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James B. Finley Letters

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Letter from R. Bowland to James B. Finley

R. Bowland

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Rev. James D. Finley
Columbus

Mr. Barker
Memphis
April
1847

Mansfield April 24. 1847

Rev. James D. Finley

Respected Friend,

Your kind communication of 18th Inst. was recd. in due course of mail, and regret that I have unwittingly transgressed any of the regulations of that institution, the inmates of which are placed under your pastoral care - One of my great fears was, that the overwhelming calamity that had befallen my truly unfortunate son, might produce on his mind such a state of deep and abiding melancholy, as might in the end seriously impair not only his health but his mental faculties, hence my communications to him were more lengthy and digressive than under different views of his situation they would have been - my designs in thus addressing him were, to cheer up his wounded spirits as much as possible at the early period of his gloomy incarceration; to a sensitive mind (such as his) there is great reason to apprehend the most serious consequences. Solomon says "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" he of course, feels his situation as deeply degrading, however kindly he may be treated by the officers of the institution, and I have every confidence that he is treated with every indulgence that can be extended to him, consistently with his situation, and their duty - yet he must keenly feel the degradation of his present situation, not only so, but he is deprived of the society of an interesting and accomplished wife - and many kind and valued relatives - all these complicated calamities coming upon him in a short space of time, are in their nature calculated to break down the health and spirits of almost any man who had been brought up as he was, and who had occupied in society the rank and flattering attentions he has. It is said, that time renders almost any situation familiar, or a disagreeable one less irksome, these views, however erroneous they may be, will explain to you why my communications to him have contained so much miscellaneous matter, he was fully apprised of Old Mr. Barker's virulent hostility to himself and wife - I supposed it would be some satisfaction to him to know how that matter now stood - hence my reason for inclosing my replies to his vindictive assaults - I learn that he has another

batch of malevolent ribaldry prepared for next week.
I had supposed that his son was the most unreasonable,
vindictive man that I had ever been acquainted with, but
more recent facts go to satisfy my mind that he inherited his
vindictive arrogance from his father, who (if possible) surpasses
the son in deep malignity of heart - the deportment of
father and son justifies us in believing, that if they possessed
the power they would annihilate every person to whom they or
either of them took a dislike, or became hostile!

Mr. Barker's object in his present extraordinary proceedings is of
easy comprehension, he fears that Robert may be yet fully par-
doned - and he is now endeavoring to manufacture public
sentiment - so that if a petition be got up for his pardon, he
can rally all ^{those} he has been able to influence, to join in his remon-
strance &c. - I fear my dear Sir, I am intruding on your time
and patience, hence will conclude by assuring you, that your
kind communication has been properly appreciated by myself
and deeply grieved family - and my earnest prayer is that my
misguided son may repent of his errors, and become in reality
an humble pious man under your parental counsel and pastoral
care - If you deem it proper, present my kind respects to the other
officers of the institution, I thank all the officers for their kindness
manifested toward my self when I called on them, also for every kind-
ness extended to my very unfortunate son, or that they may yet extend
to him - I hope Sir, you will talk to him frequently, and as much as
you deem proper, soothe his wounded spirits - by so doing, you will
have not only his gratitude, but that of his aged and very dis-
tressed parents - and hope you will make every allowance for
my troubling you - I will turn your letter to me as soon as this is
closed - as I do not wish confidential communications to be among
my papers - and my wife only knows, that I received a letter from
you - Very respectfully,
I remain

Dear Sir,
your obliged H. S. C.
R. Bowland