel it my duty to proceed to Washington Territory without delay. I have no doubt of the importance of an early exploration of that Ter., yet so providential have been the demands for my services in this valley that I have acted up to a conviction of duty and I believe with the cordial approbation of every brother conversant with our wants in Oregon and Washington territories who are on the ground. I am quite sure that your Board would approve the course, if they were on the ground and explored the field for themselves.

I feel no disposition to undervalue the judgment of your Board or to disobey their instructions, but have endeavored to do as nearly as I believed they would, if they were individually in my place acting for Christ's interests on the Pacific Coast for all coming time.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Apr. 1st, 1854.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as Exploring Agent for Oregon and Washington territories for the fourth quarter ending March 31st, 1854.

I have visited Portland once, Clackamas church twice and spent a large portion of my time in Oregon City with the church and co-operating with the college, when I could do it without materially interfering with my specific duties.

I have traveled 48 miles to and from my appointments, exclusive of my labors with the O. City church; have labored 13 weeks during the quarter; have preached 35 sermons and addressed the people 23 times, in connection with the special meetings in the O. City and Clackamas

churches, having the conducting of all the meetings at O. City church; delivered 2 temperance addresses; have baptized 16 persons into the Oregon City church.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,
Exploring Agent.

N. B.—Our young members are of more than usual promise and, although mostly youth, seem to be enquiring for the line of duty and willing to do it. I have never enjoyed so much consolation with the same number of young disciples as I have with these.

Yours,
EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Apr. 2d, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Br. Hill:

In reviewing my labors for the past year in connection with the Zion of God in Oregon, while I have to deplore my great unfaithfulness as a minister of the blessed gospel, I have been led to rejoice that the spirit of the Lord has not been entirely taken from me. God has been graciously pleased to grant me the privilege of laboring with five churches in the time of more than usual manifestations of Divine favor, where the enquiry has been made, "What must I do?" and the sinner has been pointed to the Lamb of God as the only cure for the sin-sick soul. Another church within our association, with which I have spent numbers of Sabbaths, has also been highly blessed with a work of grace. In these churches, as near as I can estimate, one hundred and two hopeful converts have been added by baptism. Of this number I baptized twenty-six, three of whom were my own dear children, rendered doubly dear by the recent death of their mother, and have witnessed the baptism of thirty-seven more. When we take into account the scarce

population of the country and the small numbers in each church, so that most of these churches have been more than doubled in numbers and the cultivation of the means of grace quadrupled, we feel that this year has been emphatically the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Most of the accessions have been children and youths from eight to twenty-four years of age and a large proportion are lads and young men of more than usual promise, some of whom I trust will be found among the future ministers of Oregon, perhaps of Asia. To be sure we are subject as churches to all the changes and many of the discouragements of a frontier county, yet our prospects are surely becoming more and more bright. While our churches have been blessed with a harvest of souls, God has not been unmindful of our school, the Oregon City College. Br. Post's arrival was hailed with gratitude to Almighty God by some of the friends at least. I shall not soon forget the feelings that came over my mind when I learned in Portland that he and his family were at my house. Our school was at a low ebb. He has entered upon his labors with the energy of a man in earnest. His labors have been appreciated by the public and the school for the last four months has been as prosperous as could have been reasonably anticipated under the circumstances. Thus you see that God is graciously pleased to prosper thus far, but with our prosperity, new responsibilities and new wants are multiplying. We now more than before need pastors for these churches and missionaries to enter upon other important fields opening in every direction. Our school building must be put in a condition to meet the pressing wants of Br. Post's family and the school, which we hope to do, God favoring, but we feel that we must have immediately a chemical and philosophical apparatus to meet the public wants and we feel that we must look to the friends at home to furnish it. I trust you will second Br. Post's efforts to accomplish this so desirable enterprise. On the whole, although the hand of the Lord has been laid heavily upon me in the removal of my beloved wife, I think

I can see the Lord is on our side and will assuredly bless us although He prepares the way by severe trials of our faith. We will take courage and submit our whole cause to the Lord and trust in Him for His future blessings by waiting in the spirit of humble confidence for the openings of His providences.

Yours affectionately,

EZRA FISHER.

Received May 25, 1854.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., Apr. 7th, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc., New York.

Dear Brother Hill:

Last week, at the request of Br. Newell, our teacher of music, formerly from New York, I visited Portland, with a view of stirring up their minds to immediate action on the subject of raising the standard in that place, preached on Wednesday evening to a large congregation in the Congregational house, and visited Wednesday in the afternoon and Thursday morning with the members. I found the following members, some of whom you know personally: Br. Josiah Failing, formerly deacon in the 10th St. Church, New York, his wife, two sons and a daughter; Br. Coe,³⁴⁶ formerly postal agent for Oregon, and wife; Br. Leland, Postmaster at Portland, and wife; Br. Simmonds, merchant, and wife, from Boston, . . . Sister Burnell, from Ninth Street Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, an enterprising, intelligent sister (her husband is in the steam saw mill business), and Sister Mosier, a widow, in the millinery and fancy clothing business. Since I left, I learn that Br. Pine and wife from San Francisco have located there. Br. Pine is in merchandising and he and wife come highly recommended as active young Baptist members. I have little doubt there are other Baptist members in the city who would co-operate with the church if one should be constituted. Really they have double the

³⁴⁶ This was Nathaniel Coe (1788-1868). He was appointed postal agent for Oregon in 1851. He later settled near the present Hood River.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:189.

numbers and quadruple the ability the church at Oregon City had before our late revival. I urged upon the leading members to establish weekly religious meetings for prayer and conference, look directly to God for His blessing and then make their wants known to the Home Missionary Society's Board. I am satisfied that, with a comfortable place of worship and a good, faithful, acceptable minister, the Baptists might expect, under God, to exert as much influence in the place and prosper as much as any religious denomination now in Portland. I felt peculiarly impressed that now is the time to strike in Portland. There seemed to be a good religious atmosphere with the brethren and especially with the sisters. They want to see the standard raised there, but they say they must have a house and a minister at once and build their own houses, and they say they do not see how this all is to be done unless they can get more foreign aid than they can reasonably expect. I urged them to make their wants known to you as soon as they could get to understand what they wanted and what they can do. They said they would call a meeting soon and deliberate on the subject. I assured Br. Failing that I should be down and stir them up in five or six weeks, if they did not act promptly in the mean time.

This is the most important place in the territory to be occupied by the Baptists, after Oregon City, and, but for our educational interests, it would be much the most important place of the two, at least at present. A minister ought to be appointed forthwith to that place with a salary of \$700 to \$800. A man worth that money to that place would build a house in one year there, hard as the times are, with three or four hundred dollars from the building funds of the Home Mission Society, if he went to his work trusting alone in the Owner of the Universe and the Disposer of men's hearts, and money too. God grant that you may find the man and put him into that field. Portland is the New York for Oregon at present, at least for the trade of the Willamette and Columbia River valleys. My soul is pained when I

think of the delays of the Home Mission Society to occupy this town, or I might say city, and Oregon City. I trust we shall soon see Br. Cramb, and that a man of God will soon be on his way for Portland.

Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—I shall order you to pay three or four dollars to the editor of the Mothers' Journal soon, also to pay my subscription for the Christian Chronicle to the end of the present year.

Received May 25, 1854.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., June 17th.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Br. Hill:

Yours of Apr. 3d, announcing my reappointment, and one a few days later, condoling me on account of my late bereavement and answering my request to remain at Oregon City a few months, came duly to hand. I now take my pen to present before your Board the importance of immediately occupying Portland, but before stating my views I would refer you to Br. Taggart, Br. Failing's old pastor, for information on that subject, as I understand that he has written a long letter to said Taggart, giving a general view of things in Portland. Br. Failing was deacon in 10th St. Church, N. Y. There sometimes are times in the history of a town in the new portions of our great missionary field where it really seems that things form a crisis, and one opportune movement of a religious denomination may give them all the advantage of years of hard labor in establishing a permanent interest. Such appears to be the door now opened in Portland.

I have it from the Methodist minister in charge at Portland that he wonders why the Baptists do not occupy Portland. Why, he says that the Baptists have more wealth and influence in Portland today than any other denomina-

tion of Christians. Yet the Methodists have expended within the last four years more than \$8,000 on that place and the Congregational Church have had a stated ministry in the place almost five years.³⁴⁷ Yet all the Baptist preaching they have had has not exceeded thirty-five or forty sermons, and that mostly by myself. I can now sit and enumerate 17 Baptist members in Portland, five of whom are in Br. Failing's family, two in Br. Coe's, our former postal agent, two in Br. Leland's family, the post master of the place and a graduate of Brown's University, and others of respectable standing in Baptist churches in Boston, Cincinnati and San Francisco. But they feel now that they must have a minister on the ground adapted to secure an influence and then they can commence and build a house by the aid of the amount they might receive from the building fund connected with the Home Mission cause. They say it is no use to do anything by way of monthly preaching in other denominations' houses. It is labor bestowed to build up other churches and hold back the very cause most dear to us as Baptists. Br. Failing says (and what he says they all say, and I suppose he says what Br. Thomas in your city thinks), that, if the Home Mission Society will send them a suitable man and pay him \$600 salary, the people of Portland will do the rest. I say there is no doubt they will pay from \$100 to \$200. The man should be adapted to carry along at once the work of building a good house of worship. Br. Failing will be active in the work. It would be very desirable that such a man should be appointed as would meet the approbation of Br. Thomas, and especially the approbation of the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not believe such a man can be sustained in that place for less than \$800 per annum.

Yours,

E. FISHER.

Respecting Br. Post, I think all things are about right and trust his school will give him a support. This school has

³⁴⁷ Rev. Horace Lyman, who had come to Portland in 1849, was settled there until the spring of 1854. The church building was dedicated in 1851.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:679, 680.

averaged 40 scholars since the first two weeks. We are finishing the building as fast as we can in these hard times for money, while I am detained at Oregon City. I shall write you immediately on the close of the meeting of the association, which takes place next week.

As ever yours in Christ Jesus,

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, June 17th, 1854.

N. B.—I sent you a bill for goods to be filled by you, I think in the month of February. I have heard nothing from you on that subject yet and am becoming somewhat anxious, as the first bill forwarded in October was lost and my family supplies are becoming pretty well exhausted. I think I shall hear from you however by the next mail on that subject. If my second bill has not been received please inform me immediately.

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received July 24.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., July 8th, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

The Willamette Baptist Association closed its sessions last week on Monday. The sessions were harmonious in the main and exhibited strong evidence that the churches are becoming more impressed with the importance of a devoted ministry and of united Christian effort for the suppression of vice and the diffusion of the gospel of Christ. During the last associational year most of our older churches have enjoyed pleasing revivals and the account of the Christian character of the young members is truly pleasing. The churches have received by baptism since the last anniversary 106.³⁴⁵ Four small churches were received into the association this year. Our net increase is 197, and our total number

³⁴⁵ At least one of these men, Rev. A. J. Hunsaker, became a minister. Another, C. C. Sperry, who had been previously baptized, but who was aroused in 1853, was later ordained.—*Mattoon, Bap. An. of Ore.*, 1:106, 108.

442. The association raised a subscription of \$165 to employ a man to travel and preach in Lane County, which lies at the head of the Willamette Valley and north of the Calapooia Mountains. \$60.50 was paid on the spot. On Sabbath a collection of \$13.10 was taken up for the same object. Elder Robert D. Gray³⁴⁸ was employed to enter that field immediately. In this field is one small, languishing church, and there are now materials for one or two churches which we trust our missionary will organize the present season.³⁴⁹ Br. Gray will be kept in the field till winter, perhaps the entire year. In addition to the above named funds, we have \$7.00 in the treasury designated to the preaching of the Word in this valley. The churches in Yamhill and Polk counties have agreed to sustain Br. Riley³⁵⁰ the coming year to travel in those counties, supply monthly the three churches in that field and spend the remainder of the time in supplying destitute settlements a part of the time. During the sessions of the association reports were made on the subjects of establishing a religious press in Oregon and on ways and means for supplying our churches and destitute towns and settlements with preaching. Resolutions were passed favoring the general objects of the denomination, such as the Home Mission cause, Publication Society, the Sunday school effort and the circulation of religious periodicals. During the time, the friends of education held a meeting in which an informal report of the trustees of the Oregon City College was made. The school was found to be in a prosperous condition under the tuition of Rev. J. D. Post. Since Professor Post entered upon his labors, it was found that the average number of scholars in attendance was 40. By the treasurer's report, it was found that \$4611.13 had been collected and expended on the building for the

348 Rev. R. D. Gray (1850-1871) was born in Tennessee and came to Oregon from Arkansas in 1853.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:105.

349 The existing church was the Willamette Forks Church, which had been organized in 1852. Two others, the Palestine and the Mount Zion churches were organized later in 1854.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:16.

350 This was Rev. Cleveland C. Riley. He was born in Tennessee and came to Oregon from Missouri in 1853, settling near the LaCreole Church.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:100.

school since the commencement of the work, and that the building was about \$150 in debt. A resolution was passed recommending the trustees to complete the building as soon as practicable. On Thursday, before the meeting of the association, an interesting ministers' meeting was held, a constitution and rules of decorum for a permanent organization adopted and the ministers' meeting regularly organized to meet annually, the day preceding the meeting of the said association. You will be furnished with the minutes of the association as soon as printed. On the whole, while we deplore the miserable inadequacy of ministerial talent appropriated and the almost entire destitution of Baptist preaching in most of our important towns, we are led to rejoice with exceeding great joy that the progress of the cause of our blessed Redeemer is onward and we trust the time is not far removed when all churches will be supplied with an efficient, devoted ministry, and flourishing churches will be raised up in all our growing towns. For this we will labor on and sacrifice and pray till the good Lord shall make our Zion a name and a praise in the land.

Affectionately yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Aug. 12, 1854.

Oregon City, O. Ter., July 19th, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Yours of May 30th was received by the last mail. No doubt God's providences are all right. Yet we are so short-sighted creatures that we often wish for the time they might be otherwise. I seriously regret that Br. Cramb is delayed till fall. It appears to me that it is a final failure, yet we may be as happily disappointed in his case as we were in Br. Post's. I will not despair of his coming till I am obliged to give up all hope. But how shall I dispose of my time in the mean time? It seems exceedingly desirable that

I be among the churches and new settlements through the fall months during the time of their yearly meetings, most of which come off in Sept. and Oct. The rising towns on the Columbia River, from its mouth to The Dalles, just at the east base of the Cascade Mountains, should be visited; and then there is Pugets Sound in Washington Ter., which I have promised you that I would visit this season, and then the church in this place, and the outdoor work for the school should be attended to immediately. It seems to me that I cannot stay at home any longer. If there is any prospect that your Society can occupy the Sound by two practical, common sense, pious ministers, I would not fail to explore that region this fall. But if I must spend six or eight weeks of the best of the season in exploring the country, perhaps preach twelve or fifteen sermons and leave the territory two years more before a man is sent to break up the ground and preach the gospel of the Kingdom, it would seem that we had better attempt to cultivate the already too wide and neglected field in the Willamette Valley. In the absence of any positive instruction from you on the subject, I shall try and look to the Great Head of the church for direction, and you will not be surprised to hear from me in Washington Ter. in six or eight weeks after the receipt of this. I may be able to receive all the reliable intelligence necessary to enable me to give you a general view of the demands of that very important portion of the country, but as yet I have nothing reliable since I last wrote you on that subject. The Dalles is fast coming into importance and, although at this time there is not more than one hundred or one hundred and fifty white people in its vicinity, it is an important trading point and must ever be the key to the whole country of the Columbia River above the Cascade Mountains, and at no distant day must become a populous city. At this time there are five dry goods stores at that place. I think I shall try and visit that place this fall, while the immigrants are there, and spend one or two Sabbaths. This place has such a commanding position

that I know of no place where an effort will be so sure to be attended with permanent results. Another important town will rise up at the Cascade Falls of the Columbia, 40 miles below The Dalles, and at the head of ship navigation on the Columbia.

Respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER.

July 19th, 1854.

Dear Brother Hill:

I am in need of some funds to defray my traveling and family expenses and have an opportunity of exchanging \$150 or \$200 with Brother Post by drawing an order on you. I have therefore agreed to make the exchange with Br. J. D. Post. The order will probably be drawn in favor of Br. Pike, the manufacturer of mathematical instruments in N. Y. I shall send the order in two or three weeks. When you send me the bill of the goods, please let me know how my account stands on your books.

Yours respectfully,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Aug. 24.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Sept. 26th, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Society.

Dear Brother:

As yet I have heard nothing from the goods I ordered you to put up for me, except a line from you stating that you would fill the bill and ship the goods the first opportunity. It is now almost a year since I made the first order. My family had depended upon them for their summer clothing and now we are looking with anxiety for them for our winter supply. We fear the bill of lading has been miscarried. I have heard nothing from you, except by the Record, for two months. Please inform me at your earliest convenience whether you have shipped the goods; also when we may expect them, if they are not already shipped. I presume you have done as well as you could in this matter, but, if I

could have anticipated the results, I think I should not have ordered the goods, but made my drafts and clothed my family here. But no doubt God designs all for the best. . . .

Your unworthy brother in Christ,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—The yearly meetings will soon be over for this season. You will then hear from me respecting our towns; also respecting Washington Territory, or I shall visit and report by actual explorations. Yet our brethren here are very unwilling to have me leave the Willamette Valley, in view of the great scarcity of laborers and the pressing calls from the churches and destitute places where important Baptist interests might be built up if we had the laborers.

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Nov. 10.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Oct. 1st, 1854.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Brother:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as Exploring Agent for the 2d quarter ending September 30th, 1854.

I have visited the LaCreole Church in Polk County, ten miles west of Salem, Santiam Church, Lynn Co., 35 miles south of Salem, and Yamhill Church, 7 miles west of Lafayette, seat of justice for Yam Hill County and 40 miles southwest from Oregon City. Traveled 205 miles to and from my appointments. Have labored 13 weeks during the quarter. Have collected \$5.50, it being a collection taken up in the Oregon City Church on the first Sabbath in July. Paid for traveling expenses \$1.50; for postage \$.25. Preached 30 sermons. Have attended three yearly meetings in the above-named churches, all of which were blessed with more

than usual manifestations of Divine favor.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

* * * *

P. S.—I have made out this report on the 26th of Sept. on account of my leaving tomorrow for a yearly meeting on the Calapooia River with the Pleasant Butte Church,³⁵¹ Lynn County, 42 miles south of Salem.

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Oct. 1st, 1854.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Br.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as General Itinerant for the second quarter ending the 20th day of Sept., 1854.

I have labored thirteen weeks in the quarter; preached 30 sermons; attended 10 prayer meetings, three church covenant meetings; spent three weeks wholly in three yearly meetings, preaching, praying and exhorting as the cause of Christ seemed to demand; visited religiously 51 families and other persons; traveled 205 miles to and from my appointments. In connection with the labors of my associates in the ministry, 1 has been baptized into the Santiam Church, 22 into the LaCreole Church and 4 received by letter, and 4 were baptized into the Yam Hill Church, all of whom were baptized by the respective pastors of said churches. There have been 30 cases of hopeful conversions in these churches. I have visited the LaCreole Church in Polk Co., ten miles west of Salem, Santiam Church, 35 south of Salem, Lynn Co., and Yam Hill Church, 7 miles west of Lafayette, the seat of justice for Yam Hill Co. The

³⁵¹ The Pleasant Butte Church, Linn County, was organized Nov. 16, 1853, by Rev. G. C. Chandler and others.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:16.

church at Oregon City sustains the monthly concert of prayer and have taken monthly collections at the same, amounting to about \$9.00. The church at Oregon City took up a collection on the first Sabbath in July of \$5.50 for the Home Mission Society. Sabbath schools, one with the Oregon City Church, the same as last quarter reported, one with the LaCreole Church.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,
General Itinerant.

Received Nov. 10.

Oregon City, Oct. 8th, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bapt. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Brother:

Yours of Sept. 18th containing your account with me, also a bill of goods sent me by the Am. Bapt. Home Mission Society Sept. 6th, amounting to \$466.66, with a bill of lading for six boxes and two barrels of merchandise, were received by the last mail. Was very glad to learn that they are on the way. Since I last wrote I have visited West Tualatin Church and spent nearly a week with the Shilo Church on a council called on account of difficulties existing between Elder — and the majority of the church on one hand and the minority of the church on the other. Br. — had been quite imprudent and serious charges were preferred against him, but with not sufficient proof to induce the council to recommend his being deposed from the ministry.³⁵² After three days' and two nights' hard labor, the council gave their advice to the church and all the parties concerned, which resulted in an amicable adjustment of all difficulties. We have felt the necessity of our church members understanding and practicing gospel discipline in case of difficulties before they come before the church. Our Divine Master

³⁵² This was Rev. William M. Davis. Shortly after the first council here mentioned, a second council was called, which urged drastic action, and the church entirely repudiated him.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, 1:10.

has condescended to give us the most simple and yet the most perfect rules for discipline either in private trespasses or public immorality.

Yours with sentiments of Christian affection,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Dec. 26.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Oct. 17th, 1854.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. Bap. Home Mission Society.

Dear Brother :

I have just returned from the yearly meeting of the Pleasant Butte Church, seventy-five miles up the valley from this place and thirty-five south of Salem. This church, like all our churches, is located in the heart of a flourishing country admirably adapted to grazing and the growing of wheat, corn, oats and all kinds of vegetables and fruits adapted to this climate. I spent ten days with the church, preaching Saturdays and Sabbaths and one sermon each night. The meetings were interesting, but not attended with the same results as last year. During the meeting six were added by letter, one was received for baptism, there were two hopeful cases of conversion and four or five others were manifestly interested in their souls' welfare. Br. Wm. Sperry is the pastor with whom I have labored. This church has a flourishing Sabbath school and meets every Sabbath for preaching or prayer. The converts of last year appear very well. The church will probably hire a man and put him on Br. Sperry's farm the coming year and by this means mostly liberate him to the work of the ministry in that church and vicinity. This is much better than the entire neglect of the ministry. This closes up our yearly meetings till the opening of the spring. I had hoped that I should have been able to give particular attention to Washington Ter. at the close of this meeting, but there are two pressing calls, one in Washington County and the other in Marion, twelve miles south of Salem, which are obviously more

immediately important than the exploration of Washington Ter. at this season of the year. Our brethren here urge a delay of the exploration of that territory till another season. So also the Methodist minister³⁵³ who has charge of that district advises. I am collecting facts relative to the region of Puget's Sound and shall be able to give you a pretty general view of the relative importance of that country in three or four weeks. My present impressions are that the Baptist cause in that region is not suffering so much for the want of immediate attention as the more populous parts of Oregon and California are. Here we have numbers of organized churches, which must be visited occasionally, and of settlements where churches might be constituted if they could have the encouragement of preaching four Sabbaths in a year, and for want of which labors our members are either lying still or joining Methodist and Cumberland Presbyterian churches. I visited Salem on my return from Pleasant Butte Church last week. Find Salem, the capital of the Ter., with a population of about 1200 souls, with a Methodist Episcopal church and a good house of worship, a protestant Methodist church and house nearly finished, an Episcopal house completed and a Congregational church and house completed. Found but five Baptist members in the place and but one of them who can be considered permanent. There are two members probably permanently located two miles from the town who wish to promote the cause in town. The whole surrounding country is settled mostly on section claims one mile square. The place must have a rapid growth. There is no doubt but a man if sent there and supported would call a small congregation around him, if his talent were popular and piety undoubted, with good, sound common sense, and he might hope to see his congregation increase with the growth of the place. Besides, a good substantial, efficient minister located there would do good service through the whole surrounding country with its four Baptist churches. Salem certainly should not be

353 This was Rev. John F. De Vore.—G. H. Himes.

long neglected by your Society. Some aid no doubt could be obtained from the surrounding churches towards sustaining an effective minister in that place. Yet most of a minister's salary would have to come from home, and it would require from \$600 to \$800 to give a family of ordinary size an annual support. I have no doubt but the expenditure for such an appointment would be judicious, if your Board can sustain such a man there after supporting the suffering cause at Portland and Oregon City, both of which places are probably in greater need of a minister than Salem. Portland has some permanent and able supporters. At Oregon City is our school for the Territory. All our towns are subject to frequent changes, yet they are towns, and will continue to be places of trade from which an influence will be continually going out into the surrounding country and into the whole world. A minister's Sabbaths should mostly be spent in town unless he can have his place filled occasionally by proxy, or little can be effected by the side of other organized churches with a stated Sabbath ministry.

As ever yours,

EZRA FISHER.

* * * *

Received Nov. 25.

Oregon City, Ore. Ter., Nov. 8th, 1854.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bapt. Home Mission Soc., New York.

Dear Br. Hill:

This is to inform you that Rev. William F. Boyakin,³⁵⁴ formerly from Carrolton, Illinois, and late of St. Joseph, Missouri, arrived in Portland about the tenth of October with his family. Since that time he has been preaching to the scattered Baptist brethren in that place. I visited Portland three weeks since on a tour west and south. Found he was making a favorable impression on the minds of the

³⁵⁴ Rev. W. F. Boyakin helped to organize the Portland Church in May, 1855. In 1856 he moved to Corvallis at the invitation of the church there.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:11, 14. Mattoon says he was from Mississippi.

Baptist members and the public; gave them some advice. Since my return Br. Boyakin has preached in this place. He informs me that the Baptist members have invited him to labor with them in Portland for one year and that they have agreed to ask the Home Mission Society to appoint him as their missionary to Portland for one year with a salary of \$800, \$200 of which the people pledge themselves they will pay. They therefore ask your Board to pay him \$600 of the \$800. I have the impression that your acquaintance with Br. Boyakin's reputation as a preacher is better than mine. I think he has been favorably known, both in Illinois and Missouri, as an effective Baptist preacher. I think from the short acquaintance I have with him that he is well adapted to get up an interest in Portland. He commends himself at once to the people as an eloquent man well acquainted with that form of human nature which develops itself in our rising towns in the West. He seems to have the true missionary spirit. Should he continue to wear as he now promises, we have no man in Oregon so well adapted to that field as he is. I think he will need \$800 salary to support his family (of 7 persons I believe) in Portland. I think the people will supply \$200 of the salary, probably not more the first year. Br. Boyakin is poor, having expended almost all his means in reaching the field, seems desirous of trying what he can do in Portland and I am now impressed favorably with the thought that the Lord has directed him in a very favorable time to his appropriate field of labor. He is calling a good congregation to a school-house which the brethren have fitted up temporarily as a place of worship. As it relates to the importance of the place, you hardly need any further information. Portland is the principal port for Oregon at present, numbering probably about 2000 souls, with from 30 to 50 trading houses, wholesale and retail, and must, for years at least, be the most commercial town in the Territory. When the resources of the country are developed, I think the great commercial city of the Columbia River will be somewhere below the

mouth of the Willamette River, yet Portland will even then be an important point. By a reference to the map of the surveyed parts of Oregon, you will see that it is 14 miles above the mouth of the Willamette in the heart, or rather at the foot, of one of the most fertile portions of country in North America. Our country is fast filling up and, although at present the influence of the Nebraska and Kansas movements may for two or three years somewhat retard our onward progress,³⁵⁵ yet I think the immigration will be checked only to flow in more abundantly when the Nebraskan excitement shall have worked its discontent among the early settlers to that territory. I trust your Board will be prompt in making the appointment and may God in His infinite mercy bless to the building up of a strong interest in Portland and the surrounding country.

With much esteem, your unworthy brother,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—Br. Boyakin, in behalf of the brethren in Portland, will make the application stating the time they will wish the appointment to take effect.

Received Dec. 26.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Jan. 1st, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Society:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as Exploring Agent for the third quarter ending the thirty-first day of Dec., 1854. During the quarter I have visited Portland twice, the Cascades in Washington Ter., The Dalles, east of the Cascade Mountains, West Union Church, West Tualatin Church twice, Shilo Church and a settlement of unorganized Baptists near the junction of the Columbia and Sandy rivers in Clackamas County; labored 13 weeks; traveled to and from my appointments 617 miles; paid nine dollars eighty-two cents

³⁵⁵ The Kansas-Nebraska Act of May, 1854, organized these territories and left the question of slavery to the vote of the settlers. This led to a large immigration to these regions from both North and South.

(\$9.82) for traveling expenses and eighteen cents (\$0.18) for postage; preached 20 sermons. I attended a council in case of difficulty of a serious kind in which I labored three days and almost two nights, with but six hours' intermission. The result of our labors seemed blessed under God in restoring union to the distracted church.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,
Exploring Agent.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Jan. 1st, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bapt. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as General Itinerant for the 3rd quarter ending the 31st day of Dec., 1854. I have labored thirteen weeks in the quarter; preached 20 sermons; attended six prayer meetings, two church covenant meetings and one council of three days; visited religiously fifty-four families and other persons, one common school; traveled to and from my appointments six hundred and seventeen miles. Connected with the churches I have visited are three Sabbath schools, one in Pleasant Butte Church on Calapooia River, Lynn Co., one in West Union Church, Washington County, and one in Oregon City, numbering each about twenty-five scholars and four teachers.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,
General Itinerant.

Received Feb. 9.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Jan. 15th, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Society.

Dear Br.:

I take my pen to give you a brief account of my late tour from this place to The Dalles, a rising town and a military

post on the Columbia near the east base of the Cascade Mountains.

I left home on the 17th of Nov. and traveled twenty-two miles north to the mouth of the Sandy, a stream nearly as large as the Mohawk, which rises in the eternal snows of Mount Hood and flows into the Columbia at the west base of the Cascade Range, twenty-five miles west from the celebrated Cascade Falls. Having failed of reaching the Columbia in time to take the regular steamer, I was detained several days till the next trip of the boat. Here I found between fifteen and twenty Baptist members, including an aged minister (Br. Bond), with an enfeebled wife for many years mostly confined to her bed. They are scattered through a fertile, timbered, undulating country eight or ten miles from north to south and perhaps half that distance from east to west. Br. Bond is preaching what he can while laboring with all his powers to obtain a comfortable support for himself and helpless family. These brethren occupy prospectively one of the most important country positions in all Oregon, but at present they have to contend with all the inconveniences of removing forests of enormous growth before they can reap a harvest from their generous soil. However, they will soon be placed above want and probably abound in the farmer's wealth. A church will be constituted here in the coming spring, if not before. This point is more promising than many fields in the Mississippi Valley where labor and money are expended by missionary societies.

The following week I took the steamer and visited The Cascades, a town site, with eight or ten families scattered on the north bank of the Columbia for a distance of three miles from the head to the foot of the Cascade Falls, about midway of the Cascade Mountains, from east to west. These families have resorted here for matters of speculation and, with few exceptions, manifest less desire for the bread of eternal life than for the mammon of unrighteousness. This is the great natural gateway through the Cascade Mountains and must at no distant day become a place of great com-

mercial and manufacturing importance, it being the head of ship navigation to the Columbia and there being a vast region of the best grazing country in North America on the Columbia and its hundred tributaries, which must soon be put in requisition to graze the cattle and horses of Oregon and Washington territories. Occasionally through the summer a Methodist circuit preacher has visited and preached in this place. Here I found one pious Methodist sister and one or two Campbellite members. The country on the north bank of the Columbia is now settled with families and bachelors most of the way from this place to Vancouver, a distance of forty-five miles.

The next week I took the steamer³⁵⁶ for The Dalles; ascended the broad, deep Columbia twenty-five miles to the mouth of Dog River,³⁵⁷ a considerable stream tumbling down with great rapidity from the snowy sides of Mt. Hood. Here I found Br. Coe, late postal agent for Oregon, and wife. This settlement consists of three white families, but will soon be swollen to fifty or 100. The steamer having left me, on the 29th of November, to save a week's delay and an exorbitant price for an Indian and horses, I took my post-bags and traveling apparel on my back at ten A. M. and took the emigrant trail, which lay over high mountains and through deep defiles, and, although the thawing of the frozen ground coming in constant contact with my India rubber boots rendered the traveling exceedingly slippery, I reached the first settlement, three miles from The Dalles, a distance of eighteen miles, at four P. M., unusually fatigued, yet grateful to the gracious Giver for strength to perform even the physical labors of a pioneer missionary. I found twenty-four families, including three or four of the officers and soldiers, in this place and vicinity, beside a number of white men who had married Indian women and

³⁵⁶ This steamboat was probably the "Mary," the first steamer to run between the Cascades and The Dalles.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Wash., Idaho and Mont.*, p. 145.

³⁵⁷ This is the present Hood River. It was called Dog Creek, because in the early forties some immigrants camping there were reduced to dog meat for food.—G. H. Himes.

some thirty or forty single men in trade and farming, and gambling, as I had good reason to suppose.³⁵⁸ Here are stationed two or three companies of government troops to defend our frontiers from Indian invasion. Here also are constantly a considerable number of Indians, amounting to forty or fifty families, who dwell here and cultivate small fields of potatoes, corn and melons. Here too the Roman Catholic Church have a mission established with the Indians and have set up their claim to 640 acres of land for the mission, immediately below the town and extending almost to the river bank.³⁵⁹

The soil in the vicinity of The Dalles is generally a loamy sand, mixed with vegetable mould and decomposed rocks of various kinds, some of which appear to contain considerable quantities of alkalis, in some places so much so as to prevent the growth of vegetation, except a kind of wild rye which grows with great luxuriance where the alkalis destroy all the ordinary grass. This soil must hereafter become very rich manures for lands requiring alkalis. Potatoes, onions, beets, cabbage, squashes, melons, wheat, oats, peas, etc., have all been successfully raised here.

The river from the head of The Cascades to this place is broad and sufficiently deep for the largest class of steamers and the current very gentle. This must be the great place of trade for all the upper Columbia country in all future time, unless a railroad should be constructed through this great valley to Pugets Sound, and in that event a branch will come down the Columbia to this place.

At this place I find two persons who have been Baptists . . . The same Methodist missionary circuit preacher who has visited The Cascades has visited this place a few times the past summer. The people here desire the labors of a good Protestant preacher, but as yet they are entirely uncommitted. An efficient, common-sense minister should

³⁵⁸ See note 309.

³⁵⁹ This claim of the Roman Catholics was later set aside. They were, however, allowed to retain about half an acre of ground for a building site.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:292.

be placed here to labor at this place and The Cascades. He would occupy emphatically a missionary post which will be a post of observation. It will prove to the great Columbia Valley what St. Louis or Chicago is to the Mississippi Valley. True it is small now, but it will soon be the key to hundreds of millions of wealth and millions of souls. I spent two Sabbaths at this place, preached to attentive congregations and received the most cordial hospitality of the citizens. Will your Board send a man to The Dalles and for once occupy an important post first among Protestants—one who may be able to work by the side of Romans, who are doing what they can?

I shall soon attempt to give you what information I have collected from Washington Ter.; also make one more earnest appeal for Oregon City and other parts of the Willamette Valley.

Yours as ever with high esteem,

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

Received Feb. 26.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Jan. 18th, 1855.

To the Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Society, New York.

Dear Brother Hill:

I shall be obliged to draw an order on you for \$200 or \$300 in favor of Abernathy, Clarke and Co., or Josiah Failing & Co. at Portland, in three or four weeks, as I am now straitened for funds to keep up my ordinary family and traveling expenses. I am also expecting to hear from the goods, which you shipped on the Wild Ranger for San Francisco, by every mail and I have not the means to pay the freight from San Francisco to this place. I send this that you may have at least two weeks' notice before the order is presented. I gave Br. J. D. Post an order of \$150 on you sometime last summer or autumn, but have never heard from it since; but presume it is paid. If that is paid,

I suppose there will be due me, after you receive my last report, which was made out and forwarded the first day of this month, about \$420. I have received \$13 from the Baptist Church in this place (Oregon City), and wish you to send twenty (20) copies of the Home Mission Record, twenty (20) copies of the American Messenger, twenty (20) copies of the Macedonian and one (1) copy of the Missionary Magazine, all postpaid, to William C. Johnson, Oregon City, if that amount will meet all the expenses; if not, send equal numbers of the Record and Macedonian, fewer of the American Messenger and one copy of the Missionary Magazine and prepay the postage, applying \$13 on these, no more and no less. Charge the same to my account. Also pay B. R. Soxley, Philadelphia, one dollar (\$1) for Mrs. Mary Winston, Oregon City; also one dollar for Mrs. Rebecca Fanno, Portland, for the Mothers' Journal and Family Visitant and charge the same to my account. Will you see that this is promptly paid, as they wish to have their Mothers' Journal continued.

Received Feb. 26.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Feb. 8th, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Society, Nassau St.,
New York.

Dear Brother:

I take this opportunity to write you a few lines on matters in general. And first, our good people in Portland are about making an effort to build a house for public worship,³⁶⁰ and today the ladies of that place make a dinner as the first effort in furtherance of that important work. As they commence the work in feasting, I hope they will complete it in praying. The church in Oregon City have been employing a temporary supply, or rather receiving it, since I left their service last June, but are about making an

³⁶⁰ The building was not actually begun until 1861.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:140.

effort to secure the labors of a man in Oregon, if they can, and ask the Home Missionary Society to aid them in his support, as they feel that there is great uncertainty in obtaining a man soon from the States. Oh, that the Lord would raise up faithful laborers and send a few to our Pacific borders! We are in perishing need of faithful pastoral labors throughout our churches. We must pray and try to raise up ministers in Oregon. I wish we had a well endowed school, manned with two or three good pious professors, to which we could direct our young men who desire to serve God with singleness of heart. But money is now scarce, though this is not half so alarming as the fact that so few of our brethren take a comprehensive view of our wants and the true remedy. We must educate our ministry on the Pacific slope, and I am beginning to think that we are more able than willing. But this business must be accomplished by "line upon line." We cannot do this work at once, but we must not cease doing till this is done; then we shall support a pious, intelligent, efficient ministry. Our seat of government is removed from Salem to Corvallis, about thirty miles farther up the Willamette River.³⁶¹ Corvallis was formerly called Marysville, the county seat for Benton County. The Territorial University is removed from Corvallis to Jacksonville, county seat of Jackson County. Now we have an able church at Corvallis and I think we should make immediate effort to put in operation a high school at that place. I shall leave tomorrow with a view of visiting two or three churches in that vicinity. I shall feel of the public pulse, as it beats through some of our leading men, on the subject of bringing up an educational interest at the seat of government. We all think an enterprise of this kind will in no way operate prejudicially to our school at Oregon City, but rather favorably. As to the question of your removal from the Bible house, I hope the Society

³⁶¹ The legislature of the winter of 1854-5 changed the capital from Salem to Corvallis, and the university from Corvallis to Jacksonville. The capital was re-located at Salem late in 1855.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:351, 352. The legislature of 1855-6 repealed all acts locating the university.—F. G. Young, *Financial Hist. of Ore. in Ore. Hist. Soc. Quar.*, VIII:162.

will let the good brethren in New York build you a good mission house, if that will end the unhappy strife.³⁶² What is \$40,000 or \$100,000, as an offset to an unhappy division?

Yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received March 24.

Oregon City, O. Ter., March 5th, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bapt. Home Mission Society.

Dear Brother:

About three weeks since I drew an order on you in favor of George Abernathy & Co. to the amount of \$300. This I did, as I have done a few instances before, on account of our great distance. The long delays, after making our quarterly reports, if we must first wait till we can get drafts from New York before we can draw on your treasury, sometimes subject us to great inconvenience. As in the present case, I had ordered a year's supply of clothing for my family a year ago last October (I think). The bill was lost in the ocean; a second order was made in about four months. The filling of the bill was no doubt necessarily delayed by the sickness of yourself and family. The goods were shipped almost a full year after the first bill was mailed at Oregon City, and last week I received three boxes and two barrels, a part only of the goods. I hope to hear from the balance in two or three weeks. But in this case my available means were used up, the money has been earned and the labor reported. I consequently made a draft on you, although it is out of your ordinary way of doing business. I trust your Board will pay the order and indulge me again under similar circumstances. I have received for religious periodicals the following sums which I wish you to pay

³⁶² In 1853 a serious discussion arose in the Baptist Home Mission Society over the acceptance from the American and Foreign Bible Society of rooms in its new building on Nassau Street. Friends of the "Bible Union" opposed the acceptance and the trouble threatened to split the Home Mission Society. The rooms in the A. & F. B. S. building were occupied until 1862.—*Bap. Home Mis. in N. Am., 1832-1882*, p. 543.

to the respective agents and charge the same to my account: For the Mothers' Journal, from Hector Campbell, one dollar; Mr. Campbell wishes his Journal discontinued. From Mrs. Olive F. D. Ogle, one dollar; Mrs. Ogle is a new subscriber; her post-office is Fairfield, Marion Co., O. Ter. For the Christian Chronicle, Philadelphia, from Thomas M. Read of Marysville (now Corvallis), two dollars; he wishes his paper stopped. For the New York Recorder, from John Robinson, Marysville (now Corvallis), two dollars and fifty cents.

Respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER.

March 6th.—I have just returned from a tour to the central part of the valley. Visited Santiam church, Corvallis (Marysville) church, Albany and French Prairie churches. Our churches seem too well contented with monthly Sabbaths and rest apparently satisfied with few pastoral labors performed among them. The result is a want of spirituality, too great a conformity to the world and a reliance almost exclusively upon special meetings for seasons of refreshings from the Most High. I spent some time in endeavoring to ascertain the state of public sentiment relative to the expediency of establishing a school in the central part of the valley. All seemed desirous of seeing such a work put in successful operation, but as yet they have had no conference on the subject and want some effective man to take the responsibility upon himself of planning and executing. While this is being done, the Methodists, who have already three high schools in the valley and one in Umpqua, will step into Corvallis, the only important point now to be occupied and raise up an important school and leave us with the alternative of building up a high school at some unimportant post some six or eight years hence, or of raising a rival school at their door. Now the influence and wealth in the vicinity is Baptist more than any other denomination. The Baptists have the only house of worship in the place. The Methodists are making an effort to build a house of

worship.³⁶³ Lest they should not be able to drive all others out, they obtained a charter for a high school in the place as early as '51. The Presbyterians are looking to the place for the location of a college. Their principal proprietor assured me he would give a block of lots worth about \$1000 for the site, if the Baptists would build a good high school. Although the people in Oregon are almost destitute of money and are much alarmed at the hard times, I think a building worth from \$2000 to \$3000 could be built by the Baptists the coming year, if the brethren in the upper country would see their interests in their true light, without materially affecting the Oregon City College otherwise than favorably. You may reasonably ask, Why trouble ourselves about another school while the one at Oregon City can hardly live? In the absence of a good common school system, evangelical Christians have opened schools adapted to the wants of the people, employed good, pious teachers, and by these schools they wield a strong influence. If we remain inactive, we must lose our hold on the confidence of the people and be set down as inefficient; besides, the sooner we can commit the denomination to some benevolent enterprise the better for them and the rising generation. They will do the more for other work strictly of an evangelical character. Again, I strongly think we must look to our churches for our rising ministry on the Pacific borders before twenty years roll around. The great question with me is, Ought the ministers now in the field and almost worn out to give any considerable portion of their time to the cause of education, while so much of our field lies waste for the want of faithful, Godly ministers given wholly to preaching the Word?

Br. Chandler baptized two converts into the French Prairie church Sabbath before last.

Affectionately yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received April 9.

³⁶³ The Methodists dedicated their church building in Corvallis in December, 1856.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:352.

Oregon City, O. Ter., April 1st, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Brother:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as General Itinerant for the 4th quarter ending March 31st, 1855. I have labored 13 weeks in this quarter; preached 15 sermons; attended 10 prayer meetings and four church meetings; visited religiously 45 families and other persons; visited one common school; traveled to and from my appointments 307 miles. Two were received into the French Prairie church by baptism under the labors of Rev. George C. Chandler. Sabbath schools in the territory are the same as last quarter. During the quarter I have distributed about 2500 pages of tracts. Several of our churches and congregations are beginning to study the Bible by subjects and meet monthly to give their views of the duties enjoined, such as the obligations of the Sabbath, the duties of religious parents, etc. The churches generally are training their young members as well as could be expected where but monthly Sabbaths are enjoyed. However, many of the members visit from church to church, so that perhaps they attend Baptist meetings two Sabbaths in a month. The remaining time they either attend other meetings or stay at home.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., April 1, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as Exploring Agent for the 4th quarter ending March 31st, 1855. I have visited during the quarter Corvallis, Albany, Oregon City, Corvallis church, French Prairie church, a settlement of Baptist brethren five miles east of Albany, Lynn Co., who will soon be

constituted into a church; a settlement of Baptists on the Molalla prairie, where are encouraging prospects; Clackamas church and Pleasant Butte church; traveled 307 miles to and from my appointments. I have labored 13 weeks during the quarter; preached 15 sermons; paid for traveling expenses \$2, for postage 37½ cents.

N. B.—The traveling has been unusually bad this winter and my health, for three or four weeks of the first part of the quarter, was not so good as usual in the winter. This may account for the unusually small amount of labor I have performed. I have labored under the influence of bronchitis and dyspepsia. I have adopted a rigid system of diet and hope to be able to perform my wonted labors the coming season.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

Exploring Agent.

Oregon City, Mar. 10th, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill.

Dear Brother:

The church in Oregon City have invited Br. Johnson and Br. J. D. Post to supply them the coming year and agreed to give Br. Johnson \$50 and Br. Post \$75. Perhaps this is the best they could do on the whole. But it falls far short of meeting our wants. Br. Post's time is engrossed in his school and the most he can do is to preach half the Sabbaths, attend the weekly prayer meetings and perhaps visit a little Saturdays in the afternoons. Br. Johnson will preach half the Sabbaths, but does not contemplate visiting at all. You will see by this that the church must be greatly neglected in the pastoral relations. I hoped the church would have chosen some man as their pastor and asked the Home Missionary Society to help in his support, so that he could give himself to the ministry, or have asked your Board to send them a minister and let him enter upon the work as a man of God. Perhaps all is for the best. I do not yet see it so.

I noticed in the January number of the Home Mission Record a notice of my reappointment. I shall endeavor to serve the Board to my best ability through the summer and fall at least, if my health will permit and God blesses. I have received no letter from you for near three months. Suppose one was lost on the Southerner³⁶⁴ when wrecked. I expect to spend most of the coming season with the churches in the upper part of the valley and in Umpqua and Rogue River valleys and, when in Rogue River Valley, I may cross the Ciscue [Siskiyou] Mountains into Chasty [Shasta] Valley, as it will be but about 25 miles from Rogue River Valley and 125 from the settlement in the Sacramento Valley. A large town called Yreka has sprung up in that valley, in which it is said there are numbers of Baptist members who have had but few Baptist sermons preached to them. Yreka³⁶⁵ is said to be as large as Portland. Should I visit Chasty Valley, or will our California brother penetrate the mountains from the south and explore this mining district?

With sentiments of Christian esteem,

EZRA FISHER.

Received April 24.

Oregon City, O. Territory, May 3d, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bapt. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Brother:

Yours of March 3d has just come to hand and I now sit down to answer it. It is with mingled emotions that I learn that your Board have reappointed me to the work of exploring agent and general itinerant. I shall endeavor in the fear of God to enter upon those duties to the best of my abilities, but in view of the gradual decline of my physical, not to say mental powers, I am led to hope that your Board will be

³⁶⁴ The steamship "Southerner," Capt. F. A. Sampson, was wrecked on the Washington coast in the latter part of 1854.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:341.

³⁶⁵ Yreka sprang up as a result of the mining in Shasta County, California, which began in 1850. Important diggings opened in March, 1851, gave rise to the town, which was incorporated in 1854. It declined with the mines after 1857.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Calif.*, VI:494.

looking out for a man of ripe Christian experience and strong physical constitution to enter upon the responsibilities of this work after the present year. I feel that I have a right to ask for a more limited field which will call for less exposure in winter rains and the inconveniences of a frontier life. Yet I often feel that I would prefer the ways of Providence to those of my own choosings. I wish it to be distinctly understood by the Board that my personal inclinations have for a long time been to locate so that I could reach the extent of my field of labor by a day's ride. Should you find a suitable man to enter upon this work at an earlier period than the expiration of the present year, I will rejoice to facilitate his introduction. It seems to me that the labor of such a man in Oregon should not be dispensed with. As it relates to the work of collecting for the Home Mission Society, you know that I am willing to do all that I can in the furtherance of that object. It is likewise true that your Society ought to have found more pecuniary aid flowing into your treasury from Oregon. Yet your servants and their fellow laborers have been laboring as fast as they thought the churches would bear to bring about this object in as healthy and as permanent a manner as possible. We have to meet all the influence of monthly Sabbaths and Missouri opinions, and an educated anti-mission influence in our missionary churches. These prejudices are so far worn away I believe in all our churches that they, as churches, recognize the principle that our ministry should be given to the work and that they should be sustained somehow or other in that work. At our last association we made a direct effort to sustain one man in Lane County, which was an important missionary field. I should at that time have pleaded the cause of the Home Mission Society and asked that these efforts might in some way or other have gone through that channel, but for the fact that your Board was at the time sustaining no man but myself in Oregon. The right kind of work was doing to accomplish the work and open the sympathies of our brethren. The churches as a whole are coming up to

the work, although much slower than is desired by every liberal-souled disciple of Christ. It is hard teaching our brethren the lesson of being dead to the world and alive to God. Yet four churches, two of which were as little hopeful as any in the Association, have absolutely paid their minister (Br. Riley) not less than \$1000 the last year by buying him a claim and providing him with clothing and food for his family. Four more are paying Br. Chandler the present year nearly \$600. And I do not know of a church, small as our churches are, which pays their minister less than \$100 for one-fourth of the time, while they scarcely get the labors of the minister more than two days in a month, except in the riding to and from the appointments, which may take two days more. Thus you will perceive that your missionaries have not been indifferent to the true interests of Christ's church, although we have not been able to do so much as we would, nor to direct what is done through the channel which might be desired. I rejoice in the love of our divine Master that you have appointed two more missionaries for Oregon and that they are in their field of labor. The way is now open for me to work directly for you without putting on the air of supreme selfishness and, although we are feeling the effects of what the world calls hard times, I intend to try and do what I can for Br. Boyakin at Portland and Br. Stearns³⁶⁶ at Jacksonville by personal appeals to private brethren, as well as by collection in the churches, if I can get the subject before the churches, and I doubt not I can. But the amount that can be done this year cannot be expected to be large. I have no fears of injuring my ministerial character in this work if God goes with me. My greatest fear is that I may not do the work as well as some other man might. We feel that we must make an effort to sustain two ministers by the Association strictly as missionaries in destitute fields; in this all our brethren will probably unite. We have the men on the

³⁶⁶ This was probably Rev. M. N. Stearns, who had arrived that year from the East with his father, Rev. John Stearns, and was chosen pastor of the Table Rock (Jacksonville) Baptist Church.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:13.

ground whom we may probably employ, our brethren see them and know them, and have an assurance that something will be done for them in Oregon when they pay their money. I have felt, in view of all the circumstances, that we should aid in this kind of work, and, although we cannot do the work in the way we would desire, we shall do much of the work which we should do if all prejudices were removed and we were doing the work precisely as you would have us do it. We have with us an old brother, Thomas Taylor, formerly from Illinois (I think he formerly was in the service of the Home Mission Society in Ill.), who has a destitute field, embracing a part of Clackamas County and a part of Yam Hill County, in which there are a number of Baptist members scattered. The field locally is important, but the country is mostly timbered, consequently slow of improvement comparatively. One of the points I reported last winter, near the mouth of the Sandy on the Columbia River. A year's labor would probably result in the formation of from one to four churches. Br. Taylor's family consists of himself and wife. He says he can labor a year for \$300 and will run the risk of raising half that sum on the field. Br. Chandler proposes to pay \$25 of the balance. Br. Chandler is very desirous that he should be put into that field. Now will your Board make him the appointment under such conditions as you may think proper and require him to report to you and allow me to see what I can raise on the field for him, yet so as not to interfere with any efforts I may make for Br. Boyakin and Br. Stearns? Will you leave Br. Taylor to consult with Br. Chandler and myself respecting the field? The country we propose is as densely peopled and as destitute as any part of Oregon and the most remote point not more than 24 miles from Oregon City.

As ever your fellow-laborer in the vineyard of our common Master,

EZRA FISHER,
Exploring Agent.

Oregon City, O. Ter., May 4th, 1855.

Rev. B. M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

I some weeks since wrote you an explanation of the reason why I drew on you an order payable to George Abernathy & Co. to the amount of \$300. I have all the while supposed from the course that you had allowed me to pursue that you would grant me some privileges, on account of my distance and the length of time it took for me to get your drafts after requesting you to forward them. My pay has mostly come in goods and exchange of money collected here. You know I have always waited as much as I could to suit the convenience of the Society, and I trust I have not shown an unusual spirit of avarice in this matter. But it would be exceedingly mortifying to me as a prompt Christian minister in all my business relations to have my order protested and come back to Oregon so. I have never in my public life owed a man over \$200 at any given time, and never but once failed of meeting my pecuniary liabilities punctually at the time. Now if I have sinned in drawing this draft, I have sinned as I have done before, unadmonished. I sincerely regret to occasion you or the Board any trouble on that account or in any measure to occasion Abernathy to doubt my integrity. If your Board should protest the order, will they do me the favor to issue a draft in favor of me to that amount and pass it over to Abernathy & Co. and pay it immediately, as I have received the money and been obliged to pay out a part of it already to keep up my family. The remaining part is passing away in the same way. Will you do me the favor hereafter to settle my accounts at the end of each quarter, on the receipt of my quarterly report, and within three weeks from that time forward me a draft covering the amount due me at the time and let this be a standing order except when otherwise directed.

Rest assured, dear brother, that I do not make this request through any unkind feelings. . .

As ever yours,

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

Received June 8.

Oregon City, O. Ter., July 1st, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society for the first quarter of the year, ending June 30th, as General Itinerant.

I have labored 13 weeks in the quarter; preached 23 sermons; attended 12 prayer meetings, nine church covenant meetings; have assisted at the organization of the church in the city of Portland;³⁶⁷ have traveled to and from my appointments 494 miles; have visited religiously 30 families and 22 individuals. The church at Portland takes her place beside older ones of other denominations under favorable prospects, as you will learn by the reports of Br. Boyakin.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

General Itinerant.

Oregon City, O. Ter., July 1st, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as Exploring Agent for the first quarter ending June 30th, 1855. I have visited Portland, Santiam, Providence,³⁶⁸ Pleasant Butte, Lebanon, West Tualatin, West Union and Yam Hill churches, the Willam-

³⁶⁷ This was organized by Revs. W. F. Boyakin, H. Johnson, and the author, May 6, 1855.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:14. The author says there were eleven constituent members; Mattoon, ten.

³⁶⁸ The Providence Baptist Church in Linn County, at the forks of the Santiam River, was organized April 9, 1853.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:12. The other churches mentioned have previously been commented upon.

ette Baptist Association and Ministers' meeting.

Have collected \$24.48 by collection taken on Sabbath at the Association. Have obtained a subscription in Tualatin Plains of forty bushels of wheat to be paid to Br. Boyakin in Portland on or before the first day in Oct., to apply on his salary. Br. Boyakin will report the value to you as soon as received. It will probably be worth from \$0.75 to \$1.00 per bushel. Paid \$3.92 for traveling expenses and \$0.25 for postage—\$4.17. Have aided in the constitution of the first Baptist church in Portland with eleven members. Have preached 23 sermons and traveled to and from my appointments 494 miles.

All which is respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,
Exploring Agent.

Received Aug. 11.

Oregon City, O. Ter., July 2, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,
Cor. Sec. A. B. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

I have just returned from the annual meeting of the Willamette Baptist Association, which was held with the Yam Hill church, ten miles west of Lafayette, the seat of justice for Yam Hill County. As a business meeting, it exceeded in interest and harmony all preceding meetings. The churches appear to be gradually arousing to the importance of the ministry becoming devoted to the one great calling, the ministry of reconciliation, and that they should be sustained in that work by the churches. Three brethren now in the field have the assurance that their salary from the churches the present year will exceed \$600 each, and other churches are expressing a willingness to contribute according to their ability. The Association resolved that they would make an effort to sustain two missionaries the coming year, one in Lane County and vicinity and the other in Clackamas County and vicinity, and something over \$200

was subscribed on the spot. Resolutions were passed in favor of the great Christian enterprises, such as the Baptist Home Mission Society, Publication Society, etc. The changes in the Association were as follows: Six new churches received into the body,³⁶⁹ One hundred and twenty-three baptized; net gain, 232. Some efforts were made to remove the school from Oregon City, which resulted in a resolution to open subscriptions for a college in favor of five places, to-wit: Oregon City, Corvallis, Santiam, Cincinnati³⁷⁰ and Lafayette, and report next year. The Home Missionary Society is gradually securing the confidence of the denomination, but while this is said, other home mission societies are represented in Oregon, and we cannot predict the results. Elder Johnson is acting as a missionary of the Free Mission Society, but prudently, and at this session of our Association we met an agent for the Bible Union soliciting life memberships and offering for sale a portion of the Scriptures as translated by the Union, also introducing their periodicals. I have no objection to the Union's translating the Scriptures and selling them to whoever may wish to purchase. But we in Oregon must be wiser than our brethren at home, if the introduction of an agent to our little Baptist community, gathered from the ends of the earth, does not strike some discordant notes in our infant land. The Lord give us wisdom and prudence equal to our day, and save us from sinning in this matter.

As ever yours,

Received Aug. 11.

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., July 3, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. H. M. Soc.

Dear Brother:

I made my last quarter's report on the first instant. In

³⁶⁹ These six were the Union (Polk County), Good Hope (Linn County), Mount Zion (Lane County), Willamette Forks (Lane County), Palestine (Lane County), and First Portland Churches.—Minutes of Willamette Baptist Association and Mattoon, Bap. An. of Ore., 1:16, 17.

³⁷⁰ Cincinnati is the present Eola in Polk County.

this letter I wish to order you to attend to several branches of business for me. By this mail I shall order the discontinuance of the Christian Chronicle and substitute the New York Recorder and Baptist Register in its place. I shall also order the weekly Tribune, if it is furnished to ministers at \$1 per year. You will therefore meet the orders which I send you for the payment on the above-named papers. You will also pay an order which I shall send you for the Baptist Missionary Magazine. I shall also order you to pay three dollars to the agent for the Mothers' Journal.

You will, therefore, please send me a draft for the sum due me, after deducting twenty-four dollars and forty-eight cents (\$24.48), the amount of the collection taken up at the Willamette Association, and ten dollars (\$10) to meet the periodical demands against me, at your earliest convenience. Should the periodical bills exceed ten dollars, the publishers must wait till after I make my next quarter's report, as I am much in want of funds to meet my forthcoming expenses. Let the draft be drawn to me or order.

Respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, July 3d, 1855.

Rev. B. M. Hill, Cor. Sec. Soc.

Dear Brother:

Our school affairs are moving along but slowly. Our community is so fluctuating, being subject to so many excitements and so many fluctuations, and so extreme, that it is next to impossible to keep any class of scholars above a few months, except a few from the more able permanent citizens. We have been suffering the last twelve months all the inconveniences of stagnation in business.³⁷¹ Farmers have wheat and beef and pork and butter in profusion, but it is hard to convert their produce into cash or family supplies. Now another panic has struck the farmers. New and rich

³⁷¹ These hard times are assigned by Bancroft to Indian disturbances, and to the falling off in the yield of the California mines. Business was prostrated in California.—*Hist. of Ore.*, II:337.

gold diggings are beginning to be worked high up the Columbia near Fort Colville.³⁷² This is drawing away the floating laborers, and some of the farmers are leaving their standing wheat for the mines. It has not yet been ascertained how extensive the gold field is on the Columbia, or how productive it will prove, yet notwithstanding the high waters, inexperienced miners, Frenchmen and half-breeds are said to wash from fifteen to twenty dollars per day with nothing but pans. About \$5000 worth of the gold has already reached this place and is pronounced to be gold of the finest quality. With these and other and varied exciting causes moving upon the minds of a heterogenous community thrown together from every part of the globe, it is no strange thing that teachers become discouraged and efforts to cultivate the minds and morals of the rising generation should prove less successful than in older and better graduated communities. Although our school has failed of exerting that direct and salutary influence on the denomination which was anticipated, yet it has done much to elevate the views of the Baptists in Oregon and has shed its blessings, both direct and indirect, upon hundreds of our fellow citizens. I fear, however, that we shall be compelled to make another change of teachers, however much such a change is to be dreaded. Br. Post has already manifested discontent and I fear that it may before long ripen into a removal. I do not know that it is possible to find a thorough, self-sacrificing teacher who will merge all the interests of the school into the interest of the denomination so as to worthily claim the name of a missionary school teacher. Yet that should be the case with our teachers as well as with our home missionaries.

Br. Boyakin is doing well at Portland, is popular with his church and the world. I have but little doubt that the Masonic fraternity³⁷³ sympathize with him and lend him their

³⁷² This gold discovery was in the spring of 1855 and caused, as the author indicates, the usual stampede to the diggings.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Wash., Idaho and Mont.*, p. 108.

³⁷³ The first Masonic lodge in Oregon was organized at Oregon City in 1848 under a charter granted in 1846. By 1855 and 1856 lodges had become quite numerous.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:30, 415.

aid as a brother of the same order. I hope he will not overrate the privileges of that order. He is energetic and eloquent and abounds in figures and epithets. May God bless him abundantly. I expect to go south in three or four weeks. Shall be able to take up some collections for the Home Mission Society. Deacon Failing has engaged to take up a collection monthly in the Portland church for the Home Mission cause. Br. Boyakin will probably report the amount quarterly.

Yours with Christian esteem,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Aug. 11.

Oregon City, Aug. 2d, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Society.

Dear Brother:

Yours of May 25th was duly received. With this I shall send you the minutes of our Association. The new gold excitement in our territory at the present time calls for a communication from me. The gold region is on the large north fork of the Columbia River, about thirty miles above Fort Colville. It has now become quite certain that the mines are rich and they are supposed to be extensive. But nothing definite can be relied upon except that most of the French in the Willamette Valley have either been and returned and gone the second time or are preparing to go. Already about 1000 of the American population of the Willamette Valley are on their way to these new mines. Many more are preparing to go; others are anxiously awaiting the first reliable information. The most extravagant rumors are in circulation respecting the richness of the mines and the facilities of acquiring the golden treasures. It is pretty satisfactorily ascertained that the Roman priest at Colville has known of these mines for years and has enjoined secrecy upon the Indians. Rumors reliable say the chiefs forbid the Oregonians, except French and half-breeds, to dig till they

have treated with the Indian agent for their lands. Money is extremely scarce in this valley and, if there is much gold to be had, our citizens will have their proportion of it, even at the price of blood. They will not stand by, by the thousands, and see French Catholics, half-breeds and Indians monopolize the best of the diggings. Some reports say that the gold has been found on only two small bars of the river; others say that the region of gold is 300 miles in extent. I have been waiting for the last two weeks to get at facts before writing you, but this is safe at the present. Nearly all the lands between the Cascade Mountains and these mines, on both sides of the Columbia River,³⁷⁴ have been purchased of the Indians and now open one of the most inviting regions to the emigrant for settlement in North America. The Dalles must immediately become a point of importance and, should the mines prove rich and extensive, a point at The Dalles will become a second Sacramento and another at the Cascades, 45 miles below, will scarcely be less in importance. We should have a man at The Dalles at this moment, awake to all the interests of religion and humanity in that region. Trade is springing up at that point with great rapidity. The Methodist Church will undoubtedly have a man there in a few months. The Congregationalists are looking on with interest and have sent their man to survey that field. I shall visit that place as soon as I learn more definitely the state of things in relation to the mines. Will you have a man for The Dalles and Cascades as soon as possible. It will cost as much to sustain a man in that field as it does at Portland.

I am strongly inclined to the opinion that I shall settle as near the centre of middle Oregon as circumstances will justify, perhaps on the waters of the Walla Walla, at the close of this year, as a self-supporting missionary, to finish my days where I can be with my family and a little more exempt from responsibilities than in my present agency. But

³⁷⁴ This purchase was by the treaties with the Nez Perces, Cayuses, Walla Wallas, Umatillas, and Yakimas, in June, 1855, and with the John Day, Des Chutes and Wascopans, about the same time.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Ore.*, II:360-8.

I leave that in the hands of the All Wise Being to direct. My friends here decidedly approve of my plans. Very little can be done in the agency by way of collecting funds this summer or next, should the gold excitement prevail. Most of our men will go to the mines and we must preach to women and children and runners to and fro. If ever missionaries needed an unction from on high, ministers and churches in Oregon at this time are that people. O Lord, give grace to thy servants to make an entire consecration to Thee!

Last Sabbath I assisted in organizing a church of eleven members, fifteen miles northeast from this place, between Clackamas and Sandy Rivers. Next week I leave for the upper part of this valley. Our churches generally are passing through trials and declensions, such as are too common after revivals, where monthly preaching and monthly meetings take the place of weekly Sabbaths and faithful pastoral labors through the week. We are everywhere attempting to impress the churches with a sense of the importance of regular Sabbath preaching and constant pastoral labors, and not without success. Yet changes in this respect are slow, but will come in a few more years. I made my last quarterly report on the first of July and ordered you to pay for me ten dollars on periodicals. Also ordered you to forward me a draft for what will be my due, after paying those little periodical accounts. I rejoice at the prospect of harmony being restored to the churches on the Home Mission question. God grant that the Bible question may soon be put to rest. Our Bible Union brethren will have the Bible translated into the English language. I hope they will do the work faithfully and leave the American and Foreign Bible Society to prosecute her appropriate work unmolested and that the Peace which Christ left with the disciples may find a home in every church and every heart.

Respectfully yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Sept. 11.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Sept. 1st, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as General Itinerant for the second quarter ending Sept. 30th, 1855.

I have labored 13 weeks; preached 21 sermons; attended five prayer meetings and six church covenant meetings; two yearly meetings of the churches; visited religiously 34 families and 26 individuals; have assisted in the organization of the Cedar Creek church, Clackamas County; have traveled to and from my appointments 818 miles. Four persons have been received into the La Creole church by baptism after a sermon I preached on the subject of communion at the request of the pastor, Br. Riley. Monthly concert and weekly prayer meeting are observed in the Oregon City church. Connected with the churches which I have visited are small Sabbath schools in the Oregon City, Pleasant Butte and Santiam churches.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Sept. 1st, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as Exploring Agent for the second quarter ending Sept. 30th, 1855.

I have visited Oregon City, Corvallis, Cascades and The Dalles, Oregon City, Cedar Creek, Luckiamute,³⁷⁵ Lebanon, Pleasant Butte, Santiam and Providence churches; traveled to and from my appointments 818 miles; labored 13 weeks. Have taken up the following collection:

| | |
|---|---------|
| In the Luckiamute church, \$2.00..... | \$ 2.00 |
| In the Pleasant Butte church, \$6.58..... | 6.58 |

³⁷⁵ The Luckiamute Church was organized April 1, 1854.—Mattoon, *Bap. An. of Ore.*, I:16. Luckiamute is about four miles south of Monmouth, in Polk County.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| In the Santiam church, \$5.80 | 5.80 |
| In Oregon City church, \$6.12..... | 6.12 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total | \$20.50 |
| Paid for traveling expenses | \$16.45 |
| For postage | .20 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total | \$16.65 |

which you will charge to my account.

Preached 21 sermons; have attended the constitution of the church on Cedar Creek. . . .

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—The extra traveling expenses are for a tour to The Dalles, which I shall make as soon as the yearly meetings are over this month. If I fail to go I shall deduct the amount in my next report.

Received Oct. 17.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Oct. 3d, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Brother:

Last Thursday I took the steamer for The Dalles and arrived at The Cascades about eight in the evening. Found The Cascades in a high state of excitement through fear of a nightly attack of the Yaccima [Yakima] and Klickitat [Klickitat] Indians, which was daily expected.³⁷⁶ About 500 of their warriors were reported to be encamped in a plain about 35 or 40 miles northeast of The Cascades, who are said to aim at the destruction of the whites at The Cascades and thus cut off communication between the Willamette Valley and the upper country (or middle Oregon). Some 15 whites are reported as already murdered by these tribes.

³⁷⁶ This was the beginning of the Indian War of 1855-6, which arose partly over dissatisfaction with the treaties of 1855, and partly over the large influx of whites, and which involved Eastern Oregon and nearly all of the present Washington.—Bancroft, *Hist. of Wash., Ida. and Mont.*, pp. 108-170.

chiefly miners; one Indian agent is included in the number. Yet Indian rumors are uncertain. Suffice it to say that I found The Cascades mostly deserted by the women and children. The men had organized themselves into a military company for self defense. The family residing on the north side of the river midway between The Cascades and The Dalles had moved to The Dalles for safety. Thirty soldiers had been sent down from The Dalles to guard the house and outbuildings. While I lay at The Cascades an express came down from The Dalles making a requisition for all the soldiers that could be spared at Vancouver to be sent immediately to The Cascades. With this state of excitement, I thought little could be expected from a visit to The Dalles, as this warlike appearance from the Indians will seriously retard the settlement of the whole upper country for a year or two at the least. Consequently I returned without even spending a night on the land.

All the Pend d' Oreille miners have returned, except a few French and perhaps a very few whites. About 25 or 30 white families are settled in the vicinity of The Dalles, and ten or twelve more, besides some fifty or sixty French whites and half-breeds, are in the Walla Walla Valley in the vicinity of the Whitman Mission Station. Although we have some 80 or 100 regular troops at The Dalles, these scattered families will be in great danger, should the Indian war become general with the tribes above the Cascade Mountains. O, when will wars cease, and men everywhere submit to the glorious Prince of Peace! If I were a young man, I sometimes think I should delight to propagate the blessed gospel among these tribes and see if they could not be saved from the brutal lusts of outlawed whites and the Jesuital intrigues and superstition of the Roman priests. I have but little doubt that the same artful teachers are at work with those Indians that were accessory to the Whitman massacre. O, when shall that great City Babylon, in whom was found the blood of the prophets and of saints and of all that were slain upon the

earth, be thrown down and found no more! Oh Lord, hasten it in Thy time.

I shall start tomorrow for a tour in the upper part of the valley and propose visiting some of the feeble churches in Lane County, if God permits. I have nothing more that is new to communicate at this time, but shall communicate on the subject of the school in this place in a few weeks. I fear Br. Post will set up an independent school about two miles from this place in the opening of the spring.³⁷⁷ But I cannot communicate with you officially on that subject till the committee visit him and report to the trustees.

Yours very affectionately,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—The school is now full. May God pour out His Holy Spirit upon it.

E. FISHER.

Received Nov. 14.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Nov. 27th, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill, D. D.,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bapt. Home Mission Society, New York.

Dear Brother:

Yours of Sept. 1st, containing draft No. 8650, \$376.24, was duly received. We here think that Br. Post has very little reason to complain respecting support. The school, according to his statement last spring, has been a paying concern ever since the first three weeks after he commenced teaching, and I am quite sure it has paid better since that time than it did before, if he succeeds as well in collecting as he did formerly.

Private. His course with us as a board has been rather singular. He has from time to time avowed his intention to open an independent school about two miles from town. Last May the Board of Trustees met to take into consideration the state of the school and invited him to meet with us.

³⁷⁷ This school was opened and ran for a time just outside the present southern limits of Oregon City.

The first meeting he did not attend. A committee was appointed to wait on him and inquire into sundry reports which we thought unfavorable to the prosperity of the Oregon City College, such as the following: That he had changed the name of the school in his advertisements; had proposed to take females as scholars, which he has since done; had privately expressed his determination to open an independent school, as stated above, without consulting with any of the Trustees on the subject, and that he had announced in a church meeting that he did not know who the Trustees were, except two or three, and he did not care. The committee waited on him and inquired after most of these reports. He made some apologies and explanations. He was told that an attempt to set up an independent school would be injurious to all parties and especially to himself; that the Board of Trustees could not cherish the scheme for a moment. He agreed to desist from that enterprise, if the Trustees would allow him to reside on his land and teach in our school building. He was told that we did not care particularly where he resided, provided he discharged the duties of a teacher faithfully. At that time he probably would have been dismissed but for Br. Chandler and myself. We felt that it was difficult to secure the labors of a competent teacher and that the Home Missionary Society had already sent us three teachers and we had little hope they would send us the fourth. We, therefore, smothered the bursting flame and hoped he would be more prudent in the future. But it is probable he will open an independent school as soon as next summer, unless he can again be persuaded to desist. As a teacher, with few exceptions, we have little occasion to find fault. Yet we have always felt that it would have been desirable that the school should have made a more decidedly religious impression on the public mind. In view of all the circumstances, we feel that it is safe to treat this matter kindly till we see some opening in providence for action.

As ever yours,

EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, Nov. 27th, 1855.

Rev. B. M. Hill, D. D.

Dear Brother:

Br. Boyakin will probably leave Portland at the close of the year. He has so signified in a communication to the church in that place. I regret much that his stay must be so short. I believe his plea principally is the sickness of his family. No doubt the town is subject to intermittent and remittent fevers during the summer and autumn, but much less severe than in many of the towns on the Mississippi River. Should he not settle at Corvallis, he will probably leave Oregon. The brethren and citizens at Corvallis appear quite solicitous that he should settle with them and they think they can raise \$500 towards his salary for the first year. They have invited him and requested me to exert my influence to induce him to go to that place. I shall not encourage a separation at Portland, but, should he conclude to go to Corvallis, he will need about \$300, above the \$500 the citizens propose raising him, to sustain his family. It is to be regretted that the ministers should return to the States after they have incurred all the expense and privations of removing overland to Oregon. May the Good Lord direct him and the little feeble band at Portland to His name's praise! Portland must have a minister if practicable.

Yours affectionately,

EZRA FISHER.

N. B.—At the strong solicitude of the Santiam church, I have consented to take the pastoral charge of that feeble, afflicted band at the expiration of the current year. Elder Richmond Cheadle, an influential member of the church, has avowed his disfellowship with that church. He will probably join the Presbyterian Church, and with him several more may go. It is thought advisable by all with whom I have consulted that I should accept their invitation and, as they propose to move my family immediately and the place will be more central for my winter's labors than this, I have consented to move in a few days. I shall hereafter address you

at Washington Butte Post-office, Linn County, O. T. You will still address me at this place and the letters will be promptly forwarded to me at Washington Butte. It is thought that my presence at the Santiam church may be instrumental in arresting the sophistical arguments in favor of promiscuous communion, while I may be at home the coming winter. This situation was unsought and entirely unexpected on my part, and, after much prayer on the subject, I have concluded that it was one of Providence's calls. The church is very nearly in the center of the valley and removed far away from most of the talent in the ministry. Should the Board require it, I will make up the time I shall lose in moving, which will be but a few days, after the first of April.

Yours in gospel bonds,

EZRA FISHER.

Received Jan. 15, 1856.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Nov. 28th, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill, D. D.,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as General Itinerant for the third quarter ending Dec. 31st, 1855. I have labored 13 weeks in the quarter; preached 27 sermons; attended 11 prayer meetings; one yearly meeting; six church covenant meetings; visited religiously 42 families and 31 individuals; traveled to and from my appointments 660 miles.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

General Itinerant.

P. S.—The results of the yearly meeting with the Providence church in the forks of the Santiam and a subsequent meeting held in the vicinity is about 70 hopeful conversions and about 40 baptized. A new church constituted; also a protracted meeting held on the south fork of Santiam; some eight or ten baptized and a church constituted. For the last five months the French Prairie church have been somewhat

revived and have had additions almost every month amounting to six or eight, and the interest still continues. This is in Br. Chandler's field of labor.

Yours, EZRA FISHER.

Oregon City, O. Ter., Nov. 28th, 1855.

To Rev. Benjamin M. Hill, D. D.,

Cor. Sec. of Am. Home Mission Soc.:

Herein I send you my report of labor under the appointment of the Home Mission Society as Exploring Agent for the third quarter ending Dec. 31st, 1855.

I have visited Corvallis twice, Albany, Salem and Oregon City, Corvallis, Oregon City, French Prairie, Shilo, Santiam, Willamette Forks, and Palestine churches. Have labored 13 weeks during the quarter; traveled to and from my appointments 660 miles; have paid for traveling expenses \$3.00; postage, 30 cents; total \$3.30.

N. B.—Last quarter I was detained from going to The Dalles, consequently my traveling expenses were four dollars overcharged. You will therefore deduct four dollars from that quarter's traveling expenses, which will then read \$9.25, instead of \$13.25.

Respectfully submitted,

EZRA FISHER,

Exploring Agent.

Received Jan. 15, 1856.

Oregon City, Oregon Ter., Nov. 29th, 1855.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bapt. Home Mission Society.

Dear Brother:

To accommodate Brother George C. Chandler, I have received of him thirty-two dollars and fifty cents (\$32.50) to be paid to Edward H. Fletcher, 141 Nassau St., New York.

\$32.50

Mothers' Journal, 118 Arch St., Philadelphia..... 5.00

Missionary Magazine, 33 Somerset St., Boston..... 3.00

Total\$40.50

Also Mothers' Journal for Mrs. Lucy Jane G.

Latourette 1.00

Total\$41.50

I shall order you to pay the above in a few weeks. Deduct \$41.50 from the amount due me on the receipt of the report accompanying this and forward me a draft to cover the balance, which will then be my due, at your earliest convenience.

EZRA FISHER.

Soda Springs, Linn Co., O. Ter., Jan. 1st, 1856.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.,

Baptist Mission Rooms, N. York City.

Pay the agent for the Mothers' Journal, 118 Arch Street, Philadelphia, five dollars and charge the same to my account.

EZRA FISHER.

Soda Springs, Linn Co., O. Ter., Jan. 1st, 1856.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.,

Baptist Mission Rooms, New York City.

Pay the agent of the Baptist Missionary Magazine, No. 33 Somerset Street, Boston, Mass., three dollars and charge the same to my account.

EZRA FISHER.

Washington Butte, Linn Co., Oregon, Mar. 31, 1857.

Rev. Benjamin M. Hill,

Cor. Sec. Am. Bap. Home Mission Soc.

Dear Brother Hill:

I now take up my long neglected pen to give you a brief outline of the cause of Christ in Oregon at present; and I may say at once that we are all famishing under the influ-

ence of a spiritual dearth. The results of the revivals in '55 and '56 are being witnessed to an alarming degree. In some churches, most of the converts continue to maintain a form of godliness; in others, more than half the number of those who united with the church are now walking in the broad road of sin, I fear, to ruin; and there are churches in which the wayside hearers and professors hold a still greater proportion. Do you ask the cause of this declension? I conceive it is not one but legion. Monthly Sabbaths, and in too many instances no Sabbaths, and visiting represent in a great degree all Bible reading, as well as almost all religious reading among the youths. Sabbath school and Bible classes may be sustained, but it is only the few of our youths belonging to religious families who can be induced to become habitual members. Our members are in each church scattered over large districts of country, with few conveniences for bringing their families together on the Lord's day. Those who would concentrate their influence cannot without a sacrifice larger than they can willingly make.

And then the pastoral relation in the churches, beyond that of preaching on Saturday and Sabbath once in a month to a given church, and occasionally visiting the most delinquent members, is merely nominal; we have but two Baptist ministers in Oregon who profess to give themselves to the work of the ministry, and one of them is talking of leaving for the States; the other is laboring at a salary of \$300, and that from the States, while clerks' hire is from \$600 to \$2200 per annum. Our families are supported as Paul supported himself while laboring for the Corinthian Church.

And then the question of slavery, as well as that of temperance, must needs be noted, both in and out of the church, as we approach the period of the adoption of a state constitution, and as we hear of the wrongs endured by the Kansas patriots on account of their love for the inalienable rights of man. A large portion of our members are from slave-holding

states, and a larger portion are professedly opposed to slavery, "but all their sympathies are with the South." What a paradox!

And then, too, many of our revivals have singing as the instrument more than humiliation, prayer, the reading of the word of God and the preached word. With such a train of causes, what could we expect other than the sad results we are now witnessing through our whole territory? Is it a wonder, under such influences, that our best ministers should talk sometimes of leaving the ministry, and betake themselves to teaching, as a means of procuring an honest livelihood? Ministers indeed seem willing to make great sacrifices for the cause of the blessed Redeemer, and will preach what they can under the circumstances. But they must become secularized. Their minds will not be fruitful in word and doctrine, and all the blighting influences of an ignorant, undisciplined, disorganized ministry and churches driven by every wind of doctrine must be the tendency in such a state of things.

Now what is to be done? Should we not have in Oregon at least two substantial, efficient ministers, fully sustained, who will approve themselves workmen not needing to be ashamed? Should not the Home Mission Society immediately give us such men, either by sending us the men, or appointing such as we have among us?

Should your Board appoint Brother Chandler to the Oregon City church, that church would do what they could to help sustain him. Portland church is virtually extinct for the want of a suitable man. I would suggest that the second man be appointed to locate himself discretionarily, but at some important point.

With the interest of the churches, our school at Oregon City has suffered. Br. Post has withdrawn from that school and set up an independent school less than two miles from the building erected by the Baptists and where he formerly taught. His course with us has not been in harmony with

the interests of the Baptists. I think I speak the sentiment of the whole denomination, so far as he is known, when I say that his whole course has seemed to be governed by his views of his own interest in dollars and cents.

At present the school is taught by a son and daughter of Br. Hezekiah Johnson, your former missionary, and the school is doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances. But we need a teacher qualified to teach the higher branches of mathematics and Latin and Greek, as well as the natural sciences. We all think such a man would be well sustained and patronized by the denomination and the citizens, if he will come to us willing to identify himself with the Baptist interests. A liberal-minded man need feel no embarrassments on this subject. The public mind in Oregon seems wonderfully impressed with the thought that they are to have no good schools in Oregon except such as are under the fostering care of some religious denomination; and to the evangelical churches they will look for good high schools till they learn effectually that the churches will not assume this responsibility. We might to-day have half a dozen flourishing high schools in Oregon, if we had the houses and teachers and necessary apparatus. The question is a grave one. Shall we as Baptists suffer these positions to slide over into the hands of the Methodists and Congregationalists? Or, what is worse, leave the rising generation in Oregon unprovided with even the means of acquiring a business education, and our churches uncared for in the great work of raising up a living ministry in our midst? Will you once more send us a man for Oregon City University? I write officially.

Yours truly,

EZRA FISHER.

A.

Adams County, Ill., 87.
 Albany, Oregon, 338.
 American and Foreign Bible Society, 79, 85.
 American Baptist Publication Society, 211, 352.
 American Bible Society, 79.
 American Sunday School Union, 9, 51, 67.
 Amherst College, 6.
 Applegate, Jesse, 350.
 Astoria, 15, 16, 17, 172, 175, 199, 208, 233, 280.
 Atkinson, George H., 21, 308, 336, 375, 419.

B.

Bagley, Daniel, 366.
 Baptist Church at Indianapolis, 36.
 Baptist Home Mission Society, 7, 31.
 Banner and Pioneer, 98.
 Beatty, A. L., 111.
 Benson, A. G. and A. W., 174, 186.
 Benton County, 339.
 Berkley, J. G., 415.
 Berry, William, 220.
 Bethany, Ill., 75, 78.
 Bloomington, 10, 11, 102, 105, 107, 120.
 Blue River, 50.
 Bond, James, 209, 217.
 Bond, Mrs., 259.
 Bowen, Jacob, 95.
 Boyakin, W. F., 448, 449, 469, 472.
 Brabrook, Rev., 153, 155.
 Brutus, 203, 205.
 Buffalo, 34.
 Burlington, 133.

C.

Cadell, Mary, 253.
 California, 16, 19, 136, 206, 210, 220, 226, 230, 235, 238, 240, 255, 262, 270, 322.
 Callipooia, 265, 267.
 Cambridge, Vt., 7.
 Campbell, Alexander, 35, 37, 40.
 Campbell, Hector, 459.
 Campbellites, 38, 40, 48, 54, 56, 137, 351.
 Canemah, 324, 325.
Carolina, 296.
 Carter, Tolbert, 354.
 Cascades, 13.
 Cascade Falls, 442, 452, 477.
 Cayuse War, 218, 221, 228, 233.
 Champoeg, 346.
 Chandler, George C., 292, 307, 320, 324, 328, 344, 345, 359, 361, 364, 388, 392, 393, 412, 419.
 Cheadle, Richard, 20.

Cheadle, Richmond, 295, 310, 322, 348, 385.
 Chehalis, 379.
 Chehalem Valley, 172, 252.
 Cholera, 42.
 Cincinnati, Oregon, 303.
 City Bible Society, 216.
 Clackamas Church, 428.
 Clark Cyrus G., 147.
 Cleveland, 34.
 Coe, Nathaniel, 434.
 Coloma, 410.
 Clatsop Plains, 16, 17, 182, 253, 270, 280.
 Columbia River, 13, 268.
 Colville, Fort, 472.
 Cone, Spencer Houghton, 317.
 Congregationalists, 80, 263, 336, 437.
 Connersville, 50, 65.
 Coos Bay, 404, 405.
 Cornelius, Aaron, 341.
 Corvallis, 339, 341, 342, 348, 385, 394, 457, 481.
 Corvallis Association, 18.
 Council Bluffs, 150.
 Covington, Ind., 41.
 Cowlitz, 372.
 Cramb, A. B., 422, 440.
 Cranfill, Isom, 249.
 Crawford, Luther, 73.
 Crawford, Medorum, 279.
 Cressey, Timothy R., 67, 68.
 Cross and Baptist Journal, 67.
 Cumberland, 52.
 Cushing, John and Caleb, 173, 174.

D.

Dalles, The, 13, 25, 28, 168, 381, 441, 451, 455, 474, 478.
Dare, Mary, 229, 232.
 Davenport, Ia., 10, 11, 101, 107, 125, 134, 140, 154.
 Davis, W. M., 428, 445.
 Dayton, 34.
 Dedham, 5.
 Deer Creek, 405, 413.
 Des Moines, 133.
 De Vore, John F., 380.
 De Witt, 107.
 Disciples of Christ, see Campbellites.
 Dysentery, 257.

E.

Ebey, I. N., 371., 380.
 Education in Oregon, 229, 236, 243, 245, 247, 266, 267, 271, 275, 279.
 Eells, 219.
 Elkins, Mrs. James, 24.
 Elledge, Jesse, 96.
Ellen and Louisa, 322.
 Elliott, Rev., 134.
 Episcopalians, 334.

- F.**
- Failing, Josiah, 322, 434, 437.
 Fairmont, Rev., 52, 60.
 Fall Creek, 60, 61.
 Fisher, Aaron, 5.
 Fisher, Ann Eliza, 258.
 Fisher, Anthony, 5.
 Fisher, Benjamin, 5.
 Fisher, Ezra, birth, 5; education, 6, 7; goes to Indiana, 8; goes to Iowa, 10; goes to Illinois, 11; goes to Oregon, 12; personal appearance, 22.
 Fisher, Francis Wayland Howard, 258.
 Fisher, Lucy Jane, 258.
 Fisher, Mrs., 37; death of, 423, 426.
 Fisher, Sara, 5.
 Fisher, Timothy, 258, 259.
 Food in early Oregon, 14, 18, 196.
 Ford, Thomas H., 95.
 Forest Grove, 28, 248, 356, 398.
 Fort Hall, 124, 219.
 Fort Laramie, 162.
 Franklin, 41, 49, 51.
 Fremont, James C., 124.
 French Prairie, 170, 249, 347.
 French Prairie Church, 329, 337.
 Franklin College, 9, 58, 72.
 Fuller, Andrew, 211.
- G.**
- Galston, Captain, 199, 215, 277.
 Gary, George, 203, 205.
 Gearhart, 17.
 Going, Jonathan, 7, 31-83.
 Gold, 278, 394; discovery of, 262; discovered in California, 230, 254; at Fort Colville, 472, 473; in Rogue River Valley, 331, 378.
 Granville, Ill., 122.
 Graves, J. M., 51.
 Gray, Roberts, 439.
 Greencastle, Ind., 41.
 Greensburg, Ind., 43.
 Griggsville, 96.
- H.**
- Hall, Colonel, 255.
 Hall, E. O., 206.
 Harding, Samuel, 48, 50, 52, 56, 64.
 Hastings party, 198.
 Hawkins, John, 43.
 Henderson, Sarah Fisher, 11.
Henry, 199, 229.
 Hill, Benjamin, 205.
 Hill, C. M., 28.
 Hill, G. W., 28.
 Hill, Reuben C., 327, 338, 339, 341.
 Hillsboro, 14.
 Holman, Rev., 52.
 Hood River, 453.
 Howland and Aspenwall Company, 408.
- Hubbard, David, 428.
 Huchins, James, 99.
 Hudson Bay Company, 193, 219, 220.
 Hunt, Thomas Dwight, 238.
- I.**
- Illinois, 71.
 Illinois Baptist Education Society, 78, 98.
 Illinois Sunday School Union, 78.
 Ilwaco, 280, 322.
 Immigration to Oregon, of 1846, 198; of 1847, 214; of 1851, 328; of 1852, 354.
 Independence, Ia., 10, 150.
 Indians, 381.
 Indiana Baptist Education Society, 19, 158, 66.
 Indian War, 218, 220, 228; of 1853, 417; of 1855, 477.
 Iowa, 10, 102, 135, 151, 153.
 Iowa City, 110.
- J.**
- Jacksonville, 351, 359, 398, 407, 457.
 Jeffers, J., 20, 21, 275.
 Jeffers, Franklin, 279.
 Johnson, Hezekiah, 12, 13, 20, 21, 22, 132, 136, 13, 142, 155, 159, 188, 193, 225, 249, 263, 267, 275, 282, 288, 300, 333, 335, 388, 392, 462, 487.
 Johnson, Mary, 20.
 Johnson, W. C., 279, 426.
- K.**
- Kendall, T. J., 165.
 Kilburn, Captain W. K., 199.
 Kinney, R. C., 263.
 Klamath, 244.
- L.**
- La Bish, Lake, 347.
 La Creole, 338.
 La Fayette, Ind., 41.
 Land Laws, 230.
 Latourette, Ann E. Fisher, 7.
 Latourette, L. D. C., 345.
 Latourette, Lucy J. G. Fisher, 16.
 Lawrenceburg, 52.
 Lawrence, Rev., 33, 39, 40.
 Leach, Rev., 73.
 Lead, 108.
 Lebanon Church, 337, 339, 344, 415.
 Lee County, 133.
 Leland, 434, 437.
 Lemon, Joseph, 105.
 Lenox, David T., 14, 15, 18, 144, 166, 247.
 Lenox, Edward, 13, 255.
 Leverett, Rev., 72.
 Linn City, 318, 324.
 Linnton, 13, 247.
 Logansport, Ind., 43, 59, 65, 70.
 Luckiamute, 14, 172.

M.
 Marion County, Ind., 39, 329.
Mary, 453.
 Marysville, see Corvallis.
 Massachusetts Sunday School Society, 201.
 Masons, 472.
Matilda, 235, 242.
 Matlock, W. T., 250, 263, 315, 325.
 Mathews, Rev., 67.
 McCarty, Nicholas, 56.
 McCoy, James, 42.
 McLoughlin, John, 13, 263.
 McMinnville College, 21, 28, 282, 300.
Medora, 222.
 Methodists, 34.
 Methodist Church, 20, 11§ 130, 186, 195, 203, 263, 264, 334, 365, 380, 406, 419, 437, 459.
 Mexican War, 195, 200.
 Military Tract, 82.
 Millard (Fisher) Amelia, 23.
 Mill Creek, 264, 265.
 Miller, Richard, 209, 262.
 Milwaukie, Oregon, 305, 318.
 Mollala, 20, 263, 266, 267.
 Molalla Church, 249.
 Moline, 129.
 Moore, Betty, 5.
 Morgan, Lewis, 51, 64.
 Mt. Pleasant, Ill., 11.
 Muscatine, Ia., see Bloomington.

N.
 National Popular Education, 296.
 National Road, 52.
 Nehama Agency, 160-163.
 Nelson, 86.
 New London Emigration Society Constitution, 159-161.
 Newell, George P., 303, 322.
 Newton Theological Seminary, 7.
 Noblesville, Ind., 41, 43, 51.

O.
 Ogle, Rev., 105.
 Oregon, 11-14, 120, 122, 124, 132-187; described, 211-213, 226, 377-384.
 Oregon Baptist Education Society, 20, 266, 267, 281-283, 286.
 Oregon City, 13, 19, 20, 22, 143, 158, 165, 188, 193, 209, 262, 267, 273, 277, 391, 406, 407, 431, 325, 335, 282, 285, 292.
 Oregon City Baptist Church Building, 225.
 Oregon City College, 336, 352, 363, 373, 374, 386-391, 417, 433, 437, 439, 457, 470, 479, 480, 486, 283, 284, 286-292, 300, 301, 304, 305, 309, 314, 320, 323, 326, 335.
 Oregon City University, 21.
 Oregon Institute, 169, 250, 365.
 Oregon Land Law, 334.

Oregon Land Bill, 313.
 Orr, David, 99.
 Owen County, 39.

P.

Pacific City, see Ilwaco.
 Parkhurst, 102, 106, 112.
 Parks, N., 78.
 Parrish Gap, 23, 24.
 Parrish, Josiah L., 381.
 Payson, 98.
 Peace Society, 55.
 Peck, J. M., 171.
 Pendleton, Ind., 51.
 Perry, M., 259.
 Pettygrove, F. W., 174.
 Pierce, T. J., 28.
 Pleasant Butte Church, 446.
 Pleasant Run, 61.
 Porter, William, 209, 249, 267.
 Portland, Oregon, 182, 296, 297, 312, 325, 334, 393, 434, 436, 448-450, 456, 468.
 Portland Academy, 379.
 Port Orford, 379.
 Post, J. D., 353, 364, 375, 401, 407, 409, 421, 433, 437, 462, 472, 479, 480, 486.
 Presbyterians, 16, 34, 130.
 Presbyterian Church, 62, 334, 351, 366.
 Prices, 224, 275, 278, 295, 332, 333, 360.
 Protracted Meeting, 92, 105.
 Providence Church, 399.
Psalmist, 215, 227.
 Puget Sound, 16, 169, 172, 185, 209, 213, 304, 327, 330, 369, 371, 379, 401.

Q.
 Quincy, Ill., 9, 10, 71, 73-100.

R.
 Railroads, 80, 84, 87.
 Read, J. S., 324, 328, 343, 350, 353, 359, 363, 368, 393, 402.
 Rees, William, 52.
 Rice, Levi A., 273, 359.
 Richardson, Wm. P., 162.
 Richmond, Nathaniel, 51, 56.
 Rickreall, 172, 207, 280.
 Riley, C. C., 439.
 Robb, James R., 21.
 Rochester, Ia., 112, 114.
 Rock Island, 11, 107, 126.
 Rock River, Ill., 10.
 Rockville, Ind., 41, 42.
 Rodgers, Andrew, 29.
 Rogue River, 21, 331, 345, 378.
 Rogue River Valley, 403, 404, 417.
 Roman Catholic Church, 80, 118., 144, 145, 169, 170, 181, 195, 201, 214, 220, 263, 282, 287, 330, 454, 473.
 Ross, Charles L., 206, 210, 256.
 Rushville, Ill., 71.
 Rexford, John, 347.

- S.**
- Salaries, 8, 12, 17, 41, 89, 90, 100, 110, 120, 132, 152, 157, 197, 200, 209, 216, 217, 223, 233, 278, 279, 334, 336, 340, 341, 345, 347, 357, 367, 370, 397, 402, 419, 448, 449, 462, 465, 485.
 Salem, Ore., 19, 264, 303, 347.
 361, 365, 408, 447.
 Salem, Ind., 42.
 San Diego, 27.
 Sandwich Islands, 204, 206, 222, 240, 242.
 Sandy River, 452.
 San Francisco, 16, 206, 210, 226, 240, 253.
 Santiam, 265, 266.
 Santiam Church, 24, 385, 421.
 Santiam River, 250, 254.
 Scottsburg, 378.
 Sedwick, George C., 67.
 Seley, Rev., 126.
Shark, 192.
 Shasta, 331.
 Shattuck, E. D., 417.
 Shelbyville, Ind., 50, 51, 56.
 Shiloh, 265.
 Shiloh Church, 329, 287, 339, 347, 415, 427.
 Shiveley, Charles, 426.
 Sick Creek, 55, 66.
 Skipanon, 246.
 Slavery, 25, 485.
 Snelling, Vincent, 14, 15, 144, 162, 207, 209, 216, 225, 248, 251, 261, 270, 280, 296, 329, 338.
 Sodaville, 24.
 South Yamhill, 179.
 Spaulding, 219.
Spectator, 185.
 Spencer, Ind., 39.
 Sperry, William, 24, 334, 351, 416, 446.
 Spokane, 219.
 Springfield, Vt., 7, 31.
 Stanford, N. B., 148.
 Stark, Benjamin, 177.
 St. Anthony Falls, 128-156.
 Stearns, M. N., 465.
 Stevens, Thomas, 354, 385, 405.
 St. Helen, 144.
 St. Joseph, Mo., 12.
 Sullivan's Creek, 255.
 Sunday Schools, 36, 206, 208, 217, 232, 234, 284, 293, 297, 413.
- T.**
- Taft, Lucy, 7.
 Taylor, Thomas, 466.
 Temperance, 202.
 Temperance Societies, 55, 98, 108, 137.
 Terwallomey River, 259.
 Texas, 10, 88, 91, 93, 96, 97, 99.
 Thompson, Lewis, 17, 202.
 Thornton, Mrs. N. M., 283, 295.
- Thurston, M., 296, 308.
 Tillamook, 379.
Toulon, 177, 180.
 Townsend, Thomas C., 55.
 Trabne, Aaron, 96.
 Tualatin Plains, 13, 167, 179, 207, 229, 231, 266.
 Tualatin Valley, 19.
 Tuallaty Plains, see Tualatin Plains.
- U.**
- Umpqua, 244, 327, 331, 345, 348, 358, 378, 404, 405.
 Umpqua River, 21.
Undine, 19, 238, 240, 277.
 University of Oregon, 457.
- V.**
- Van Brunt, Rev., 105.
 Vancouver, Wash., 267.
 Vermont Baptist State Convention, 33.
- W.**
- Wabash and Erie Canal, 80, 84, 87.
 Waller, A. F., 381.
 Walker, 219.
Wapsipinicon, 105.
 Wapsipinikie, 10.
 Washington Butte, 26.
 Webster's Spelling Book, 186.
 Wendell, Mass., 6.
 Weston, Rodolphus, 385, 395-397.
 West Union Church, 14, 15, 18, 385, 395-397.
 Wheeler, O. D., 19.
 Wheeler, O. C., 261.
 Whitby's Island, 213, 379.
 White, Elijah, 164.
 White River, 34.
 Whitman, Marcus, 29.
 Whitman Massacre, 218-220.
Whiton, 199, 206, 216, 227.
 Wilbur, Rev., 250.
 Willamette Baptist Association, 18, 438.
 Willamette Valley Baptist Association, 225, 229, 248.
 Willamette River, 20.
 Willamette Valley, 19, 142, 172, 208, 262-270.
 Williams, Eliphelet, 50.
 Wilkes, Charles, 172.
 Wilmot, William S., 353.
 Winchel's Works, 47.
 Winchester, 349, 359.
 Woods, James V. A., 739, 50, 56, 58, 59, 70.
 Wyoming, Ia., 102.
- Y.**
- Yamhill, 266.
 Yamhill County, 15.
 Yamhill Valley, 251.
 Youngs Bay, 192.



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