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James B. Finley Letters

8-22-1848

Letter from William R. P. Seman to James B. Finley

William R.P. Seman

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Recommended Citation

Seman, William R.P., "Letter from William R. P. Seman to James B. Finley" (1848). *Finley Letters*. 1090.
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Wm. Lloyd Garrison

Consolton Hy Aug 22 1848

Friend Sir

When I last saw you I promised to write to you - to let you know how I was getting along - And how Society received me - &c - In the first place - my health has been good - indeed even better, Providence has smiled thus far upon me and I have a prospect - of doing well - it is true that some do pass me as though they had never known me - that makes me feel bad - makes a shade of sadness cross my heart, and perhaps destroys some of my well planned notions of reform - alas! that it should be so; that the great efforts, the noble impulses, the generous actions, if not absolutely referable to the same Catalogue of human care and suffering, to the same category as the pitiful thieft, the degrading vice, and the destroying crime, seldom, very seldom meet with any reward, except the radiant glow from the inner heart - which can have no expression, and admits of no description -

Oh! were the guilt of men but weighed by their opportunities - were the heaviness or lightness of those things which silence the voice of conscience within them but judged as well as their acts, who would not be in the situations of some of those unfortunates which they now so loudly condemn - or upon whom they now cast withering glances of utter contempt - And may not those things which ~~silence~~ stifle the voice of an unerring

William Lloyd Garrison
 Consolton Hy
 August 22
 1848

Rev & James B. Finley
 Columbus Ohio

Consolton Hy
 Aug 24th

Home

Conscience be so judged in the future as to leave the sad possessor a fearful reply - or contemptuous silence? May not the thief be asked, what it was that made him neglect the safeguard planted within his breast by Heaven? and may he not answer Want, Ignorance, Evil-Associates, Oppression - & Injustice - And may not the rich neglecter of all such duties be so questioned likewise and find nothing to answer save Pleasure, Avarice, & Ambition. Show with Omniscience for a judge how will the more guilty trouble.

No - No - Conscience is drowned in pleasant sounds even more easily than in the noise of want - It needs Silence, Solitude, the ^{lull} of passion and the ^{death} of hopes to let that still small voice reach the heart's ear - and awaken repentance - and reformation -

When I look over my past life and then see the time mispent or poorly improved - the evil committed - and some bad habits formed - and that poor evil associates - I wonder at my own continued existence - I can only raise my eyes heavenward and say Lord thou hast been merciful -

I am by no means as good as I wish to be - but when I consider the temptations I have passed through - the evils shunned - and the bad examples of evil men - I wonder that I am as I am - And to what can I attribute it save the prayers of a pious mother - for O! what will not a Mother's prayers do?

I hope you will see Pharis for me and tell him that I have not forgotten him yet - and perhaps by the time you get this I will be on my way to Warren County to see his prosecuting witness - for I have hitherto been detained

for the want of funds - I am at work in the neighborhood of the mouth of the Kentucky River from whence I am writing this (Carrollton) but expect to go to Cincinnati on a visit on next Saturday - I am at work for the Hon^{ble} Charles T. Mercer who was a Congressman from Virginia for near thirty years - and who is now living on the interest of his money.

Please inform me whether or not Baker has been released and if it would be consistent with the existing laws of the Institution remember me to my former companions in sad misfortune - and especially Clark & Ironbridge & Baker -

Present my kind remembrances to Col. Sewry and Whole family - and for yourself please accept the assurances of the continued esteem of your most devoted servant
Rev James B. Finley
Columbus -
Wm. R. Jones, P. Leander

P.S. - please write soon - address Carrollton Ky -
And I remember me to Mr. Tassdale -
William