4-28-1838

Letter from Wright & Swormstedt to James B. Finley

Wright & Swormstedt

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Ow. 3. “Agreement written on the same paper enters into, on the 26th of March, you will recollect it is in the following words: Under this date it is agreed by the parties named in the foregoing article, that the contract be suspended for the present, and that J. B. Finley of the first part, withdraw his manuscript for enlargement, correction, and preparation for the press. And that when he shall return the manuscript and the North Committee approve of it, and recommend its publication, it is agreeable that the foregoing contract made on the 6th day of Dec. shall be binding on all the parties. Now we are aware that the North again cannot publish any work, unless recommended by the North Committee, and if Bro. Elliott should express the best wish in preparing your manuscript, it would still have to be according to our understanding of the arrangements recommended by the North Committee before we could publish it. Now just as soon as the North Committee shall approve of your manuscript and recommend its publication, we shall be willing to bind ourselves for the manuscript and the right according to the provisions of the said contract, but until that is accomplished, we had, we are compelled to beg permission to adhere strictly to the suspending contract, for we have no means of having the work prepared for the press without considerable additional expense. But if you will proceed the engraving of your portrait on the most favourable terms, for it certainly ought to accompany the history by whomsoever it may be published. We remain yours respectfully,

[Signature]
Dear Bro Finley,

Yours of the 20th inst has been received and altho you do not ask for an answer, we think it best that we make a few remarks in reply. In stating the part of the work you were expected to perform in the publication of the History of the Wyandott Mission, you refer to two brethren, Bishop Soule & A.W. Elliott. We respect them very highly and are bound to respect their opinions, yet we beg leave to call attention to the resolution of the Ohio Conference which you know is to be the guide of all parties. “1st That J.B. Finley be requested to continue the composition of his Indian History.”

2nd That the Book Committee be requested to examine said work and if in their judgment it merits a publication the Conference request the Book Agents to negociate with Bro. Finley for the copy right, and publish said History.”

This 2nd resolution certainly supposes the manuscript to be in some way prepared for the press. It supposes also, that the Book Committee after an examination are to determine if it merits a publication, and then we are requested to negociate with you for the copy right. The agreement we made with you on the 5th of Feb was made under the impression that the transcribing into a fair hand after some corrections would prepare the manuscript for the press, but in this it seems, we were mistaken, as the resolution of the last meeting of the Brook Committee, intimates the necessity of the manuscript’s undergoing a recomposition.

Our 2nd agreement written on the same papers entered into on the 20th of March, you will recollect is in the following words – “Under this date it is agree by the parties named in the foregoing article, that the contract be suspended at present, and that J.B. Finley of the first part, withdraw his manuscript for enlargement, revision, and preparation for the press. And that when he shall return the manuscript and the Book Committee approve of it, and recommend its publication. It is agreed that the foregoing contract made on the 6th day of Feb shall be binding on all the parties." You are aware that the Book Agents cannot publish any work unless recommended by the Book Committee, and if Bro. Elliott should exercise his best skill in preparing your manuscript it would still have to be (according to our understanding of the arrangements) recommended by the Book Committee before we could publish it. Now just so soon as the Book Committee shall approve of your manuscript and recommend its publication, we shall be willing to bind ourselves for the manuscript and copy right according to the provisions of the first contract, but until that recommendation is had, we are compelled to beg permission to adhere strictly to the suspending contract, for we have no means of having the work prepared for the press without considerable additional expence. Our J.F.W. will procure the engraving of your portrait on the most favourable terms, for it certainly ought to accompany the History by whomsoever it may be published.

We remain yours respectfully

Wright & Swormstedt

Copy of letter to Rev. J.B. Finley