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Letter from Stephen G. Roszel to James B. Finley

Stephen G. Roszel

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My dear Brother,

Baltimore, June 5th, 1831

I trust I shall have been, or may, have been with you at once Camp, making the season; but many things second to you, and our not the least, is this want of means to meet any expenses. It is, however, a pleasing gratification to me that I find the pleasure of seeing you. I can converse with you by letter, belonging highly to the present, and one that may be enjoined, to the spiritual education, in the good, prosperity and safety of the church.

I was a visitor at the last session of the Philadelphia Conference, and from all I hear, it is the intention of our Eastern brethren to bring forward the old question at the ensuing General Conference. If possible, effect a change in our Discipline, partly, that their delegates will not be actuated in direct support to that point, this year they will see the Chancery board with men, of their own political stamp, for hard to act to their ease. You will readily discover that if you will look at the delegates from the New York Conference as published in the Advocate, Journal, they could not afford all their professed friendship to Dr. Vaughan at the last General Conference, and yet far enough, to esteem him, the ensuing General Conference. Doctor, this is now in this city, first from the New York Conference. He informed me that the only reason why he did, Vaughan was not done, was that he could not support their measures. With such evidence before us, it is a
duty incumbent on us all to all the Methodists to stand in our Watch Tower, and as far as we can preserve our well tried and inward beliefs. Bishopdale publicly, by a public reading of the mystery as a people. What a change in our government! We have done so great an injury to our ancient brethren and the charge they with the Presbytery Bishopdale Methodism is in all its parts as a vote to the congregation must go. But, then, I saw, could an apostolic example than any other. I think must be obvious to every Methodist church here attached to our Episcopal Government.

As you know, appearances are, I still think, your men. Wie and doctors, the evil may be avowed and our folly (10) heard. It should be known. If you come to the Lord's Conference, we should not have a doubtful mind. I am anxious to establish the right as a Methodist who shall be able to approve of our Church Government, and who shall not in the least degenerate and anathematize in our general system.

As you know, the cause and Church of God, I do confidently hope you will attend to this business in your Conference, and that you will write to me of announcing and influencing in the different Western Conferences, showing them the great necessity of sending money to the General Conference, and do our utmost to aid this enterprise.

Walter Jones. I could most sincerely wish I could see you, that we might convey more fully on the great interest of ourion, but I have not this privilege at present. Please be in touch in addressing you in front of those sentences.
My dear Brother,

I did hope that it would have been my privilege to have been with you at your camp meeting this season, but many things seemed to forbid it, and one not the least, is the want of means to meet my expences; It is however a pleasing gratification to me that if denied the pleasure of seeing you I can converse with you be letter, a blessing highly to be prised, and one that may be employed to our mutual edification, and the good prosperity and safety of the church.

I was a visitor at the last session of the Philadelphia Conference and from all I can learn it is the intention of our eastern brethren to bring forward the Old Presiding Elder question at the ensuing General Conference, and if possible effect a change in our eclesiastical polity. Hence their deligates will all be selected in direct refference to that point, this gain’d they will fill the Episcopal Chair with men of their own political stamp, prepared to act agreeable to their views. You will readily discover this if you will look at the deligates returned from the New York Conference as published in the Advocate & Journal. They could not after all their professed friendship to Bro. Waugh at the last General Conference trust him far enough to elect him to the ensueing General Conference. Doctor Hall is now in this city, just from the New York Conference. He informed me that the only reason why Bro. Waugh was not elected, was that he could support their measures; With such evidence before us, it is a duty incumbent on us and all old side Methodists to stand in our watch tower, and as far as we can preserve our well tried and Heaven Blest Eclesiastical polity. In no period of our hystory as a people, would a change in our government have done us so great an injury. If our eastern brethren effect the change wish in the Presiding Eldership, Radicalism in all its parts as a legitimate consequence must follow, then farewell to an efective energetic itinerancy. This I think must be obvious to any old Methodist preacher attached to our Episcopal Government.

Alarming as appearances are, I still think if we are wise and prudent the evil may be averted and our Holy Ark saved. We should know the men we send to the Gen’l Conference. We should not hazard a doubtfull case. Let every deligate be a firm established old Wesleyan Methodist who know, love, and approve of our Church Government, and who will not in the least degree countenance an alteration in our general cystem.

As you love the cause and Church of God, I do confidintly hope you will attend to this business in your conference, and that you will write to brethren of standing and influence in the different western conferences, shewing them the great necessity of sending none to the Gen’l Conference but old side men firm and established;

Was it proper, I could most sincerely wish I could see you, that we might converse more fully on the great interest of our Zion, but as I have not this priviledge at present, I must be resigned in addressing you in part on those subjects by letter not doubting but you will do all you can to prevent inovations in our Church. I shall be much gratified in receiving a letter from you on the receipt of this.
Praying that the great head of the Church may be with you and yours at all times, and bless you with any needed and wanted blessing. I am dear Bro. yours in love

Stephen G. Roszel

P.S. I think it unfortunate that Bishop Hedding instead of Bishop Soule, visits the western and southern conferences this year. A hint is enough, this in confidence.