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Letter from Henry B. Gilbert to James B. Finley

Henry B. Gilbert

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Rev. J. B. Finley
Chaplain to the Ohio
Penitentiary Columbus
Franklin Co Ohio

Hope O
March 16

Henry Gilbert
Prisoner
1848

Rev. J. B. Finley

13 748
New Albany Plain Township March

Sir I embrace this opportunity of addressing a few lines to you for the purpose of informing you of the state of my health and to request your attendance at a quarterly meeting to be held at the village of New Albany some fourteen or fifteen miles from Columbus the circuit is traveled by the Rev. Mr. West and Havens both of whom are in my humble opinion faithful and zealous workers in the vineyard of the Lord and their labours have been truly blessed since Newyears day there has been almost one continued protracted meeting and the presence of the Lord has been felt powerfully throughout the length and breadth of this Township. There is scarcely a meeting held but what there is a crowded altar I was at a meeting on Saturday last and heard a sermon from the Rev. Mr. Havens which was truly evangelical — doctrine after the sermon there was an opportunity given for members of the church to rise and speak and there was a goodly number that testified what the Lord had done for them — after which there was an opportunity given for volunteers to enlist in the service of the Lord of hosts when eight came forward and enrolled themselves as soldiers of King Emanuel with as I believe a full determination to fight the good fight of faith and at last win — a crown of never fading glory at the right hand of God in heaven.

There is one case which I will try to state to you and had I the talents of the most learned ^{man} that ever existed since the foundation of the earth when the morning stars sang together I could not do it justice the case is that of old father Landon for many years a member of the Methodist church but was ~~sent~~ at the time of which I speak a backslider and one of the very worst class (he had) for some years past kept a public house in New Albany and was noted as being one

of the greatest persecutors of the church
one of the most profane and drunken
retches that was in the country there was
not a night that he retired to rest sober
for the last ten or twelve years and I do
not know but that I might say longer but
let it suffice to say that he pursued such a
course untill he was 64 years old but at the
eleventh hour the spirit of the Lord arrested
him and he is now a bright and a shining light
he has given up all that he might win Christ
but I cannot tell you half so I want you
to come and see what the Lord is doing for
those that love and serve him I make this
request not in my own name especially
but in the name of him who has called you
to stand forth as an ambassador for him
and also in the name of the Methodist
Church I would not right for you to come if
I did not think that your coming would be
beneficial both to yourself and the society I
for one want to see and converse with you
and if you will come I will come after you
and see that you lack nothing which is
necessary to your bodily comfort and return
you to the place from whence you are
taken please right to immediately and let
me know whether you can come or not
our meeting commences on the first day of
April 1848 Direct your letter to New Albany
Indiana Hope P.O. Plain township Franklin Co
Ohio if there are any there that wish to
know or hear any thing from me tell them
that Gilbert is well and doing well
tell them that they need not despair of friends
only conduct themselves right and they will
have plenty at least I have found it so
any by the help of God I intend never to
forget the confidence that my old friends

have placed in me I commenced right
and I intend to hold out right they may
all do so only commence right give my
Best respects to the Warden Deputy Warden
and all officers who may wish to hear
from me No more at present But remain
yours in the Bonds of love
Henry B. Gilbert

Rev P.B. Finley