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Letter from Thomas Lindsay to George Sibley, December 4, 1838

Thomas Lindsay

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Major George C Sibley Decr 4th 1838

Dear friend I recd. your letter inclosing a News paper, containing the Constitution of a Home Missionary Society, for which I thank you, Not that I am Much pleased with the present plan of the Society, I was a Spectator of Some of the proceedings in the formation of Said Society They had the tact to put our Worthy friend A [sic, H] Gamble forward in that Case, He had the Credit of being the first, who proposed the formation of Such a Society, I heard him read the preamble to the Constitution and and distinctly expect his Views that it Should be purely Presbyterian and that it was intended that none Should be received to labor under its influence, and authority, who were not Sound presbyterians. And although I was under the impression that it was the bantling, Not of a Synod, but of that part of the Synod who Seemed fully bent on becoming independent of the authority and Govt. of the Presbyterian Church, or of finaly joining the New School Secession. I Was Much pleased with Mr. Gambles Views, persuaded that the Synod of Missouri, Just needed Such a Scheme in Opperation, for Supplying her Churches, and building up her Weak Congregations, and Waste places.

Accordingly a Committee Was appointed (but Mr. H. G. was not a member of that Committee) to draft a Constitution But, alas when the Constitution Made its appearance what a falling off there Was from the Views of Mr Gamble as I understood him and no doubt as he understood himself for in passing it although he did omit himself he proposed Sundrie amendments his excellent preamble Was entirely Supressed and every article So constructed as to meet the Views of those men who I fear have but little affinity to Sound Old School Presbyterianism. And How are they to form the Synod they refer to in the Constitution Not in the regular Way by the Order of the Genl. Ass[embly] [sic, asby]. of the Presbyterian Church but Either by the New School Secession or by their Own Self Will and in defiance of the Order & Government of the Presbyterian Church. Will it not in that case be entitled to the name of the Pseudo Presbyterian Synod of Missouri.

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These Men are well aware that neither the Presbytery of Missouri nor the Old School portion of the Presbytery of St. Charles will ever join them unless they Come back to the old Stand, and acknowledge themselves under the authority and direction even of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. It is not even Certain if the Genl. Assy will receive that portion of our Presbytery who have denounced them and gone off.

I have understood from good authority that One of the Ministers belonging to our presbytery did before hand declare that in this Way they Could raise funds from the Churches to

Supply the State with Missionaries of their own Choice independant of the General Assembly These Men profess themselves to be Sound presbyterians, but in these days of Nullification names may pass for what they are worth, the men who Supported and cleared Barnes and his heretical Book may Call themselves by what names they please, acts are more potent things than words. My notion is that it becomes every Sound presbyterian to mark well his steps in these times of Schism and distraction and keep close to the good old ways our Fathers trode, I have good reason to believe that Some of the leading Men who formed that Constitution have no Congenial feelings for the Sound old fashioned Presbn. Church and if they Can get the people to go with them Will in all probability Either join the Secession or declare for independance, They may turn themselves into What form [inserted: or shape] they please, and Call themselves by What name they Choose, But the forming of a Presbyterian Synod is the Work of a higher Judicature. As I Observed above I Was Much pleased with Mr H Gambles preamble and remarks, respecting the great Need We have for Such a Missionary Society under the direction of the Synod of Missouri and if well ordered and well Supported Would under God be of immense importance in Supplying the Church in this State with able and faithfull Ministers. And although the Presbyterian Church in Missouri is weak in numbers yet I fully agree with you that if united and our heart in the thing We Could raise Sufficient to keep at least 10 Missionaries Employed in the State Either helping Weak Churches or in destitute Settlements. I am fully of the Opinion the Synod of Miss[ouri] ought to have Such a Missionary Society under their Care. but Where is

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The Synod of Missouri it is like the years beyond the flood past & Gone, the Presbyterian Church in Missouri Can have no regular Synod in all probability for Some time to Come for in Whatever Shape or form these New Schoolites May Choose to put themselves they never Can be a part of the true Presbyterian Synod of the State of Missouri unless they Come under the order and direction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and Where are they to Get their truely Sound Missionaries not from the Approved Seminaries of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but from New School Seminaries, Such as Jacksonville Albertine New Haven &c &c. I now assure you that if these Men forsake their Mad freaks and declare themselves Soundly Presbyterian by adhering to the Genl. Assembly and then form a Synodical Missionary Society Auxiliary to the Genl Assy Board of Home Missions With the priviledge of retaining all the funds raised within the State to Support Missionaries and Ministers to labor [~~crossed out: within~~] Among ourselves, procure their Missionaries [inserted: from Seminaries] Approved for Soundness in the faith and render an annual report of their proceedings to the Genl Assy Board of Home Missions I will Not Only approve of it as a decidedly desirable object. but Will freely Support it with my mite But I must beg you My dear friend to Excuse me in Either approving or assisting this

would be Synodical Missionary Society in its present form and under its leaders I am persuaded Mr Gambles Views are Sound and good and he brought the Presbytery of St. Louis to yield almost every thing but that of decidedly disowning the Conduct of their Commissioners in joining the New School General Assembly. and if he and his Brother Should Stand in their Way by their Old School preferences, the Constitution is Sufficiently lax with a little adress to lay them and all Such aside as to any active agency in the Management of the Societies affairs I found Some of the leaders Very anxious that all Subscribers Should have a Vote in the Election of Officers the Constitution as it now Stands leaves that point Much in the dark Were I inclined to give it a name to my Mind Appropriate, I Should Call it an irresponsable Voluntary New School Mission board and if it Succeeds at all in its present form and under its present leaders, We have no Security that it will continue to favor Sound Presbyterianism but it may at the Expenche of those gulled with its fair promises flood the Churches in Missouri with a loose lax

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System of Doctrine and discipline to the utter Abolition of Sound Presbyterianism the leaders in these proceedings Especially from St Charles Presby would Seem to be in fact out of the Ecclesiastical Connection of the Presbyterian Church nevertheless they will tell you yea have Sounded it abroad that they are the Only true Presbyterians but are We obliged to believe them in the face of Such opposition both doctrinal & Ecclesiastical What has been the leading object of the Sound orthodox majority of the Presbyn. Church for years past Simply to get Back to peace and purity in Doctrine order and discipline in accordance with the Standards of the Church. What has been the leading object of the New Schoolites but to loosen the reins more and more both in doctrine order and discipline to give the right hand of fellowship to almost every one no matter how hetridox and opposed to the peace purity and Standards of the Presbyterian Church While those who have Stood up for her peace and purity have been Sneered at with Scorn and Contempt as drones heresy hunters &c &c.

Dear Major these are Stubborn facts in the Case of Barnes Even the public papers were Engaged fulminating against his prosecutors An Election [sic, Mr. Watson] and Mr Gallaher Saw fit to Send the Board [sic, Mr. Boal] to the Synod without asking or Consulting your humble Servant I nevertheless went to See What Was doing and returned fully Convinced that if these Men Can get the Churches to Go with them they are prepared to bid a final farewell to the good Old Presbyterian Church and finding that a Number of the Members of our little Church were likely to fall away with them I thought that I had perhaps done and Said Inough and if my Voice was not heard it Might be best to be Silent_ It has been Cause of deep grief and Mortification to me to See the Church of St Charles Whose prosperity I

have earnestly Sought and prayed for that it might be built up in the faith of the Gospel and the fellowship of the Spirit and bond of peace likely to be Scattered and Chased about by every wind of doctrine. I was buoyed up with a prospect of Members Sufficient with liberal Exertions to Enable us to Support a faithfull Minister to labor among us for our Spiritual good In this Critical moment of hope how Mortified to find that a Sort of Spiritual Nullification and radicalism toward the Orthodox portion of the Presbyterian Church has taken [inserted: deep] hold of a Number of the Members of Synod and that Many privet members had Inlisted under their banners

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While with a few Noble Exceptions a Strange apathy or indifference Seems to have taken hold of the rest My dear friend I have felt much on this Subject and Still feel and am Willing to do What I Can (and that is but little in these my declining days) to Support and defend the truth and the preaching of the true Gospel among us, I love our Church I love her doctrines her Order her discipline, and have no inclination to follow those who are given to Change

I ought to have Seen and Conversed with you and Mrs Sibley Long ago, but I thought you was fully aware of all that passed. Since I received your Note I have had my hand lame, that I Cannot write but with difficulty and that with pencil only, lately I have been quite unwell, that and the Cold Weather together Must be my Excuse for not going over to See you before now. I do not know if you will be able to read this Scrawl penciled with a lame hand believe me I am yours Most Sincerely Tho. Lindsay

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T. Lindsay letter to G. C. Sibley Decr. 4. 1838. abt Church affairs