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Unpublished Letters of the Disciples of Christ

Letters

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12-31-1863

### Robert Richardson to Isaac Errett, December 31, 1863

Robert Richardson

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With kind regards to sister Errett  
& family, I remain your truly

R. Richardson

<sup>R. Richardson</sup>  
Pittsburg, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> 1863.

Dear Bro. Errett

I rec<sup>d</sup>. per last  
mail yours of 23<sup>d</sup> enclosing your  
photograph, for which I am much  
obliged. It is, I think, an excellent  
likeness.

I read Bro. Cox's rejoinder in the  
Review & thought it very unworthy  
of him. I think you do well not  
to reply. It is sufficient to have  
disavowed any design to impose a  
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our views, for the benefit of the public,  
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further discussion with those who  
are so blinded by prejudice that  
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plainest distinctions.

Your letter to Bro. C. in relation  
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been of for some 2 weeks or more. It has been regarded by all as a very proper & courteous communication, but the proprietors of the hymn book will by no means hearken to its suggestions. There are some who cannot hear on certain topics, even if their ears were as big as those of Midas. Heaven deliver us from the love of money, that "meanest of amonoz"!

What is to be done, I scarcely know. It is clear that the present book should be superseded in some way. Suppose that you, with Bro. Haden & any others you might engage, either actively or nominally, would get up a really good book embracing all in the present one worth retaining, & giving the music as in the Plymouth Collection, with good tables, indexes &c. would not such a book take the place of the

present one gradually in the churches. Containing all the good hymns in the old books it could be used along with it without confusion & having superior merit, would gradually displace it - particularly, if, after a time an edition were printed, without the music, in a cheap form. Unless something of this kind could be done, I do not see but that the brethren must continue to groan instead of to sing, and remain unwilling tributaries to individual selfishness.

Finding that the Harbinger does not any longer "pay", Bro. C. has concluded to discontinue it at once. Some of the Jan'y No. was even printed, when this conclusion was reached by Bro. & especially by sister C. so that there will be no more expense incurred. Unfortunately we have no reason to believe that this decrease & sud-

Robert Richardson to Isaac Errett, December 31, 1863

Bethphage, Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> 1863

Dear Bro. Errett,

I rec'd per last mail yours of 23<sup>rd</sup> enclosing your photograph, for which I am much obliged. It is, I think, an excellent likeness.<sup>1</sup>

I read Bro. Cox's rejoinder in the Review<sup>2</sup> & thought it very unworthy of him. I think you do well not to reply. It is sufficient to have disavowed any design to impose a creed, & to have shown as you have so clearly done, that expositions of our views, for the benefit of the public, have been given by our brethren from the beginning. I can conceive of no good that can result from a further discussion with those who are so blinded by prejudice that they are unable to perceive the plainest distinctions.

Your letter to Bro. C. in relation to the hymn-book, I have heard spoken [begin page 2] of for some 2 weeks or more. It has been regarded by all as a very proper & courteous communication, but the proprietors of the hymn book will by no means hearken to its suggestions. There are some who cannot hear on certain topics, even if their ears were as big as those of Midas. Heaven deliver us from the love of money. That "meanest of amours"!

What is to be done, I scarcely know. It is clear that the present book should be superseded in some way. Suppose that you, with Bro. Hayden & any others you might engage, either actively or nominally, would get up a really good book embracing all in the present one worth retaining, & giving the music as in the Plymouth Collection, with good tables, indexes etc. would not such a book take the place of the [begin page 3] present one gradually in the churches? Containing all the good hymns in the old book, it could be used along with it without confusion & having superior merit, would gradually displace it – particularly, if, after a time an edition were printed, without the music, in a cheap form. Unless something of this kind can be done, I do not see but that the brethren must continue to groan instead of to sing, and remain unwilling tributaries to individual selfishness.

Finding that the Harbinger does not any longer "pay", Bro. C. has concluded to discontinue it at once. Some of the Jan[uar]y No. was even printed, when this conclusion was reached by Bro. & especially by Sister C. so that there will be no more expense incurred.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately we have no reason to believe that this decrease & sudden [begin page 4] vanishing of the Millennial Harbinger, augurs that the Millennium has actually begun & that the work of the Harbinger is over. The time is evidently "not yet", & this Harbinger having failed, I suppose we must "look for another." The next I hope will be able to point to the prophecies in confirmation of his mission, and especially to the fact that 'the poor are to have the gospel preached to them.'

Brethren Pendleton & Loos are absent on a visit to Pittsbg. Bro. Campbell & family are in usual health. I am happy to hear of your continued success in Detroit. With kind regards to sister Errett & family, I remain yours truly

R. Richardson.

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<sup>1</sup> In other correspondence in this collection, M. C. Tiers asks Errett to get a 'half size' negative of an "exquisite" picture from an artist in Detroit at Tiers' expense. Errett apparently sent Tiers a different portrait. The superior portrait was on a 'card' and is probably what Errett sent to Richardson.

<sup>2</sup> Josiah Wright Cox (1821-1888) wrote a scathing review of Errett's "Synopsis" in the *American Christian Review*. Cox's rejoinder was reprinted in the *American Christian Quarterly Review*, Volume 2, 1863 (Cincinnati) 232-236; 258-263. For more on the Synopsis, see Douglas A. Foster, "Synopsis of the Faith," *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2004) 725.

<sup>3</sup> The decision to cease publication of the Millennial Harbinger was not fulfilled. It remained in print until 1870. In the Preface to the 1863 Harbinger, Campbell addressed the frequent question, "Will the Harbinger be continued for the present year?" In the December issue for that year Campbell announced he would "hold out for one more volume." In the January 1864 issue, Campbell, having stated how difficult publishing the Harbinger had become, relates that "The Harbinger, henceforth, will be conducted and published by my long and well-approved associate and co-laborer in many works, Prof. W. K. Pendleton."