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Letter from Noah Merrick to James B. Finley

Noah Merrick

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at Sp. M^o. June 23: 1751. (49)

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Sermon, V

By Noah Merriam. June 23, 1751

2 Cor. 13:5. Examine your selves, whether ye be in y^e faith; prove your own selves. —

we propose y^e Method in dispensing upon these heads; viz.

I to mention some things, about w^{ch} we sh^d examine our selves.

II to shew w^{ch} Rule we sh^d proceed by, in our self-Examination.

III to shew y^e advantage of our frequently attending upon y^e Duty. — in our former

Discourses upon y^e Subject, we have considered y^e two first of these things; & have entered upon y^e 3^d and last; have mentioned several advantages, y^e attend y^e frequent practice of y^e Duty; or

1: by y^e most likely Method, we can take, in order to find out whether we are in a state of grace or no; and if we be not, it will have a happy tendency to excite us, to labour after it.

2: it will have a great tendency, to make and keep us humble.

3: it will afford continual matter of comfort and Consolation, to holy and Religious persons.

4: it will tend to make us more careful and watchfull over our selves; and consequently prevent many sins, y^e otherwise, by wh^{ch} we shall fall into. — Thus far we have proceeded upon y^e head; and shall now add, one or two more advantages, y^e will attend y^e

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frequent practice of ^{3d} Duty; And ^{2d} a simple
 subject, with a brief improvement. —
 we proceed in ^{3d} 5th place, to say, ^{4th}
 frequent practice of ^{4th} Duty, will have a
 tendency to make us Charitable; and inclined
 to forbearance & forgiveness towards others.
 If we are so disposed to be uncharitable and
 censorious in respect of our fellow-creatures,
 who ^{4th} have done amiss, is arising very much
 to our not considering and allowing for, ^{4th}
 weakness and imperfection of our natures; And
^{4th} likewise is arising ^{to our not looking} into our own hearts
 and lives, and considering our own failings
 and imperfections. ^{4th} uncharitable and Cen-
 sorious persons, are those, ^{4th} are left as-
 -guainted with themselves. — Did we know
 of as many sins and follies in any other person,
 as we our selves are guilty off, ^{4th} we would
 stay he ready to think of him? Should we not be
 ready to call him a very bad man? Should we
 not be apt to have but little charity for him?
 But from whence, ^{4th} we proceed? and it not,
 from our being unacquainted with our selves?
 For if we have ^{4th} grace or heart, to be ver-
 uere and uncharitable toward a man, for
 those follies, ^{4th} we know, we our selves were
 guilty off? — Therefore ^{4th} best Method to prevent
 uncharitableness and censoriousness of others, is often
 to look within our selves. — There is a nat-
 ural disposition in Mankind to be curious
 in observing and censuring ^{4th} follies, and im-
 perfections of others. But to keep us sensible

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upon us, and to silence all such rash
censures, we must consider of innumerable
failings and imperfections we are liable to,
and are often guilty of. When we look abroad
into the failings of others, we sh^d often apply
to our selves, if words of our blessed Sav-
-our, Relating to y^e woman of us enclosed
and brought before him, let him, if it without
sin, cast y^e first Stone, Joh. 8: 7. — we we
hear and know of any fault in another, we
sh^d look within, and seriously ask our selves,
whether we are not guilty of y^e same failing:
And if we be, let y^e Confidence of y^e Shop
our Mouths, and Silence our Reproaches. — But
if we are not guilty of y^e same Crime, yet
perhaps, we are guilty of those y^e are a y^e,
those of another nature: And if so, must not
y^e that of y^e put us to Silence? — too often
y^e Cole, when a person has been guilty of some
y^e and open Crime, if that, y^e time not been
guilty, in y^e some way, will pride themselves
in y^e not being chargeable wth such Crimes;
and will for ever treat y^e guilty person, wth
insolence, scorn and Contempt. But in such a
Cole, we sh^d think of y^e Corruption of our own
hearts, and ask our selves, whether, if we had
been in y^e some circumstance, wth our guilty
Brother, left wth y^e some fiery Spirit of Satan,
and every way tempted like him, whether in such
a Cole, it is not likely, we sh^d wth him fallen
into y^e same Crime, if our Confidence before
to us, if y^e we had been y^e Cole wth us;

Certainly you, a frequent Examining our selves, must need greatly tend to check and suppress, an uncharitable, Envious &c^{ts} towards others. — And you likewise, if must tend likewise to promote in us, a forbearing, forgiving temper towards those who have hurt and abused us. — if we thoroughly examine our selves, our hearts and lives, we shall find of us are guilty of innumerable sins against God; shall find, if we are daily offending and dishonouring him; daily guilty of most vilest injuries and abuses towards him; daily exposing our selves, to his over-looking wrath and displeasure. Now, who can we tend more to make us forbearing and forgiving towards those who have been abusive to us? how can we be unforgiving and unrelenting towards those who have injured us, when we consider of many and great injuries, we are constantly doing to God? must not we need Reflect often of manner; what if God should use such severity against us? what if he should measure us by our own Rule? how unpardonable Miferable of us would he our Condition? And what Reason have we to expect, it will be otherwise with us, if we thus treat our fellow-creatures? has not our Lord told us, of except you forgive men, of their trespasses, neither will your Father who is in Heaven, forgive your trespasses? — Thus of frequent examining our selves, of keeping in our thoughts, a sense of our many failings and Miferices, and imperfections, will incline us, not only to humility in the respect of our selves;

But to pity, Charity, forgiveness and forbearance — and, with respect to others. — And of a more close might Recommend your duty to our practice. — 6. another Advantage attending of frequent practice of Duty, and of self-examination, is, that it will be a great Means of preparing us for Death, and making it easy and pleasant, when it comes. — in order to end our days in peace, and be able to look death in the face, with pleasure and delight, two things are necessary; first, if we are really in a state of favour & friendship with God; or in other words, if we are in a state of grace. And, secondly, if we have got a firm and unshaken hope & belief of it. — it is not enough if we are in a state of grace, in order to keep peace and comfort upon our death-bed; but we must be thoroughly possessed with a belief of it. — Now our frequent Examining our selves, will be a great means of promoting both these things. — first; it will be a great Means of our obtaining grace of God. — if upon our examination we find, if we are in a state of sinning against God; we are in an unjustified, unparsoned condition, it seems impossible if we do not reflect, and conclude in such a dreadful case. — if Reason why sin — very so easy, in a Miferable condition is — because we are not sensible of it is miserable. — Don't Reflect upon of unhappiness of it; for had off a sense of it, it seems impossible if we do not reflect. — But of self-examination we are constantly speaking of, must need

I have now finished, w^{ch} I proposed upon as
 subject. And have only to conclude with a
 brief Improvement. — And here,
 1. w^{ch} we have heard, in y^r discourse
 to us y^r dangerous nature of immoderate
 cares and concerns about our temporal
 affairs — nothing is such an hindrance to
 a serious thoughtfulness about y^r concerns of
 our souls, or perplexing, and anxious cares
 about our temporal affairs. y^r mind is
 out of our selves, and makes us strangers
 to y^r state and circumstances of our own
 souls; and consequently deprives us of all y^r
 advantage of a serious Examination. —
 They are prefer y^d heard to heaven; and y^r
 trifling usury of time, to y^r immoderate
 — y^r of heaven. — therefore if we w^{ld} do
 — read upon, and yet any benefit by y^r duty,
 we must labour against being immersed in
 y^r concerns of y^r life. —
 2. Hence we have a Reason, why sinners can go
 on so long, and securely in y^r wicked course
 — because y^r are strangers to y^r duty
 of a serious Examination. — if y^r did but look
 into y^r hearts and lives, and take a view of
 y^r looseness and deformity; how contrary y^r
 are to y^r pure nature of God, and how far
 — pursuant to his revealed will; it seems im-
 possible, y^r sh^d live as y^r do, but y^r is y^r
 unbelief, y^r don't look upon y^r deform-
 — ously, nor consider y^r misery and danger —
 — and therefore y^r go on,

[illegible]

