12-27-1830

Letter from George S. Houston to James B. Finley

George S. Houston
My dear Brother, I am commencing this letter. I have not been able, though I have time to write, but the one matter is so important on my mind and I must write it, lest it may be you will not have heard it as yet.

On Saturday, Prof. Eddy preached at 11 o'clock, in time of preaching the Rev. Collins came in. He had returned from Bettendorf, until then, as Prof. E. was closing meeting. The fact of his return and the prospect of his preaching brought up the idea of speaking at this meeting, of which he had been informed. He declined to speak at the same time as Prof. E. and then again preached at St. Cloud, but not in a large meeting, as he was going to preach at the school house, Saturday night next. Prof. E. again preached at St. Cloud, but not in a large meeting, my father, Prof. Collins, says. But he told me he differed with Prof. E. in the matter. The meeting was quite dull and when it adjourned, Prof. E. declared to me that the meeting was quite dull and when it adjourned, Prof. E. declared to me that the meeting was quite dull and when it adjourned, Prof. E. declared to me that...

The meeting was quite dull and when it adjourned, Prof. E. declared to me that...
though I am informed none will forsake the church for
my own part, I am not the separation that will take place if
shakes with me until we continue in one body. I would rather
than the conference had granted some protest than to see a separa-
tion that the laws the new body are working on, every
candidate. Methodists must give it up, was their reformation of
a reform in life, in holiness, righteousness and devotion to
God, who works any change against them.

But my dear Brother, is there not a plain departure
from the Meth. in the present day, and do you not
remember what James Gill man wrote to your rude young
age, "Let us return to the first love"? I really wish
I could feel more in god, more religious and utter a
complete section other myself, and see the good works
as my, the same religious men said, the Methodists,
the whole matter of radicals in does not trouble
me, the name is nothing. Presbyterians or Baptists,
the first thing is that I have become an evang. But the
sumner brethren of religio to know what you
and I remain as ever your friend,

J. H. Austen

[Signature]
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 of 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.

I am pleased to state, if we are moving on in a dull way, the Presbyterians are much engaged an increasing. Many have embraced religion and the good work is going on. Were we united and love reigned among us and we lived as we ought and were as faithful as we should be I should not fear but the Lord would bless us also. But this will require a reformation and we can expect it in our society. All Israel is not for Absalom though I am informed some will forsake David. For my own part, I regret the separation that will take place. I should wish we could continue in one body, I would rather even the conference had granted some points than to see a separation, but the plan the new body are working on, every candid Methodist must disapprove. Was there reformation or reform in life, in holiness, righteousness, and devotedness to God, who could say any ought 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 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 sumum bonum of religion is to love & serve God.

I remain as ever your friend

Geo S. Houston

Dec. 27, 1830