

To

Secretaries
A. S. Society;

Inalienable Plains
Oregon Ter., Jan. 10th 1853.

Dear Brethren, -

The direction is, respecting benevolent effort for the cause of the Church of Christ, that every one lay by in store, "as God hath prospered." I therefore tender to your Society and to my own county, Washington, my services as a tract distributor to every family that shall be found in the same when the books shall arrive.

My services and that of horse, I offer as a gratuity, so far as I pay out money, I would expect it refunded. The last tract I received from you was a package of \$10, worth, & on which I paid six dollars freight, have sold, 50 cents worth, perhaps, but this I was able to do and was thankful for it. My habit has been to take with me a packet of tracts, to the ^{more distant} small villages where I might occasionally preach, and distribute them at the close of service.

It is now about time I should be getting more, & have therefore offered as above, which, of course, is upon the supposition that you have no one else engaged for that service.

There is some reason, perhaps, for me to go through the county as above, having been the first minister in the county, may verily,

my family was the first sublime family in in it. and whenever I have offered such, or like services, I have been respectfully received, and I am known to some extent in the county, as one that does not readily give back before the sides of evil.

I do not know precisely the number of inhabitants, but I think the usual amount of books for 5000 inhabitants would be about the amount that should be received for this county, and it is high time that a faithful effort should go through the county. The usual trashy literature has not yet gone through the county, & evangelical books should immediately proceed with their work.

I wrote you, in the Bible Soc, some years since, a letter expressive of my grief, ~~that~~ for the curious movements that had just then resulted in the formation of what were called Oregon Bible, & Oregon Tract Societies. I declared it as my conviction that those societies would not obtain the confidence of those that are justly expected to labor in such efforts. I attended their ^{last} anniversary, and saw what I expected years ago would be seen, viz. an empty house; and also a dark cloud hanging over the burning of the books of the Bible Society or, rather, (in the estimation of a large & sound class of men,) the light shining through

that cloud, and manifesting, not very dimly, that
that the owner of the office himself had burned
it with the books, ^{money} & accounts of the societies, in
order to produce the conviction that it was
the wicked rather than the righteous that were
so generally in opposition to him. At least no
less a man than Amory Holbrook, our
United States Attorney, told me that he
did not believe there were five men in the
city who were not of the conviction that the
office, & the societies property were ~~not~~ burned by
the owner of the office, who was also the principle
acting officer of the societies. Nor was such a
view any new view of character. The amount of
it is, that your Society & the Bible Society and
kindred societies, are, in a high degree catholic;
they are upon the most liberal principles that
evangelical sentiments can act upon, and when
narrow sectarianisms must run in their most
narrow channels to the formation of such societies,
depend upon it, those societies will ~~not~~ exist
merely in name; where they ought to exercise con-
fidence, they will narrowly refuse it, & where they
ought to refuse confidence, they will selfishly re-
~~ject~~ ^{bestow} it, & blindly commit all their little prosperity
to those who give it an evil character or to
the flames. Before I came to this country,
I had passed church relations on the 14th of
Romans & parallel scriptures; & when they have

Thrown baptism in my way, I have taken the
short course, that baptism is not the answer of a
good conscience towards a baptist, a methodist or
any other man or set of men; but it "is the an-
swer of a good conscience towards God". That
conscience is no man's law, but every man's
judge. That ecclesiastical courts may decide
when a man gives evidence of having a conscience
purged from dead works to the service of the living
God, & to such a conscience, as the court, God
submits that man's baptism, & no ecclesiastical
court can deny to the court of conscience the
jurisdiction God has given it, except by usurpa-
tion & the denial of private interpretation,
which is Romanism, & as such scourge it.

Touching heresy in doctrine I have been too
liberal; touching heresy in practice I have been
too ~~bit~~ ridged ~~for a~~ to be a popular man;
but especially ridged I have been ⁱⁿ ~~forming~~ the
foundational principles for confidence. I was ~~will-~~
not willing that the general or catholic societies
should be formed except by the process of
signing a call for that purpose by some
one or more active men from every denom-
ination that should be expected to serve its
those societies. But this and then publish
that call. But that principle from the be-
ginning in this Territory (I have been here 14 years)
has been rejected & contemned with apparent
melancholy and awful haste by ~~the~~ all the
would-be bishops of the Territory. A private
enterprise may be called by a catholic name, but
it will be left as a private enterprise, until its
catholic name shall kill it. The result is, there
is but little confidence in the Territory, for the
very reason, there is but little evidence that there
ought to be. There is money enough here, and
there is men enough, but public confidence is low.