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Finley Letters

James B. Finley Letters

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12-18-1848

## Letter from John McDonald to James B. Finley

John McDonald

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Let John of Don note  
prop. Jan 1849  
answered Jan 27/49

Latta's  
Oct 18<sup>th</sup>

Rev. J. B. Hinley  
Columbus  
Ohio

Poplar Ridge, near Latta, Prop. county Ohio Dec<sup>r</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> 1848  
My respected friend, James

Your very friendly letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> Instant, came duly to hand, I was gratified to be informed that your health and that of your wife was good, and if my wish could continue it, you will be so as long as life may be desirable.

As it respects Religion I am, <sup>the</sup> same old John that I ever was, I endeavor to keep from doing <sup>evil</sup> and learn to do as much good as I can. In some speculative <sup>acts</sup> of faith held by many as being ~~to~~ orthodox, I am ~~entirely~~ <sup>entirely</sup> skeptical, but I find that correct moral men agree about actions that <sup>are</sup> right, or action that are wrong. I think the poet, when he wrote, "For forms, let Graceless zealots fight, He can't be wrong, whose life is in the right." No one can control his faith, there are so many circumstances in the life of man that his faith is made for him, by his instructors, and <sup>the</sup> region in which he is born. If he is born Turkey or Persia he will be a follower of Mahomet. If born and educated in China he will be a follower of Confucius, and worshiper of the Grand Lama. If born and educated in Italy he will be a worshiper of the Pope, if born in England, or America he will be a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. Although among <sup>men</sup> there are diversities of faith, yet about right and wrong there are no disputes, all agree. The religion taught in the new testament is the religion of God, and the religion of nature, and of common sense.

Love your neighbor - In your intercourse with all men, do as you would be done by - Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, - visit the widow and the fatherless relieve their distresses with kindness. How sublime the doctrine, no mysteries about it. The follower of Confucius, of Moses - of Mahomet or Jesus, can all adopt these precepts because they are natural, they are humane. I consider the idea of a knowledge of right and wrong inherent in all men.

There are something in forming friendships with men. In our sojourning through our tangled world, we meet with men, and from the first <sup>sight</sup> at his physiognomy we have a leaning to cultivate his acquaintance, and this feeling is almost universally mutual: while at <sup>first</sup> sight we feel a cold reserve. How are these whims <sup>to</sup> accounted for. I thought a good deal on this subject, without <sup>being</sup> able to come to any conclusion.

I was pleased with your answer to the Loco foco committee who invited you to go and preach and pray for their mob in the state house, when you said to them that you could preach to convicts in the penitentiary, but could see no use in preaching to Unitarians - you should have referred <sup>them</sup> to Doctor Hall as the proper <sup>wisdom</sup> to take charge of Unitarians and have been full.

My own health is good, my years, the out, <sup>works</sup> are beginning to give way, but the appetite and the digestive powers perform <sup>for</sup> functions as well as ever.



My wife sends her very best respects <sup>would</sup> you, and be glad if you could  
take time pay us a visit, she says ~~set~~ if you will set a time to come  
home and preach. She will insure you a large congregation. My  
<sup>Children</sup> and Grand Children are all well, and respect <sup>sends to you</sup> as an uncle. your little  
name <sup>sake</sup> J B H Morgan is now sitting by me, reading your letter to me, he  
is a smart little saucy fellow.

I had forgot to say any thing about the Low Joco Columbus  
Mob, nor do I know <sup>what</sup> to say about them, supposing <sup>to</sup> say they either fools or  
knaves, or perhaps partake of both.

This is a better skelter letter writer with <sup>out</sup> method or order  
at the spur of the moment. you tell me that you are engaged in  
a book <sup>making</sup> I have no doubt you will amuse and instruct your reader.

I wish you health, peace and prosperity in this world, and a  
happy <sup>exit</sup> into the world come.

John McDonald

Rev J B Finley

<sup>politics</sup>  
ps In you and I are of the same mind as much so as if ~~we~~ one soul  
inhabited both our bodies: in morals the same, in faith we  
differ a little but that is no other <sup>business</sup>, and we wont quarrel  
about it. The same words do not convey the same Idea to different men  
Perhaps there ~~two~~ are not two men who think ~~exactly~~ any more then there  
are two faces formed exactly alike.