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Finley Letters

James B. Finley Letters

6-28-1846

Letter from Samuel Maddux to James B. Finley

Samuel Maddux

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Buffalo, N.Y.
July 1846

Dear Sir

Rev. James B. Finley,
Calvary Church,
Ohio.

Received

July 8 1846

Wm. J. McDougall

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Buffalo, N.Y., June 29, 1846.
Dear Brother Finley, - I have pro-
posed a written correspondence on
the subject of future and endless pun-
ishment, to Mr. M. L. Canvass, a
Universalist minister of the state
of Ohio, who wishes to be assured
that I understand the subject, and
that my brethren in the minis-
try have confidence in my abil-
ities to do it justly.

I want you, if you please, to
give me the best recommen-
dation you can. I know, however,
that you have heard and preached but
few times; consequently cannot
give me such a certificate as you
could under other circumstances. To
assist you I will extract a few lines
from a letter written by Prof. L. S.
McBride, June 10, 1846. Alluding to
a debate which took place at Athens,
Ohio, between Prof. F. Mellick and Mr.
M. L. Canvass and the invitation I
gave him (Canvass) to a written dis-
cussion, he says, "I heard the debate. You
had nothing to fear from him. He
is superficial in learning, illogical
in argument, but little intensity
of thought and but feeble in his

Ship. Get him away from his
hobbies and you will shipwreck him
in five minutes. Tell if Edwards has
accepted. I know he will not."

I have made Universalism my
study for several years; consequently state
to myself that I understand it and
all its varied ramifications. Moreover,
I have been holding and extensive
correspondence with the first schol-
ars on the American continent;
such as Dr. Robinson of New-York,
Prof. Gibbs of New-Haven, and Prof.
Watson of Baltimore. They have
afforded me to some extent and valuable
materials. I think that I shall
be prepared to do more for the sub-
ject critically, than any work of
the kind which has come under my no-
tice. For instance, I shall take up
the word Gehenna (hell) which ac-
curs in several places in the N. T.,
and show 1. That notwithstanding it
originally meant the "valley of the
torment"; it had acquired the meaning of
torment in the future world. And
prove this by the Septuagint & Latin.
Prof. Gibbs has furnished me with
numerous and appropriate extracts.

2. Examined all the passages in the N. T.
where the word Gehenna occurs, and
show that in every instance refer-
enced is lead to a world of not in
the immortal world. 3. Show that
the Christian Fathers all understood
Christ to use it in the sense of
not mortal punishment. Had
I have valuable extracts to the point,
furnished by Dr. Robinson. 46. 46.

I have never known the subject
handled in this way. These argu-
ments I consider irrefragable. I
have been studying the Greek
language for the last two years,
and have made some progress.

If you can do anything
in this case, it will be
gratefully received. Perhaps it
may be in my power to do
you a favor at some future
time.

I shall expect to hear from you
at your earliest convenience. My
address is Buffalo, Nassau Co. Virgin-
ia. I am yours in Christ,
Samuel May.

Rev. J. B. Finley.
Columbus,
Ohio.