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James B. Finley Letters

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9-23-1817

## Letter from David Young to James B. Finley

David Young

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Janesville Sep 23<sup>rd</sup> 1817

Very dear Bro. I presume you are looking by this time for an extract from the Journal of our last conference, respecting Masonry. The committee on the subject of Masonry reported as follows

The Ohio Annual Conference to the Ministry & membership of her charge & endeth greeting. Whereas it hath been represented to us that many of our brethren have attached themselves to the society of Free-Masons, we take this method to communicate to you our decided opinion & sentiment on that subject

We are decidedly & sentimentally, opposed to the practice & are determined (as the ministers of Christ & your servants) to set our faces & lift our hands against it; for the following reasons.

1. Because it appears from observation that an union with this body of men is unfavorable to piety. Witness the multitudes who on being converted to God, have abandoned their Lodges & Festivals, walking no more with them. Witness the decaying piety of those who have attached themselves to them from amongst ourselves. Witness that want of brotherly love, those jars & schisms which have ensued

2. Whatever Masonry may be in itself, it is obvious to all that Masons are (in general) greatly deficient, both in Religion & good morals, & the Lord Jehovah hath said, "Come out from among them (that is the wicked) & be ye separate," yea tho they should have the form, yet if they deny the power of godliness from such turn away.



Dear Sir  
James W. M. M. M.  
Janesville

1817 (Single)

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We therefore beseech you in the Fear of God, & as we shall have to give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick & dead; that ye refrain from these men, lest ye be partakers of their sins & by consequence of their judgment. Dear brethren "The spirit of the Lord is with them that fear & love him," & we are sure if you have & retain this "Spirit" it will secure your Felicity, & render the "Suits" of Masonry unnecessary. And finally we can only say we are yours, living & dying."

No doubt with me but that spleen, envy & ignorance have all had their share in the production of the above. But you know that many moderate men with pure motives had a hand in it. I hope good may result, yet my fears are stronger than my hopes.

What have we done? Why we have besought our Ministry & membership to "refrain from these men" because they are "deficient in Religion & Morals" - May we then associate with infidels & other bad men making Masons the Bute of our indignation exclusively!

What Mason (& they alone have the knowledge) ever came out in the abuse of Masonry? We poor souls don't <sup>know</sup> who is or is not a mason! We should think it hard if the next Meeting of the Grand Lodge of Ohio should condescend to issue an address to the Masters, Wardens, & members of their charge to refrain from the Methodist Church because we have men in our Ministry & membership

"deficient in Religion & Morals." To say the least my private opinion is that this is zeal without knowledge calculated unnecessarily to raise a formidable body of men against us. I hope however they will pity the weakness of our good intentions & just let us alone. Dear James every body but ourselves

must know that there is no danger, nor possibility of all the Methodists becoming Masons. Thousands of them could not if they would try, get admission. That pain in my jaw has afflicted me ever since - I am never to grind this world without its thorns. But if Providence strew roses enough to keep me from despondency it is all I expect it is all I ask; And this I feel confident this morning shall be given me. Doing nothing is an affliction - my idea to me. But being able to do nothing seems worse. But I look to God for grace to keep me from murmuring at his providence, I have never yet been disappointed!

My young folks me in well wishes for you & yours.

I am Dear Brother

Most respectfully  
and

Yr Truly

Phlegmately

Yours

Lyman