

2-11-1801

Letter from Robert W. Finley to James B. Finley

Robert W. Finley

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Feb 14 1801

My dear children) I at present enjoy a considerable degree of health, but have been ^{more} so unfavorably situated, the hardships of a hard winter. The snow is at this time 16 inches deep & the cabins very open. Some ~~travellers~~ travellers passed through the neighbourhood a few days ago, & informed us that in the Grand Prairie the snow was 6 feet deep, on the Wabash & feet & Indianathuro to the mid thigh of a man 100 feet.

It is a ^{more} chance for meditation in a cold Cabin, a small fire & we are amidst a mass of bewailing children for meditation & private retirement. I have often tried to strip Death of all his bright but colors & make all its dismal airs vanish in softness. So this cold among the Provings of my thoughts, is a ^{great} treat to myself the whole creation as one immense building with different apartments all under the government of the great Creator. One apartment was little & dark, damp & ^{and} here there much confinement, little good company, a great cloud of natural spirits, that one cannot think, or talk with freedom, & avoid any of his intellectual powers with glory or pleasure. This is Earth where I dwell.

A second apartment, large, airy, lightsome & serene. Open to the Sun & sky at least admitting all the valuable Qualities of Sun & air without any inconveniences; where there are thousands of most delightful companions, & every thing that can give pleasure to others. This is Heaven.

A third apartment was large, a wintry sky, ^{not} natural storms of pain, wind, hail, thunder, lightning & every thing is painful & offensive, this among millions of wretched companions, cursing the place & tormenting one another & increasing the universal misery. This is Hell. Now ^{is} it not incomprehensible wonderful to be drawn out of the narrow dusky cells into the third apartment, where the change of the room is beyond imagination dreadful, it can be no wonder sinners are afraid to die. But how pleasant ^{the} thought for a soul in possession of a firm hope of entering into the serene apartment, to leave the narrow smoky prison he dwelt in so long & wider such a bound in consequence. ^{It} to a good man is but passing through a death entry, a dusty room in his father's house into another that is beautiful, large, lightsome & divinely entertaining. O children may the prayers & wonders of our heavenly apartment shoot downward, & give the death entry with such a cheerful gleam as to banish every fear when we shall be called to pass through. I have father, mother & every mortal friend forsake us & every good angel take their flight. The presence of Jesus will be all sufficient, & will furnish us with an eternity of life & eternal happiness.

All born on Earth must die, destruction reigns round the whole globe & changes all its scenes. Time rushes off our lives with sweeping wings. But heaven expects forever

At present it is uncertain how long I shall remain here, I wait a letter
from ~~the~~ Joseph's friends writing in Spring to put me at ease
likely I shall continue some time, but if not I shall return to
Ohio before very long. Remember ^{me} to my inquiring friends, & be assured
I remain your affectionate father G. S.

Robt. W. Finley

Shewell Finley

Cincinnati

Geo. James, Esq. Finley

Rushville
11 Feb

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