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James B. Finley Letters

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Letter from Robert W. Finley to James B. Finley

Robert W. Finley

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Heart
W. H. Parker Oct 27

My Dr Children) My poor little mind is so prone to wandering
that I am obliged ~~that I am obliged~~ to curb it by confining it to meditate on
some single subject. last Sabbath, the subject was Death. The first
thought that arrested my mind, that it was an awful & solemn thing to
die. I stood amazed at myself, that it was not only awful, but sure, that I was
so void of reflection, on the solemn moment. For a sinner to rally death
without any spiritual, or overleaping life in his soul is the act of a raving
and madman, who laughs at a fearful precipice. & rusheth down headlong
to destruction. O solemnity, eternity. It is fearful indeed to burst the bands
of life, & to launch into the boundless & unalterable region of eternity. No
living man can bear the shocking reflection which death, & being
an everlasting nothing as some think, or of enduring everlasting enjoyment
deserves. It is only grace, & a good deal of it, that can inspire the soul with a hope
full of joy & immortality. Through grace alone, ~~that is death~~ ^{that is life}. Through
faith in Christ, he lifts his fearful thing. & destroys nothing about the
the Christian, but sins, & the means of sin. I visited a sister on last evening,
who with a pleasing smile said I am dying in body, & am ^{beginning} to live for
ever, when I get home I will tell them to enter me ^{just} in your Crown;
for I am not sick with death, but with life. The Christian is fitted for heaven
& longs for it earnestly, for it is congenial with his renewed mind & nothing
can truly be found ^{short} of the regions of glory. Those afflict themselves as about
the loss of this life, are like infants unborn, who if they could speak, might
bemoan their expulsion from the womb at the approaching time of their
birth, not considering it as the means, but the end of being. The Christian
has a hope, & longs for a life everlastingly pure like God, & for a dwelling
wide & beautiful as the temple of heaven. My Dr. Children, I shall quit this
clay I know not, nor do I want to know. It is sufficient for me, if the Lord
will sustain me with grace & let me know I shall be forever with him in the
world to come, that when I lie on the bed of death, I may be waiting from mo-
ment to moment for my dispensation hence, to rest in the bosom of my precious
Jesus for ever, O sweet Jesus, when shall I see thy face, way to vision & hope
to eternal fruition. All that death can do to one, is, tell me that I am of age, & to
lead me from these chambers of darkness to celebrate my birth day in the per-
fected glory. O how revising the thought, I am not only akin to angels
but am doubly related to them & my God, by being ^{born} again & renewed
after the blessed image of precious Christ Jesus; these are some of the
fragments of my meditation, & while I call them to my common business, some
so transient, that I am transported my eyes drop water, & my soul girded with
joy, full of glory & immortality. &c &c
On last evening, in conversation with an African, I reasoned from the equal
obligation we were under to the three Persons in the God head for the redemp-
tion of the fallen humanity of Adam. That we were not more indebted to one

Shall I suffer for the blessing of redemption. That their love was one
& the same love, as their spouse was one & the same, & that their could not
possibly exist such an inequality of love to fall on more, unless there was
such an equality in themselves. And if such an inequality did exist, then we
were not under the same obligations to the son & holy Spirit for redemption
on as to the father. & on this principle put my antagonist to perfect
silence. When I returned to bed I arranged my arguments in some kind
of order. That the three persons whom the plan of redemption was formed
that they were equally & undividedly concerned in it. And the accomplish-
ment of this plan, it was necessary that an order of distinction should take
place according to the several engagements of the three distinct persons, yet
the will of Godhead were but one, & the object of their power but one, Jehovah's
glory in the salvation of sinners. The father loved & concerned in the ac-
complishment of man kind. The Son lived & bore their sins in their nature,
glorifying in that nature all the attributes of the Godhead. The Spirit loved,
& engaged to apply the whole plan, by filling the heart to receive, & by carry-
ing to the heart all the benefits of eternal salvation, to all that would re-
ceive them. Many more thoughts had I on this subject, but I suppose I have
written them you will have time to read.

I at present enjoy but an indolence & state of health, from riding
thru so many hard rains & snows, deep frosts, have broken such
a cold as I think probably I shall never recover. I think it probable that
is not a cure unless the cure of confinement, so as to be able to walk without
without a bridge, flat or canoe. If this, I suspect it will be one of the
most unprofitable years of my life - The circuit is so unkind to me
of government, that it probable in will shatter to pieces Joseph's family
as usual in health - as I intend writing on several subjects,
if you think fit you may fill in my letters, as I cannot keep a copy.
I take the liberty to
to subscribe my your affectionate father &c.

Robert W. Finley

Jan. 9. 1820

I frequently devote some time in
Devotion on nights, some of them versified -
The Soul's Departure from the Body.

How am I like a prisoner here,
Tied from my God. This mortal chain,
Binds me to sorrow here below
In short liod ease, or tedious pain.
When shall that wondrous hour appear
Which free me from this earthly load,
To live at large in regions where
Nor blood nor oil shall hide my God.
I saw this flesh, these eyes, these ears,
These senses & fetters of my mind.
My God, nor let this frame arise
Till every part be well refined.
Jesus thou hast met our nature whole,
Moulded me a body like thine own.
I wish to be as thou wast once before
In robes of praise in worlds unknown.
The Soul's Departure from the body.
Absent from flesh, O blissful thought,
What unknown joys this moment brings
Tied from the mischiefs sin hath wrought
From pains & tears & all their springs
Absent from flesh, illustrious thought,
Surprising scene, triumph thou hast won
That rends the prison of my clay
And I compel my father back.
Absent from flesh, then rise my soul
Where feet no wing could ever climb.
Beyond the towers where planets roll
Measuring the course & joy of time.
I go where God & glory dwell
His presence makes eternal day
Till all that mortal I was sign
For Gabriel waits & wants the way.

On the Soul entering heaven
And is this heaven? And on there?
How short the road, how swift the flight
I am all life, all eye, all ear,
Jesus is here, my soul's delight
Is this the heavenly friend who hung
In blood & on palm on the tree
Whom Paul proclaimed, & from David sung.
Who dyed for them, who dyed for me.
How fair thou offspring of my God,
Thou first born image of his face,
Thy death ground this bliss above.
Thy vital breath adorn the place

So the perfect one at his throne,
"Hail Hail! thou the Godhead's signs."
Sublime & purest thou the dove
Above my voice in heavenly strains.
I conclude at this my act, that no copy oblige me to keep my mind, but I remain till your affectionate father &c.
Robert W. Finley