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James B. Finley Letters

8-14-1852

Letter from T. Gorsuch to James B. Finley

T. Gorsuch

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I would be glad to have you come and see me, and I will give you any information about this unfortunate matter which I can. I will go with you in person to the trustees if you desire it.

I would be sorry that any thing should ever occur to interrupt in any degree the friendship which has hitherto existed between us. Nor do I think it will be interrupted. I have written this letter not that I had the least ground to suspect that you entertained one hard thought of me, but I knew that such was my relation to this church, that it might be thought that I had used my influence to bring about this thing.

I expect to lay your communication before the Trustees on Monday evening next, and they must speak for themselves.

Yours truly as ever

J. G. S. Gorman

P.S. Should the Trustees not give their reasons for their course I will give you the reasons which they have assigned to me. I do think however that the whole thing was done at first without much reflection, and at a time when their sympathies were all waked up by the death of Brother Raper. I am almost certain that had that event not taken place just before, that the church ^{had} never been talked of at all. But after the thing began to make a stir, and their course was pretty severely condemned by some, they thought to recede from their position would look like weakness, and that they were driven into measure. Now in all honesty I do think this the true state of the case.

J. G.

153
Dayton Ohio
Aug 15th 1852

Dear Father Finley

I received your letter yesterday, after my return from the camp meeting at Cass, where I had expected to see you, and to have a talk with you about the subject on which you write.

So far as the request made to the Trustees is concerned I shall most gladly lay it before them at a very early date, and urge upon them a compliance, as I think it a very reasonable one. I shall not however Father Finley, pretend to give you the reasons which they have assigned to me for their course, for the present, as I hope they will do this themselves.

I think it right however to say a few things in reference to myself, as the humble pastor of the congregation here. I have not heard that any one has censured me, nor do I suppose that any one knowing the circumstances of the case would do so, but in view of my relation to the congregation and my connection with the building of the new church, it might be thought, that I had used an influence in the matter.

I have especially been concerned lest you might blame me for having acted improperly in the matter, and frequently resolved to write to you

you

And make an explanation of the whole thing, but I felt a delicacy in touching a matter which I knew would deeply affect your feelings, a thing which I certainly could never find it in my heart to do.

But as the way is open I will now state to you the manner in which the subject came up, together with the subsequent state of the case, and my relation to the whole subject.

About the 1st of March a meeting of the entire membership of the ^{Church} was called, and a large majority of the members were present at the meeting.

Nothing so far as I know had ever been said about a change of the name prior to this meeting, and most certainly if any thing had been said, it was kept from me. No one had ever thought worth while to consult me about it. While I was in the rear of the Church trying to get subscriptions for the new Church (for that night we presented our subscription to the people for the first time) some one, I know not who introduced the subject of the name of the new Church. I suppose a motion was made to call the new Church Paper Chapel, though the first thing which called my attention to the matter was the rising up of the people.

I think brother S. Mitchell put the vote, as he was sitting on the altar. The whole thing was informal as we had no regular organization as a business meeting the object of the meeting being merely to see what the members would do towards the erection of a new house.

However the meeting voted to call the new Church ~~Paper~~

if built Paper Chapel. Subsequent to this some one proposed that I should be requested to publish in our city papers that we were going to build a new Church to be called Paper Chapel, to this I at once objected, as being premature and so the whole matter dropped for that time.

And I may be allowed to say just here that I think had it not been that brother Paper had so recently died the thing probably had never taken place, or even have been thought of.

So far however as I was concerned, the whole matter was got up without even a word being said to me about it.

At a subsequent period to the meeting to which I have referred, one of the brethren introduced the subject into the Leaders' meeting, as there had been considerable talk about the change which was contemplated. And without entering into the details of that interview and without rehearsing all that was said, it became apparent to me that not only a majority of the trustees but of the official body, had determined not to recede from the position which they had taken, and that to continue to agitate it would not only do no good, but would stir up strife. So I let the matter go, knowing that it was something over which I had no control.

I do most deeply regret that the change was ever proposed, and if I could I would gladly blot out the whole matter. I have labored hard to build the Church and that it should become the occasion of afflicting any one and especially an old Methodist preacher, is a source of affliction to me.