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James B. Finley Letters

12-27-1830

Letter from George S. Houston to James B. Finley

George S. Houston

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My dear Brother, In commencing this letter, I know not how to begin, though I have more to say than I have time to state, but one matter is ofually on my mind and I will name it, as it may be you will not have heard it as yet.

On Sabbath last Bro Eddy preached at 11 o'clock, in time of preaching the Rev. — Collins came in, I did not know he had returned from Battimore, until then, as Bro E. was closing meeting, he went up in the pulpit & whispered to him, I have since been informed he solicited or offered to preach at night, Bro E. declined and referred him to the Trustees, and proceeded to give out a prayer meeting, as he was again to preach at the school house, 5 miles east at night, Bro E. again preached at 3 o'clock, at night a prayer meeting was held, Bro Collins invited Dr. Stanton to lead it, I think I was so informed, for I was not present, afterwards invited this Bro Collins to pray, he declined, the meeting was quite dull and when dismissed, this Bro. C. arose and made a long statement, calculated to excite the sympathy of the people, stating he had been refused to preach in the house he, next evening, he preached in the New light meeting house, I did not hear him, but understand he detained at large, coming in my office at noon, I was sent for to dinner, invited him along, my wife invited him to stay with us that night, he with his wife did, and in the course of a couple of hours I learnt much of his views and objects, and plainly he is not merely an agent sent to preach and be instrumental in converting sinners, but I believe he will exert himself to pull the red line methodist as he calls them to pieces, he has located himself in Dayton, but is going round to prove circuits, and I believe if he can get a majority off any Society to join him, he will try to see if the meeting house deed is valid and if possible try and wrest it from the present proprietors, I could say much more, but have been so cautious in what I have stated above, as possible so as to give you some idea of what is going on, The lesson I got with the Rev. J. M. early has taught me to be careful even when I have a statement from respectable testimony. I am pleased to state, if we are moving on in a debt way, the presbyterians are much engaged an increasing, many have embraced religion and the good work is going on, were we united and long reigned among us and increased as we ought and were as faithful as we should be I should not fear but the Lord wants to bless us alone, but there will require a reformation and we can expect it in our society, all Israel is not for Abraham

though I am informed some will forsake Alcester for
my own part, I regret the separation that will take place, I
should wish we could continue in one body, I would rather
given the conference had granted some points than to see a separa-
tion, ~~that~~ the plan the new body are working on, every
candid Methodist must disapprove, was there reformation
a reform in life, in holiness, righteousness and devotedness to
God, who could say aught against them.

But my dear Brother is there not a plain departure
from old Methodism in the present day, and do you not
remember what James Decima wrote you some years
ago "let us unite to hustle back". I really wish
I could feel more engaged, more religious and attain
a complete victory over myself, and see the good work
go on, see pure religion prevail, old Methodism,
the whole matter of radicalism does not trouble
me, the name is nothing, Presidents or Bishops,
the preceding order is no severe exam, but the
sumum bonum of religion is to love & serve God.
I remain as ever your friend
Wm. H. Haunston

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1830

Houston_ab518

My Dear Brother,

In commencing this letter I know not how to begin, though I have more to say than I have time to state, but one matter is specially on my mind and I will name it, as it may be you will not have heard it as yet.

On Sabbath last Bro Eddy preached at 11 o'clock. In time of preaching the Rev _____ Collins came in. I did not know he had returned from Baltimore until then. As Bro E. was closing meeting he went up in the pulpit & whispered to him. I have since been informed he solicited or offered to preach at night. Bro E. declined and referred him to the Trustees, and proceeded to give out a prayer meeting, as he was going to preach at the school house, 5 miles east at night. Bro E. again preached at 3 o'clock. At night a prayer meeting was held. Bro Cottom invited Dr. Ashton to lead it. I think I was so informed, for I was not present, afterward invited this Bro Collins to pray. He declined. The meeting was quite dull and when dismissed, this Bro C. arose and made a long statement, calculated to excite the sympathy of the people, stating he had been refused to preach in the house & next evening he preached in the New Light meeting house. I did not hear him, but understand he detailed at large. Coming in my office at noon, I was sent for to dinner, invited him along. My wife invited him to stay with us that night. He with his wife did, and in the course of a couple of hours I learnt much of his views and object, and plainly he is not merely an agent sent to preach and be instrumental in converting sinners, but I believe he will exert himself to pull the Old Side Methodist, as he calls them, to pieces. He has located himself in Dayton, but is going round to form circuits, and I believe if he can get a majority of any society to join him, he will try to see if the meeting house deed is valid and if possible try and wrest it from the present proprietors. I could say much more, but have been as cautious in what I have stated above, as possible so as to give you some idea of what is going on. The lesson I got with the Rev. J.M. Early has taught me to be careful even when I have a statement from respectable testimony.

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But my dear Brother is there not a plain departure from old Methodism in the present day, and do you not remember what James Quinn wrote you some years ago, "Let us unite to battle back." I really wish I could feel more engaged, more religion and obtain a complete victory over myself and see the

good work go on, see pure religion prevail, old Methodism. The whole matter of radicalism does not trouble me. A name is nothing, President or Bishop. The Presiding Elder is no scarecrow, but the sumun bonum of religion is to love & serve God.

I remain as ever your friend

Geo S. Houston

Dec. 27, 1830