

Ohio Wesleyan University

Digital Commons @ OWU

Finley Letters

James B. Finley Letters

7-27-1846

Letter from Werter R. Davis to James B. Finley

Werter R. Davis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.owu.edu/finley-letters>

Recommended Citation

Davis, Werter R., "Letter from Werter R. Davis to James B. Finley" (1846). *Finley Letters*. 277.
<https://digitalcommons.owu.edu/finley-letters/277>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the James B. Finley Letters at Digital Commons @ OWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Finley Letters by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ OWU. For more information, please contact earutigl@owu.edu.

Rev. James B. Finley

Columbus

Ohio

Wm. D. Davis
July 1846

Knoxville July 27th 1846

Dear Father Finley

Your letter came to hand in due time and is now before me. I have concluded to answer it immediately. I was much gratified with this testimony of yours wherein you say "I was well satisfied with your course and the administration of the Discipline in the Station and I did not know of any but what was, I have allways tried to treat you as a son in the gospel and expect to as long as I live." First- I rejoice that you are satisfied with my administration, because the D. E.'s and Conference have heretofore acted as if though I was not worthy of these confidence so much as to put me in charge of any work only two years out of eleven, which conduct towards me has made me a speckle bird among you. I do not ^{believe} that you can find another such case in the Conference or in any other conference. It is this odious cast in the ministry that I am honestly struggling to get out of, and out of it I must come by the grace of God, for submit to it I cannot, and will not, and sin your generous heart will not crush me now; when for eleven long years I have been struggling against wind and tide and even now only in sight of land, shall I call upon my old and tried friend in God, he that was my friend when I had no friend, to help me into a safe mooring place (in vain) from disgrace, while other men have had the fat places all this time, I will not believe it until I am forced to it, and even then I will be exceedingly reluctant to believe it. Secondly- I rejoice that you promise to allways treat me as a son in the gospel. This is all that I ask and no more. I hope that I shall allway prove myself worthy of such. Your doctrine on the subject of itineracy is the doctrine I believe as you know but notwithstanding I object to the use that is made of it. First- It is preached to those that belong to the odious cast and have been treated like myself, to make them satisfied with these odious lot, while others have the fat places. All doctrine is a perfect mockery of mankind that only exist in theory. Secondly- Your doctrine has not been carried out practically in the Ohio Conference as you can see by a mere reference to minutes and not in your own districts.

It was not carried out in this district even as long ago as last year. There is George C. Crum who out of fourteen appointments has received nine stations and two of his circuit appointments were at his own request at Hillsborough in order to be at home and yet this man received the best appointment in the district. There is John Ellily that in eight years has only traveled but one circuit and he was the man for Zanesville Station and indeed proposed for his invaluable services in fat places for a P.E. on the district. I have traveled three years more, but I must not so much as hint that I must go to a station ^{much exp} on a district, nor it must not be hinted for me, to this I protest and eternally protest. I only alluded to the fat place I did as among the fat places that these pets have enjoyed and thought that it was about time that some of us that have been knowing the bones should have some of the meat. but no these places must be kept for the favoured few, for such men as John W. Weekley who has traveled but one circuit I believe for ten years. There is Joseph Ell Trimble the Governor son and the seceders Nelson and Latta and others, to say nothing about those that have had life time estates on districts and stations. Now Dear Father Findley I am ready for your doctrine to be carried out this next Conference, but I will not submit for it to be carried out on me and no body else as it has been heretofore. I have received but but three stations in eleven years, I traveled six year before I was stationed and then stationed one year as a junior preacher, then I traveled two years as a junior still and now I have been stationed two year with a salary that would hardly keep my family and out of the eleven years I have traveled I was in the mountains of Virginia two years and eight years of the time I was single. Now sir were are the fat places of which you speak, I have been ^{thankful} to be treated in any way that would be called decent or ^{would} come any way near what would be called respectable, so far this is all that I have received if that. I thank you for your good opinion of me, you say, "I have no doubt myself but you would sustain yourself in almost any of the stations in our Conference and be useful", because there is no man in whose judgement I have more confidence. But you say that you are sorry that I make claims as my due. I do not claim any in preference of my brethren in common, if this is the way you understood me I do not wonder that you felt sorry, but I do claim as my due in justice and by the grace of God make or break I intend to set it up as you will see next Conference with others rights with the favoured few and break up this odious cast.

Now Father Findley whether you are in the cabinet or not is not a question with me, for I love ^{you} you know I do, and I now thank you for all your kindness to me, not that I think that you want my thanks, but it is your due, for it was as you say, "when I had it in my power to redress these grievances I did so, because I thought you had equal claims with others". That is the case, you did so at the Charlotte Conference, but it had then gone to such a pitch, that if my grievances had not of been redressed, I intended fully to of returned from that Conference a located man, but your act saved me from an act that would of been a great affliction to me and my family, but not so great a one as to have been treated as I had been, and it would still be a mortification to me if you or any friend of mine could with indifference see me pushed aside to give place to the favoured few, but no mortification at all to do as Pittsburgh Conference at its last session ^{did} pass a resolution that all that had been in stations and on districts should be removed. I am at a loss to know what you mean by saying "I am bound by no association under heaven but that of the Church and my Divine Master" and no claims can be made on me from any private influence and I thank God that ~~of~~ ^{of} God freeman. Now sir if you refer to Masonry I think this allusion unkind, ~~because~~ at your own advice I quit visiting any lodge, can you or will you, ask any more. Or do you design to intimate that I would ask any favour, from any man, in the Conference on Masonic principles, if you do you have mistaken my character altogether. Or did you think that I wanted some secret collusion with you to get an appointment, if you did, I will correct your mistake, that letter was written through pure friendship, and you have written enough of such letters to know that we must write about something and that something usefully about one or both of the parties as the circumstances might be, in this case, it so happen that I was so egotistical as to write something about my humble self, which I hope will give no offence. Or did you suppose for a single moment that I was not as free as you or any other man under the heavens, if you did, you very widely missed the mark. You say "Some of the young men of this Conference are backbiting me and trying to injure my character" Now who are they? They are the very men that the P.E.'s have assisted into high and fat places over the heads of men that were good and true and those very P.E.'s will still help keep them in fat places, they have not independence to put them out, I would like to see try it once. Please answer soon. We send our love to you and wish we could see you. Your son in Christ
20 Rev D W Findley
Walter N Davis