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Finley Letters

James B. Finley Letters

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2-21-1826

## Letter from George S. Houston to James B. Finley

George S. Houston

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### Recommended Citation

Houston, George S., "Letter from George S. Houston to James B. Finley" (1826). *Finley Letters*. 813.  
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Dear Brother on the 11th inst. I received a letter from Bro Brooke post marked the 7th and on the 14th yours marked Aug 31. So it must have travelled out of the way, but they are both kind cordials and I feel indebted to you both for those esteemed favours, I am much pleased with the contents and have a little volume to write you both in answer and on other points, but have to spend time, I cannot get for a season, therefore Bro B. must excuse my writing you first, it is now Sabbath morning Feb 19, I have been afflicted with the influenza this week and a troublesome bile, but sitting on a pillow I have some other matters to say, Many of our Good preachers instead of reformatting the people, instead of preaching down the prevailing and increasing evils are busy in warring against the discipline, I do not properly understand what they want mended or how, one point is respecting the trial of members, as said, but expect it is other matters; among the reformers is good old Brother Towler, opposed is good old Bro. Sale, now these two good old men have fell out by the way, on the subject of reform, both have been too warm and I fear it will be injurious to the good cause, there are others among the radicals or reformers I could say somewhat of, but the substance will be lost for the shadow in this unprofitable contest, I beg you in all you say or do on this subject to exercise the utmost patience and forbearance and to be on your guard; this a mere friendly hint. It is evident there is a great falling off, that situated as you are, you do not witness, it is among preachers and people, I repeat what your old friend Quinor once wrote you it is time to hustle back, to old Methodism, it is said the people have become enlightened, no doubt, but they have as much Devil in them as ever, are as much his servants, and to what cause to attribute it, but there is more apparent depravity observable than I ever have known, in the Church Brother will take the advantage of Brother and but little confidence extant, the wicked say such a professor will cheat in honest trading before now my own observation makes me think the professors give them too much cause to talk and while such is the case how can we expect to see religion revive? We hear of great preachers and great preaching of Bascom, Shinn, Brethren, Mair, Hinckle, Light and others, but they do not preach like Paul, to Philip, nor do any I hear now a days; they tell people they <sup>are</sup> wicked and this they have heard so often it is an old tale, but they do not search the heart, lay their secret sins open, pursue them in all their



and either entice them to forsake their sins and do right or alarm them by the terrors of God's wrath, a judgment to come or the punishment in reserve for the wicked to produce repentance and reformation; I see around me Universalism, infidelity and immorality increasing, the spirit of the world is among the professors, and if a united effort is not made, we may ere long cry "the glory has departed from" — Methodism! and who is there to arrest the progress of the plague or stand in the breach and call on the people to return. On our circuit we have three good preachers, but they preach over the heads of the people, it does not touch or reach the heart, it would be a glorious sight to see an old fashioned revival, we see many join society but they never get out of their A.B.C.'s in religion, and there are some professors who line up to the gospel, that the wicked take advantage of it, few that can say like Moses, Joshua or Samuel they have wrought no one or done no injustice, but done as they would be done by; My dear brother this picture is drawn from observation, I could extend it, but enough, I would rather go too as a nonprofessor than a professor, I have been refused admission by the latter than the former, in soliciting signatures for recommendation for Post Master only two refused to sign mine, they were professors and afraid my opponent would be hurt, he is a professed infidel, disbeliever in the Bible and will not enter a house of worship! Here I will observe the reason I asked any recommendation was on account of the P.M.G. (John L. Mumf. & W. Deane) so that his enemies or the other side should not censure him, I had shown to the other one, Gov. Marraim & others among them. The fact is my dear brother, by the opposition I have met with in printing, it has nearly ruined me and taken all I had, the expense was great, the receipts small, therefore it was necessary to look for some thing else, I am now to receive one third of the profits of printing until I can sell it out entire, which I shall do as soon as I can, the Post Office alone will not support my family, it will probably be worth \$180 a year and increasing, if I can sell the print &c, so as to get a little stone or soap, it will help to pay rent and enable me to buy a bay to help, otherwise it will be most starish indeed; I have a third son about five months old, but the eldest is going to live with my brother in Jersey who has no family, he will be better educated there, if I can collect enough from printing to pay some small debts, I am in hopes of being able to take care of my family, by hiring generously. My dear Brother I want more grace, more pure old fashioned religion, pray for me, remember when it goes well with you, remember me in your approaches to a throne of grace, pray much for Lions peace, there is a time approaching in which the Lord will be proclaimed in the wilderness or the still small voice, the former and conduct of the late Emperor of Persia, of whom Europe stood in awe and who opposed the spread of the gospel is no more, the Lord has removed him and no doubt some important event will soon take place, I think the Turks will be put down by his successor.

On other subject — I am very much interested for the poor injured Indians, their cause lies near my heart and I regret I have neither power, wealth or influence to sound the alarm in their behalf; exertions have been made to civilize, educate and christianize them, progress has been made and now we want to drive them to the West, as that gets settled by whites to the Pacific and finally into the Ocean, in plain words the object seems to me to annihilate them, they are weak and defenceless, to the government alone they can look as friends, the government have obtained their land for a few barrels and would not leave them enough to subsist on! Where is our boasted national justice, where is our religion, where humanity? There is yet land enough this side of the Mississippi for both, their Savage habits will soon be worn off and they would finally be ingrafted as citizens of the republic. — My voice to them would be, remain in here you are, never sell a foot more of your land, get it improved so as to live comfortably on, and increase every means to provide stock and necessaries to become independent and be able to provide for an increasing people instead of a decreasing one. We have heard recently here, that Gov. Cass & J. Johnston are to meet with the Indians to try to induce them to remove, J. C. has made himself independent by this poor injured people and no doubt would now turn his heel on them, may the good Lord stand by them, they have friends even on the floor of Congress, the advocates of slavery, even on the side of Indians extermination but I believe the President (by himself) is their friend.

Once more my dear brother, My heart is with you in the cause of Missions, in that of old Methodism and to travel on to Canaan, I have ever felt a warm interest in the cause, but I have had lately to row against wind and tide, I have suffered from a milking nest to receive and oblige, I have found that man is but a beast of prey, that selfishness predominates over justice, humanity and feeling and to get along in the world we must compromise in none but old Father Patterson! I never have brought one member to trial, I was twice brought up in the case of Mr. Skinner, who has used me for a long time the first time was mere machinery, after he had got all he could get from me, Bro E. — endeavored to get us to reconcile the matter and justify him in wrong, but he gone up what I could not help, but he eventually went out of society, he was on the brink of ruin, I toned his property, he is getting wealthy and I regret to hear of him. Some others and other matters have borne hand on me, those from the Church I have felt the severest, I was never calculated to stem the torrent with a decreasing world, my days cannot be many, I have not on these accounts felt that peace and enjoyment I once did, but I hope the Lord will