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Letter from David Reed to James B. Finley

David Reed

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Chillicothe Ohio Jan. 1. A.D. 1845
Uncle James.

Dear Sir on this beautiful morning of the New Year, thinking of friends near and remote, we thought as we frequently do, of our venerable Uncle J. B. Finley and hearts were indeed cold in their regards toward you but more especially have we been interested in you since our last "General Conference" we are proud to acknowledge our consanguineous relation to one who so boldly and independently defended the interests of our beloved Union from an alliance with the "falsest system of Slavery which ever saw the Sun" (so said Wesley) in its connection with the Episcopacy on the one hand and from the high pretensions of Ecclesiastical dignitaries who would be "Lords and Gods-heritors" upon the other. Bishop Saul has well said "But if an humble man may judge without the wisdom of fore-cast, that those who come after will examine the doings of the late General Conference they will examine them, there is no doubt of that and the more they are examined the more odium will accumulate upon the minority of that body. Yes Sir, the voice of the entire Christian world will be heard in tones of thunder disapproving of their course. And should they organize themselves at their Louisville Convention with Bishops Saul and Andrew at their head. They may attempt calling themselves "The Southern Methodist Church, but the whole world will unite in calling it the "Slave holding Church" or the "pro-Slavery Church". And if I am not much mistaken, much of this odium will rest upon the head of Bishop Saul. It is the opinion of many of the most prominent men with which I am acquainted that a General Conference should be called immediately for the purpose of deposing both Andrew and Saul. It has been exceedingly gratifying to us in this vicinity to see the firm stance which has been taken by Drs. Elliott and Bangs. And pray is that God may give them success, we believe with Dr. Bangs that Bishop Saul's act-

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Recd James B. Finley
Gainesville Ohio

David Reed
1845

in inviting Bishop Andrew to attend the Southern
Conference in connection with himself, in direct
violation of the advice of the General Conference
(and I believe the most intelligent body of men
ever assembled in the United States.) And in
opposition to the advice of all his colleagues in the
Episcopacy, will not be quietly submitted to by the
intelligent Ministers and members of the M. E. Church
West since the Lord made me die I desire intelli-
gence, Gray hairs, and influence, as when I read
Bishop Paul's letter to Bishop Andrew, "Vessels large
may venture more, but little boats should keep
near shore." But I would in my soul have you
and hundreds of other aged Ministers who have
spent your entire lives in the service of the
M. E. Church can hold your peace when you
thus see her bleeding at those wounds which have
been inflicted by that spirit against which we
most solemnly protest. You will think
I have no doubt that this is a strange Epistle
from me, well it is, and such as one as I did
not intend writing "cut out of the abundance
of the heart the mouth speaketh." You might
perhaps also be inclined to think, that we were
giving too much of our attention to these exciting
questions, but we think not so. This community
in that respect is free from the excitement.

You will believe me when I say that I never
felt more of an attachment to the M. E. Church
than at present, neither have I ever felt more
confidence in her success. Methodism has you
know been from the beginning a child of
providence, and she has been wont to follow
the openings of divine providence. And truly like the
blind spoken of by the prophet "she has been led
by a way she knew not." And I think this to be
eminently the case with her, as it respects her con-
nection with Slavery, had her discipline extended
all from her pale who were connected with Slavery, why
then Methodism to a great extent must have been
kept out of the Southern States. But and then of
course her influence must have been exceedingly
limited when compared with what it now is.

-But Sir, in this instance as you may think the
view upon the subject to be. I cannot help thin-
king that Methodism is the fulcrum upon which
the great God is about to poise the scales of the
Gospel. And with the balance of power in the
M. E. Church holding States, shake us from this
vile blot which stains our National Esce-
tehon and if so, Amen, and Amen.

You will perhaps hear by Mrs. Heath who
called with us some two weeks ^{ago} that we are
well. We have enjoyed very good health since
Conference. We are well situated. Things
seem to go on with party pleasantly, we have
just closed our second quarterly meeting,
we had a very good meeting, and we
incline to think that we will have a
series of religious here this winter, indeed
when compared with the State in which the
Church was when we came here, we
may safely say that we have a series of
religion already. The Church is very much
enriched and on Monday night we
had 15 at the altar to be prayed for, and
2 of the number were converted, and 5
joined the Church. As you see we are
doing very well considering the times.
We will be glad to hear from you as soon
as you can find leisure to write. And
we would be exceedingly gratified if you
could make it convenient to either come or
go by Chillicothe. You would be hailed
here as a welcome visitor by many of your
old friends - And by none more cordi-
ally than your humble servants David
and Hannah Reed.

Yours affectionately

David Reed

Rev. James B. Finley