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Finley Letters

James B. Finley Letters

8-1-1845

Letter from Samuel A. Latta to James B. Finley

Samuel A. Latta

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Brother ^W Finley

No one is more fully acquainted with my true Character than yourself. If you my dear brother have known me from my youth up: And although my life may have been faulty in many respects yet you do know that it would form a more just view of my Character than as charged in your Communication. "Have you ever known me my dear sir to profess friend-ship for those whom I did not love or respect? Have you ever known me to prove treachery to a friend, or betray the Confidence reposed in me, although ^{even by those} who might subsequently be ^{my enemies}?" I know you never did. I have always esteemed you as one of my best friends & have always said & still say that there is no man living for whom I have stronger attachment or of whose integrity, judgment, & moral excellence I have formed a higher estimate. Nor have I at any time betrayed you or been prodigal of your Character or interests.

John

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Wm James B Stinley
by ~~James B Stinley~~
Nashville
Ohio

I deny unhesitatingly that I "industriously circulated the Report that I had a letter of yours in my possession which would ruin you if published" as you have charged in your Communication or that any copy of the letter was sent by me or with my knowledge into your district or that the letter or any part of it was published with my approbation, as charged in your Communication. The letter was not obtained for such purposes: nor was it so implied. In obtaining ~~the letter~~ ^{it} I acted in good faith to you. I intended to furnish you with a copy so as to allow you the opportunity of explaining or appealing to the party concerned in a way that might prevent its publication. And as I confidently believed ~~that~~ ^{it} the publication would injure your reputation I urged every plea to prevent it & for a time hoped the effort had been successful. But you continued to write & I could ^{properly to serve you} no longer ~~be~~ ^{as a friend} ~~an influence~~. The letter was not mine ^{it was to be returned if} called for. Having placed it in the hands of brother Marley our mutual & much esteemed friend who was in correspondence with you who promised to send you a copy I had intended when it ~~was~~ should be brought back to me to return it to Dr. Cooper to avoid being called upon in future by persons desiring to see it. Accordingly I placed it in the hands of a Southern preacher to be returned. In the meantime Brother McFerrin was here & said the letter must be published. I intreated him to publish only so much of it ^{if it must be made public} as applied to the controversy & to correct the spelling & punctuation as it had been ~~written~~ carelessly & to a private friend & not for publication: to all of which he consented & it was so published. Other papers published the letter as it was written.

I have now given you an honest statement of all the facts
And can only say if I have erred it is in judgement & not in
intention. And I assure you most solemnly that although
I have been severely tried with your writings against Bishop
Soule who is also one of my best friends

I may have been betrayed into a mention of your letter in private debate; but with no other motive than to justify my own position to the present Controversy. ^{by showing that others ~~and~~ stand where I now stand} No one can say they have ever heard me speak disrespectfully of you during my whole life: nor could any body by any statement have induced me to denounce you through the publick press without first enquiring of you as to the alleged facts. I think you had some Cause to suspect me from the Representations which it appears have been made to you. And although I am disposed to excuse you ^{on that account} yet you have done me great injustice & injured my Reputation which has already suffered much by the Misrepresentations of the Advocate.

I feel most keenly your reference to your defence of me in the time of my trouble. I should be ungrateful to forget this or to inflict injury upon one to whom I am so deeply indebted. You may smite me if you will & when I am guilty I will gladly submit. You may cast me off & crush me for opinions, sake and yet I will cherish the ^{best} recollections of the past. I will derive some comfort from the recollection of what I once was & that I once had friends. My present position is a painful one and my articles have been ^{so} mutilated ~~in~~ that my true position is not known to the readers of the Advocate. And I am now threatened with the party influence of the Conference for so saying. ~~My~~ ^{My} old friends denounce me because I dared to differ with them in opinion & it is confidently asserted by some that the Conference will punish me ^{severely} ~~for so doing~~. If so let them do it, & I will carry up my appeal from man to God. You are at liberty to use the letter as you see proper.

Write on the receipt of this let me know who can communicate these things to you. ~~Do not let me know that you have~~
 If I am not mistaken ^{in the least} he is in fact an enemy to us both.
~~There has been but one man for many years devoted to him in the~~

Rev J B Hinley