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James B. Finley Letters

9-26-1836

Letter from John H. Fielding to James B. Finley

John H. Fielding

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friends? Just now there is no efficient Ministry in any of the pro-
testant Churches here. The opportunity is favorable for our Church.
The Church's great head, can indeed; revive & carry on his work. But he
is not bound to work miracles. He works by instruments; & can render
the suitability of instruments, for different departments of the labour,
obvious to us. You have several men in Ohio, whom I could name,
whom indeed you would not like to part with, whom perhaps you think
you could not spare - - who would suit well this commanding position.

Rev. J. B. Finley
at Conference
Chillicothe
O.



And, I know a visit from some of you, would convince you of this.
The appointment is already of one preacher for this Station. But the
Church would gladly receive & support another, such a one as they
want. But I must close - - Think of us - -

St. Louis, Monday 26th Sept 1830

Rev. J. B. Finley

My Dear Brother -

After all my efforts, after altering the
arrangements of our little School here, at the great risk of injuring
seriously its interests, I find myself obliged to abandon my de-
sign of attending the Ohio Conference. Our Sepian classes on the
30th; of course our Examination should be now in operation. It
was necessary for me to attend the Missouri Conference, (which closed
its Sepian last Friday,) to negotiate a transfer of the Institution
at St. Charles, from its proprietor, Mr. Collier, to that body. Desiring
& intending to proceed to Ohio as soon as this business should
be transacted, I ante-dated the examination four weeks. At the
termination of this matter, however, I found myself so involved in the
various business of the College, ~~at~~ that I cannot absent myself,
without exposing it to ruin. Mr. Collier is in the east; & has been
absent several months. There is work to be completed in & about the
College building, a board of Trustees is to be formed, & a charter,
prepared, & an endowment of \$15,000, raised, all by the 1st of
November. I expected Mr C. Home at the time of the Conference;
but a letter I received from him some days since, appoints
me his representative in this concern. The endowment, I would
observe, by the way, is the easiest item of the work. It is
supposed that St. Louis alone will raise it. - I cannot express the

regret I feel at being obliged to give up my design of attending my Conference. My attendance I cannot see, however, to be necessary. No doubt my transfer will be given. The person or persons whose objections, at last Conference, possessed weight enough to prevent my transfer, have now had a full year to give those complaints an actionable modification. This has not been done. Of course there is nothing, as there was nothing against me. You are aware Brother Finley, that I have not had even an insinuation of the nature of those complaints. Still, respect for the Conference, & for the feelings of my friends, were sufficient motives with me to have induced me to submit to the expense of time & money &c. connected with a journey to Ohio; could I have accomplished it, without a dereliction of the duties, & a ruinous sacrifice of the interests of my present situation.

I transmit to the Bishop a Certificate from Brs. Monroe & Johnson, under whose observation I have lived & acted since my arrival in this Country. I commit my case confidently & cheerfully to my Conference. Will you have the goodness to represent me? My claims are slender. I have ever needed, & ever received, the indulgence of the Church, of which I am a weak & unworthy servant. I ask no indulgence, however, in regard to the matter, whatever it may be, which, so intangible in itself, has had so serious a bearing on my relation. Whatever be done, I wish this distinctly understood, I should prefer, remaining yet longer, in this painful condition of suspense, (& may I not say suspension?)

to any arrangement which should leave a cloud over my course at Augusta. Indeed it would be gratifying to me, were it consistent with the economy of the Church, to be retained for some time yet at the Ohio Conference, & receive some kind of appointment compatible with the situation I now occupy. The Missouri Conference being now over, of course I cannot for another full year, be received here -

I am Dear Brother
Yours affectionately
J. H. Fielding

The M^c. Conference has had a long, laborious, but pleasant session. The work had been prosperous during the year. The increase could not be ascertained, an account of the division of the Conference; but it was upwards of a thousand, within the present limits of the M^c. C. The preachers, with very few exceptions, were in good health. But a few were added by transfer; about ten ^{received} an trial. Sufficient for all but two or three appointments; & Missouri supports her ministers well. All that seems wanting now is a man of wisdom, the mature wisdom of experience, combined with labouring ability, to serve this great City. When, Oh, when will the importance of St Louis, be understood & felt, by our eastern