

1851

Letter from James B. Finley to Rev. Abel Stevens

James B. Finley

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New
Abel Stevens
Boston
Editor of Epian Herald

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At Page
Caton Oneida County Ohio is my
address

Dear Brother I ~~thou~~ leaves me in good health
 as I have enjoyed for years; or since I left the Penitentiary
 I am much more than thankful to you and to the
 Michigan Advocate for giving some of our poor heretics
 in the Ohio Conference, the privilege of defending
 ourselves against some of the most violent measures
 that in my opinion ever displease a body of Minis-
 ters, calling them slaves the ambassadors of the blessed
 Jesus. Just because we would not believe and
 consent to act on the rule advising to build our
 houses of worship with free seats as mandatory and
 punishable by the executive officers of the Discipline
 No doubt you are well posted up on some of the
 Doings of the aristocracy of our Conference via Walter
 Linnell Moody & Co. and no one has come in
 for more of their abuse than myself; Mr. Inskeep has
 been pursued with a Jeremial Beal that would have
 been worthy of the Dark ages; and our beloved Bishop
 James has been roiled and abused in the publick streets
 of Chillicothe, and the Brethren who have contended
 for the privilege of Family sitting and their houses

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Three years & 3 months did I spend in the Ohio Penitentiary as inmate Inmate not as ~~other~~ ~~off~~ I lived in the prison with the prisoners every day Troved at their breakfast table every morning and eat with the guard. Had the opportunity of P.C. by the appointment of Powers for 12 years of my Strenuous life; I have travelled the heaviest circuits of this western valley and done and suffered as much as any man for the cause of God & Methodism on the west side of the mountains according to my talents and at no time has my moral character been called in question either for sincerity, honesty, or sobriety until the Conference at Chillicothe on the 1st September was a year since by Mr Greenall Moody

I have sought redress but none has been afforded me so my dear friend if you will permit I will in the spirit of God and I hope with the spirit of a Christian Minister state my whole previous and then let the world & my Brethren Judge and if they shall find me guilty I will not object to be anathematized

If you will permit this: Please send me your excellent paper as a subscriber and I will send you the subscription price by the next communication perhaps there will be others who will subscribe

I am as ever yours affectionately
Geo A Stephens
1851
J Blinley

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Was called by ~~friends~~ houses of orijation

Now My Bre as you have noticed in your paper that I amasperamented ~~that~~ if you will consent tell the whole tale. through your paper and let My old and true friends and Brethren in the membership and Ministry ^{east & west} know ~~my name~~ ^{my name} to the position I now occupy. It is to me most painful to say and so far as I am concerned I would decline saying any thing; but the ~~the~~ ^{the} Statutes of the Church and the feelings of My friends are concerned call for it as you have opened your columns for me and others I hope you will at least permit me to give the History, and the Documents from the beginning to the end. I shall be very particular only to state such things as will be proven without such a full controversy; both in reference to facts & circumstances; and in closing up this letter I suffer me to say that the 10 day of last August about 9 O'Clock in the morning in the State of Tennessee I was born of the spent 50 years ago; (or in 1831) I have been traveling as an itinerant 48 years the 1st day of next May I have labored from the fall of 1821 to 28 as Superintendant of the Indian Mission, six years of that time I lived with them and rode of their horses eating sleeping in their wigwags and in the woods often between a hollow anem and an Indian Mother; or on my death on my back or on a Bear or Buffalo Skin