

From Jonathan B. Fuller to Dear Father

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Kansas City, Mo.

May 23d 1864

Dear Father,

Yours of the 16th is to hand. I am sorry to hear of Mother's sickness again. I had hoped that she was going to escape it. Can the Dr[.] give any reason for it? I hope she is done with it now.

I am keeping about as usual. Yesterday was a fine day and we had good congregations both morning and evening. The Campbellites had a couple of their big guns at work -- but they did not hurt us a bit. Our choir too was in better working order -- and we had splendid music so altogether I was abundantly satisfied. I would feel better however if I could fish up a few new members for the Church. As to our congregation, I still hold to my former opinion, that it will be impossible to fill fully the house upon any ordinary occasion. So far as I can hear the Church has been well satisfied in former times to have the house a little more than half full. This much I feel hopeful to do my self -- and so far the place has been more than three quarters full both morning and night.

On Saturday there was a Picnic of Mr[.] Scarrit's School. I was invited to deliver an Address. Politely but firmly I declined. Thereupon Mr[.] Scarrit mounted the stand and remarked to the assembly that he had invited several gentlemen to address -- but they had declined -- but he felt confident that if the young ladies and gentlemen would extend a personal and pressing call to Mr. Fuller -- that gentlemen might be induced to yield. Thereupon -- Mrs. Lykins made a face at me -- the young gents yelled "Fuller, Fuller" -- the young ladies had sent half a dozen requests already -- so [Bro.?] Thomas marched poor miserable me up to the stand like a culprit to the gallows. There was no help for it -- so I made my bow to her Majesty the Queen of the May and to the ladies and gents of her court -- premising my remarks by gravely apologising for being frightened inasmuch as I was totally unaccustomed to stand [*text stricken through*] in the presence of Royalty. Having by this time gotten them into a kitten and a good humor I proceeded by reminding them that under this same bright sun -- perhaps this very hour strong men were going out in battles wild rage to the warriors bloody doom -- and while we with garlands crowned were meeting in joyous festal -- pain and woe mutterable were darkening many [*text stricken through*] a heart and home -- let us then give one prayer for the wounded and dying -- one thought to the bereaved and comfortless weeping[,] their loved

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ones laid to a long, long rest in the battles gory graves. Then seeing that a large portion of the School was made up of grown young ladies -- I made some of my prettiest and most sentimental remarks upon Woman's Influence -- recited a pretty fragment of poetry -- wished our little May Queen a prosperous reign -- a happy, thornless life -- and an unfading crown in Heaven and so ended. Considering that I had hardly given the subject ten minutes thought -- I thought I had gotten through pretty well. I happened to be in good talking condition -- and therefore trust that I both interested them and as I hope[,] edified them for in closing I took occasion to point them to that joy and reward that endureth for ever.

Our Sunday School is going to have a Picnic next Saturday week weather &c permitting - - therefore I shall have another Address to make. They are not giving me much idleness -- but as I think it is maybe best to make as big a figure as possible I am submissive.

Meanwhile they get out some funny jokes on my beauty. I must tell you one that is really too good to keep. The morning that I preached my first sermon after my return -- a good old Sister was going home from Church. Just as she reached a reasonable distance from the Church she lifted up her hands to heaven -- and devoutly exclaimed "Thank God! At last we have got a Pastor so ugly that the girls won't steal him from us!" Now was'nt that a knock down of a compliment. When the Dr. was telling me of it last night his fat sides shook till I thought he would tumble out of his chair -- and Mrs. Lykins laughed till her throat was sore, and her ribs too I should think. But as a kind of offset to this. On Saturday after the Speech was over one of the prettiest young ladies on the ground come up to Mrs. Lykins -- "Mrs. Lykins, I thought the first time I saw him that Mr. Fuller was the ugliest mortal I ever saw -- but he improves [MS. illegible] upon a close examination, ask him if he wants to marry!!" So I tell them the old Sister was mistaken.

I am getting along quietly with the Church as yet. Davison told me that he did not intend to meddle or trouble us -- but he would not come to Church. I politely regretted it, but did not urge him to come. I look upon him as dangerous -- but I trust he is powerless. Nugent started this morning for the Convention at Jefferson City. From there if Grant is successful on the Potomac he will go on East on his collecting agency for the Church.

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But if Grant fails or if the result is uncertain he will return home and wait developments. I am anxious that he should go -- for I would like to have the house plastered and finished.

Things are quiet in a general way. We have bushwhackers in the county -- but I think they are few in number and not likely to do any general mischief. I hope they will keep quiet -- for my success in building up the church depends in great measure upon it.

The Church has paid me my first quarter's salary \$123.00 without any deductions or grumbling. So far good. We will see next what the Board will do.

The weather is dry and hot -- roads very dusty -- vegetation begins to need rain. News from the Potomac is not quite so encouraging as I could wish. But as Grant's military renown is at stake, I am confident that Lee will have to stand a severe [tug?] before the matter ends.

As to Mrs. Bailey's case, the Church intends to dodge the issue -- there was no necessity of this continual laying over. I did not notice J.L. William's case but I expect it is the same. I would not trouble myself much about it. His coming or going is very little to me. The parties Cyrus was hinting at were I presume Eva & Laura Hesser -- who both had a good deal to say the night Mrs. B. applied for her letter. I hope he will collect my dues, make a minute of whatever money he may [hand?] and send me the minute so that I may properly record it: Dont quarrel with him -- and if he plays cool, keep out of his way and pay no attention[.] Hand him sometime those reviews -- except the one containing article on New Testament Criticism. You can leave them at the store. Those Bowlinggreen Baptists will never hurt themselves attending Baptist Church. Such people are a nuisance.

You need not speak about bantering the Dr. about his place. The house alone cost him \$14,000, and the grounds about it are very large. Though by the way some people here are beginning to suspect that that the Pacific R.R. is going to destroy instead of make the place. In the course of a few years I expect the trains will pass right through, making this merely a way

station.

I will write to Hull as you wish sometime this week. The Lily you speak of is the Calla Aethiopica, which must be kept quite moist while blooming. See directions in the flower books. The Canna is I expect another variety. I am truly obliged to him if he has sent them as a present. The Pomegranate I was doubtful of -- cut off[f] about half or two thirds of the top and water it pretty freely. Did you send those seeds to the Lady in [Troy?]? And how

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are the Japan Lilies coming along? That Geranium blossom you send me is decidedly pretty. Is the cutting of [*text stricken through*] Begonia I planted growing?

How are our friends in town behaving -- do any of them visit you. Especially did any of them come up while Mother was sick? How are Mrs. Hesser's family? Give them my respects. And be sure to give my very kindest regards to Misses Lenton and Oury -- as also to Dr. Bell. After all is said, I believe Miss Annie Lenton & Miss Kate Oury have stood by us as well if not better than any of our own people unless it be Sister Hesser. And though I should like the Dr. Bell to have a better set of Politics, I certainly think he has shown a friendly disposition toward us -- which I cannot soon forget. Remember me to any others who may enquire.

Tell Mother to take the very best care she can of herself. Let Mollie help her more with her work. And I hope she may enjoy better health the rest of the year. I trust that the Good Father above will yet some time or other allow us to settle down in some quiet pretty place -- which we may be able to enjoy as a home. The Good time is coming -- so I guess we can keep a sharp look out for it. Write as usual. Ask Mother what I had better do with my woollen underclothes during the Summer -- Pack them in my trunk or lay them in the top shelf of my closet. It is getting so hot I have taken to my thin drawers already. My best love to Mother and Mollie and yourself. I trust you will all enjoy yourselves. If you want any money let me know. I feel more and more every day my good luck in getting such a good place to board. I should have roasted to death down in town. With love to you all, I am as ever

Your affectionate Son[,]  
J.B. Fuller