Letter from James B. Finley to David Whitcombe

James B. Finley

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Germantown Feb 8, 1841

Dear Sir,

It is perhaps necessary for me to make some apology for my sudden departure from you the last day. But nothing was the wounder state of my feelings that I thought it best. I had not the least intimation of your having joined the Masons until I read of the sermon and the news came on me like a clap of thunder and now you have joined and sworn to be a Mason. Do not know that I could be thought to say anything to you on the subject. But you have inflicted a wound on many of your own character and the finest part of good character you have been set by the Holy Ghost as an overseer of the members of God's people and if any of them should slip through as a slip of ungodliness to a Circassian theatre or a ball room yours is the duty to reprove and rebuke them. But men is the kind of men that would not much matter be found in any of them. Men in a Mason lodge never blindfolded with a little mask in his pocket and forced printed at his breast and the Orison not to have his thought cut from ear to ear every and to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ, one who proffers to be sent by Christ and to stand in this place and about in this manner by the neck by McGuire, Ockley, or men of that stone pillar it not in gold nor silver, it is the stone of Dayton and then to thrust you or any thing than Minister would go laying down in search of light when you have obtained the Holy Ghost and received the true light to enlighten you to go to a Mason lodge asking after light is too silly and contemptible your illuminati might have been gratified if you had taken pains to have read Morgan's book andAtcheson Black, John Lowneys, James Atcheson and the testimony of 756 Masons who all mentioned it as the most dangerous the civil Invalidation, but I am the first in the order of Masonic influence, and an honor that comes from men and not from God.
Can you avoid joy following me as well as the Masons while you are not your example and influence be as the views of riding upon a neck Brother in the society of three brothers and put them under their influence to the danger of my life. Can you now go to them come out from amongst the wicked whom you have sworn allegiance to them can you now help a brother from the church for attending balls and theaters and cinemas and heretics among whom you can much defile in the heathen abomination of a lodge. O my dear Mr. Young to God that you may yet see the fruits of this abominable influence, the pretensions to antiquity and the incorporating of Jesus Christ and hisKorazite or As Battores is Knowledge and the constant pretension of the Holy Word and Religion as a covering for all it; Demples to an anthem to make a devil Salute Meek what I know and what the world knows it is true that since Megan and the development of it by others there has been some alterations of it done but it is in the same thing and it is to be tested as to be made incontrovertible and its influence is not to protect evil but it is certainly abominable and a cancer of all the do not think well of it and Sinners to hear it may well be called the history of Emigrantes not is allowed working evil to others but good to its self and no man that follows to its self can do this and to any man or creature whom the dispute is with a Mason if he does not have harm himself he is turned to favor a Brother Mason in the state you cannot meet that the convenience mode of solicitors on the subject of Masonry and the Masons that you never be of the long time Lord join them without excuse I cannot but expect may you to Mr. Womack and you need to be the servants of your but you will influence others for mankind will not hang to justify them above but with you will not
Dier Br
Perhaps is necessary for me to make some apology for my sudden departure from Dayton but such was the wounded state of my feelings that I thought it best. I had not the least intimation of your having join’d the Masons untill Sabath after Sermon and the news came on me like a clap of thunder and now you have joined, and sworn to be a Mason I do not know that it would be worth while to say anything to you on the subject. But you have inflicted a wound on many of your own charge and the purist part of God’s Heratage. You have been set by the Holy Ghost as an overseer of the Morrals of God’s People and if any of them should stray through a sinfull curiosity to a circus or theater or a ball room, yours is the Duty to rescue and reclaim them. But where is the truly pious man that would not much rather be found in any of them then in a Mason Lodge. _____ blindfolded with a ______ round his neck and sword pointed at his breast and the profaine oath to have his thought but from ear to ear and to see an embassador of Jesus Christ one who professes to be sent by Christ and to stand in his place lead about in this manner by the neck by McQuene Ockley or men of this stamp. O tell it not in Goth nor publish it in the streets of Dayton and then to think of you or any Christian minister should go crying I am in search of Light when you have Christ the Holy Spirit and word the true light to enlighten. To go to a Mason Lodge asking after light is too silly and contemptable. Your curiosity might have been gratified if you had taken pains to have read Morgan’s books and Allyn’s Ritual, John Quincy Adam’s letters and the testimony of 250 Masons who all renounced it as rotten and dangerous to our Civil Institutions. But I fear the secret lies in the Desire of Masonic Influence and an honner that comes from men and not from God.

Can you now say follow me as I follow the Masons. Will not your example and influence be the means of leading many a weak brother in to the Society of these wicked men and put them under their influence to the injury of their soules. Can you now say to them Come out from amongst the wicked when you have swoarn alegance to them. Can you now expel a brother from the church for attending balls and theaters and circuses and horse races any of whitch are much preferable to the secret abominations of a Lodge.

O My Dier Br I pray to God that you may yet see the grate evils of this abominable flumary. Its pretentions to antiquity and the encorporating of Jesus Christ and his appostles as its ______ is Sacriledge and the Constant prostitution of Gods Holy Word and Religion; as a covering for all its ______ is anough to make a Devel quake. I speak what I know and what the world knows. It is true that since Morgans and the development of it by others, there has been some alterations of its ____ but it is the same thing and it is so attested as to be made incontestable and its flumary is not its gratest evill but it is secretly malitious and a persecution of all who do not speak well of it and __________. As near it may it may well be called the ______ of iniquity and that it allways working evill to others but good to its self and no man that swollows its oaths can do justice to any man or citizen when the dispute is with a Mason if he does not perjure himself. He is bound to favor a Brother Mason. See the oaths. You cannot but recollect the compromise made at Chillicothe on the subject of Masonry and the Resolution that no member of the Conference could join them without censure. I
cannot but expect now you and Br. Wambaugh has yealded yourselves to be the instrements of this ________. But you will influance others for men allways want company to justify themselves but I hope you will not suckseed. It needs some men of moral carructer to _____ it up and it gives influence to the worst of men without whitch they would go down in Society. How would Mq_______ live if it was not for this _____ and you have lent him the moral influance the Church gave you to keep up him and his abominoble system. I learned that him & the Rev. __ Elliot walked the streets linked arm in arm and the most abominoble man in Dayton carried the holy bible after them. This is fine Society for the Holy and Sanctifyed ones of the alter.

My Dier you would no more have taken this step after God converted your soule then you would have sworn an oath or got drunk but alas for your sinfull curiosity and Love of Masonic honor—Dier Br you must soon appear at God’s ______ to give an account of all the deeds done in the body and then it will be seen wheather you acted under the influence of the holy spirit with an eye single to God’s glory. I expect as long as I live in the world to be secretly persecuted by your brethren and all that hate & speak against this ___ of Darkness and of course from you as well as all the rest but I am determined to cast my care on Christ and trust him to the end and not Masons nor Masonry. I will close this plain letter by saying I hope none of God’s flock may follow your example.

I am as ever your Friend

J.B. Finley

Revd David Whitcome