

STUDY IX

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NEW CREATION

Jehovah the Great Judge of the Universe--All Blessings, Favors, etc., are from Jehovah, Through the Son--The New Creation to be Associates and Joint-Heirs with Christ--"All Power in Heaven and in Earth is Given unto Me"--The Father's Judgment to Condemnation of Mankind Already Expressed--The Judgment during the Millennium One of Mercy and Assistance--The Final Executive Judgment will be Justice without Mercy--Judgment of New Creation During the Gospel Age--New Creation Judged by the Perfect Law of Love--The Supervision of the Glorious Head over the Body--"With What Judgment Ye Judge, Ye Shall be Judged"--We should Judge Ourselves Properly--"He that Judgeth Me is the Lord"--The Church Should Judge Some Matters --"If Thy Brother Trespass Against Thee"--Forgive Seventy Times Seven Times--Offenses Against the Church--We must All Appear before the Tribunal of Christ.

WE have already seen* that the whole world of mankind was judged unworthy of everlasting life by the great Supreme Judge, Jehovah, when Adam, its progenitor, failed in trial. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death as the result [penalty, or sentence] of sin, and thus death passed upon all men, because all are sinners." (*Rom. 5:12*) Adam's failure and sentence to death sealed the same sentence upon all of his children. His fall, his blemish, his sin, extended in a natural way, and with increasing force and momentum, to his posterity. We have already seen that this sentence was in every way a just one, and hence irrevocable --that the great Judge of the Universe, having justly determined man's unworthiness of everlasting life, could not reverse his own sentence, declare wrong to be right, and the unworthy to be worthy of lasting life. But we have seen,

*Vol. I, Chap. vii.

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too, that he had compassion on us, and that in his gracious plan, framed before the foundation of the world, he contemplated and made provision for the redemption of the entire race,* in order to the granting of another trial, or judgment to all its members--providing also that his Beloved Son, whose redemptive work made at-one-ment possible, should be the Mediator of this new arrangement for blessing and uplifting our race. We have seen also that the period of this judging and uplifting of the obedient, is the Millennial age, set apart as the world's Day of Judgment, or day of trial, and is to give to each an opportunity, not only to come to a knowledge of the Lord and into harmony with him, but, additionally, to prove by loyalty and obedience their worthiness of life everlasting. We have the Apostle's words to this effect, "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."+ *Acts 17:31*

Beyond all question, Jehovah himself is the Supreme Judge, and his Law the supreme standard, according to which all decisions must be made respecting life eternal. Thus the Apostle refers to "God the Judge of all," and indicates that the Father is meant by referring in the same sentence to Jesus as the Mediator. (*Heb. 12:23,24*) Again he says, "The Lord will judge his people," and "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." (*Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30*) In these quotations from the Old Testament (*Psa. 50:4; Deut. 32:35,36*), the Lord referred to is Jehovah. Again, the Apostle says, "God shall judge the secrets of men [the world] by Jesus Christ." (*Rom. 2:16; 3:6*) Jehovah was the original Lawgiver and Judge, and will forever maintain this position and relationship to all of his creatures. His honor he will not give unto another. (*Isa. 42:8*) Likewise he points out to us in the Scriptures that he is the Shepherd of his people. "Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want." (*Psa. 23:1*) Again he designates himself the

*Vol. V.

+Vol. I, Chap. viii.

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Redeemer of his people: "All flesh shall know that I, Jehovah, am thy Savior and thy Redeemer." (*Isa. 49:26*) In the

highest sense of the word Jehovah himself is the center of the entire plan of salvation and of its every feature; and any other view of the matter is a defective one.

However, as it pleased the Father to create all things through the Son (*John 1:1*)--so in all things it has pleased him to exalt our Lord Jesus as his honored instrument. From this standpoint we see that all blessing, all authority, all favors, proceed from the Father and by the Son, and that the New Creation, associated with the Son, are thus with him made ministers and joint-heirs of the grace of God.

In so complete a sense does the Heavenly Father "rest from his own work," and make use of the Son as his honored agent, that our dear Redeemer could say, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (*John 5:22*) Our Lord uttered these words before he had finished the work which the Father had given him to do at Calvary, but he spoke from the standpoint of that completed work; for, as we have already seen, his own testing as concerned his fitness for the work the Father had purposed was to be determined by his faithfulness even unto death. Thus he not only demonstrated his worthiness to be a faithful and merciful High Priest, but by his own blood suretied a New Covenant on behalf of mankind, and opened up the new way of life, and obtained "the keys of death and the grave"--the right to say to the prisoners in the great prison-house of death, "Come forth," and the right to bless and uplift so many as will obediently hear his voice. Strictly speaking, it was from the moment of our Lord's resurrection that the Father committed all *judgment* unto the Son, and then it was that he declared, "All power [authority] in heaven and in earth is given unto me" (*Matt. 28:18*), and his first exercise of this authority was the commissioning of his apostles, as his representatives, to commence the work of gathering the members of the Bride class, the Church, the *Ecclesia*, his fellow members of the New Creation.

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The Father's *judgment* respecting mankind had already been expressed, and had condemned all; and any further judgment on his part, under the laws of absolute righteousness, could be of no particular profit to any of the condemned race--all having "sinned and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one"; and the divine standard accepts nothing short of absolute righteousness

--perfection. The divine arrangement, therefore, was that our Lord Jesus should be the Mediator, the go-between, the one who should satisfy justice and represent the fallen race, and the one to whom the Father's justice would look as the representative of man, and who would be accountable for the race. Jesus will occupy this mediatorial relationship between God and men until he shall have accomplished fully the intended work--until he shall have brought back into full harmony with God every creature who, being brought to a knowledge of his Creator and his righteous laws, shall desire to be and to do in complete harmony therewith. More than this, his "all judgment" will include the execution of his findings, for he will not only reward the obedient, but shall "destroy those who corrupt the earth"--will destroy the wilful sinners, destroy from amongst the people all who will not hear his voice, his command, his instructions, putting down all sin and all insubordination, including even the last enemy--death. ***1 Cor. 15:25-28; Rev. 11:18; 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 2:14***

This judging will be in part as Mediator during the Millennium --making allowances for the imperfections of humanity, and punishing and rewarding correctively--and in part as Jehovah's vicar, or representative, at the close of the Millennium--bestowing the eternal rewards of everlasting life to those found worthy, and of everlasting destruction to those found unworthy. And this last executive judgment will be along lines of justice without mercy--the proper uses and purposes of mercy having been fulfilled by his Millennial reign, in which mercy and assistance shall be extended to every member of the race by their Redeemer. And the body of Christ, the Church, shall be associated with him in

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all the various features of the blessing, judging, ruling, correcting, etc., of the Millennial age of compassion and helpfulness --and, possibly, also in the pronouncing and inflicting of the final rewards and punishments.

Before proceeding to notice particularly the *judgment* or trial of the New Creation during the Gospel age, prior to the Millennial Kingdom, we should impress deeply upon our minds the fact that all of these procedures, *judgments*, etc., are of the Father, though through the Son and through the Church; even as also we read respecting the resurrection of the dead, that God raised up from the dead our Lord Jesus by his own power, and that he also will raise us up; which statement we understand to be in full harmony with

our Lord's declaration that "I will raise him up at the last day." "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." "I am the resurrection and the life." *1 Cor. 6:14; John 6:39; 14:3; 11:25*

The *judgment* or trial of the New Creation must take place during this Gospel age, before the Millennium shall have been fully introduced; because it is the New Creation, Head and body, which is to do the work of the Millennial age. It is in harmony with this that the Lord declares that we "shall not come into condemnation [*krisis*, judgment] with the world [not share in the world's Millennial-day judgment or trial], but are [already] passed from death unto life [in advance of the world]," justified by faith and obedience as members of his body. (*John 5:24*) So, then, the present time, the present life, is to each of the consecrated ones his day of judgment, his day of trial, his day of testing --to determine whether or not he shall be accounted worthy of life under the terms of his call and consecration. The Apostle's words agree with this: "Judgment [*krima*, final decision] must begin with the house of God." (*1 Pet. 4:17*) As the Apostle suggests, it gives the New Creation an exalted idea of the divine requirements, or conditions for life everlasting, when they consider that those who have forsaken sin and who have set their hearts to know and to do the divine will need to pass through a time of trial to test

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them and to perfect character in them--such as the Lord can approve.

Who Is the Judge of the New Creation? And What Is The Law or Standard by Which It Is Being Judged?

We answer that we are being judged by our Heavenly Father's perfect Law of Love--that we were justified by him ("It is God that justifieth"), and that our consecration vows were made to him, and that the entire New Creation, Head as well as under-members, are amenable to the Father, as "God, the Judge of all." But this does not alter or interfere with what we have already seen respecting the Father's methods of dealing with us. When he deals with us and permits us to approach the throne of his heavenly grace, it is because he has made us acceptable in the Beloved--in our Lord and Head, under whose robe of righteousness, only, we can approach the Father or have his favor. Nevertheless, all power, all authority, is vested in the Son, as the Father's agent and representative, and hence we see that, although

dealing directly with the Father, he grants us audience only through our Advocate--even as in an earthly court an attorney represents his client. The world will not have access to, or direct dealing with, the Father through an Advocate during the Millennial age, but will, on the contrary, deal directly with the Christ until its close, when the perfected ones shall be presented to the Father.

The New Creation are all begotten of the Father--his children, and not the children of Christ; and it is the Father who chastens every son whom he receiveth. It is also to the Father's throne of grace that we are specially instructed to pray--the way to which has been opened up by Jesus our Redeemer. And yet, our Redeemer's words are true in the most absolute sense, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." The relationship of the Lord Jesus to the Church is that of the Head to the body, and the Head takes cognizance of and judges or determines in respect to all the interests of the body, directing its course, correcting difficulties, relieving and bringing general aid and comfort, support

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and strength to every member using frequently fellow-members of the body as its ministers or servants. However, since every feature of this work is done in the Father's name, and by the Father's direction, it is properly considered as of the Father and by the Son. **1 Cor. 8:6**

It is in accord with this that we read, also, "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth," etc. And again, "My Father is the husbandman: every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth [pruneth] that it may bring forth more fruit." (**1 Pet. 1:17; John 15:1,2**) Nevertheless, that the advocacy of our Head is fully recognized, and that these disciplines, prunings, etc., are accomplished in us and toward us through him, as the Father's agent, is manifested from the declaration of the same Apostle, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Thus he teaches us that we are not in the hands of the living God directly, nor directly under the ministration of his inflexible Law. We are *in* Christ Jesus, covered by his merit, and dealt with through him as our Head and Master, under the merciful provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant, made operative toward us, by his blood.

The Supervision of the Glorious Head Over the Body

We could not doubt the love and care of our glorified Head in respect to his Church--"body," "bride"--even if he had given us no explicit declaration on the subject. However, in his last message to his faithful, he very particularly shows that it is he who sits as the refiner and purifier of the antitypical Levites, including the Royal Priesthood. Hearken to his words to the seven churches of Asia Minor, representative of the seven epochs of the one Church's experience:

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent,... else *I will come* upon thee quickly and remove thy candlestick." "Be thou faithful unto death, and *I will give* thee a crown of life." "*I have* a few things against thee,...repent, or else *I will come* unto thee quickly and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth." "To

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him that overcometh will *I give* to eat of the hidden manna." "*I have* a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, ...*I gave* her space to repent...*I will cast* her...into great tribulation, ...and *I will kill* her children with death; and all the churches shall know that *I am he* that searcheth the reins and hearts: and *I will give unto every one of you* according to your works....He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him *will I give* power over the nations." "*I have not found* thy works perfect before God.... He that overcometh,...*I will not blot out* his name out of the book of life." "These things saith he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." "Behold *I will make* them of the synagogue of Satan,...to come to worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, *I will also keep thee* from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world." "Him that overcometh will *I make* a pillar in the temple of my God." "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, *I will spew thee* out of my mouth." "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich;...*As many as I love I rebuke and chasten*; be zealous, therefore, and repent." **Rev. 2 and 3**

We call to mind, also, our Lord's parables of the Pounds and the Talents, in both of which he shows that at his return he will render rewards to his faithful; "to those who by patient perseverance in well-doing seek for glory, honor, and immortality [he will render] eternal life"--to others, wrath in the day of wrath. The parables distinctly picture the distribution of these rewards to his servants, according

to the degrees of faithfulness, by the "young nobleman" after he has been invested with his kingly authority; and that subsequently his enemies are to be dealt with. Yet the Apostle ascribes both the rewarding and the punishing to the Father. The key to the matter is found in our Lord's words, "I and my Father are one"--we act in unison in every matter.

**"Judge Not, that Ye Be Not Judged. For with
What Judgment Ye Judge, Ye Shall Be Judged."
--Matt. 7:1,2--**

The competent judges of the Church are the Father and the Son--the latter being the Father's representative, to

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whom he has committed all judgment. (*John 5:22,27*) The New Creatures are not competent to be judges one of another for two reasons: (1) Few of them fully comprehend and appreciate the divine Law of Love governing all. (2) Evidently few can read their own hearts unerringly; many either judge themselves too severely or too leniently, and, hence, should modestly decline to sit in judgment of the heart of another whose motives may be far from appreciated. It is because of our incompetence for judging that the Lord--while assuring us that this shall be one of our future functions in the Kingdom, after being qualified by participation in the First Resurrection--forbids all private judgment amongst his followers now; and threatens them that if they persist in judging each other they must expect no more mercy and leniency than they show to others. (*Matt. 7:2; Luke 6:38*) The same thought is enforced in the sample prayer given us, "Forgive us our debts [trespasses] as we forgive our debtors." *Matt. 6:12*

This is not an arbitrary ruling by which the Lord will deal unjustly and ungenerously with us, if we deal thus with others: on the contrary, a correct principle is involved. We are "by nature children of wrath," "vessels fitted for destruction"; and although the Lord mercifully proposes to bless us and relieve us of our sins and weaknesses and to perfect us through our Redeemer, he will do this only on condition of our acceptance of his Law of Love, and our heart-conformity to it. He does not propose accepting unregenerates and having "children of wrath" in his family. To be fit for any place in the Father's house of many mansions [planes of being] (*John 14:2*) all must cease to be children of

wrath and become children of Love--being changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of our Lord, the spirit of Love. Whoever, therefore, refuses to develop the spirit of Love, and contrary to it insists on uncharitably judging fellow-disciples, proves that he is not growing in knowledge and grace, not being changed from glory to glory of heart-likeness to the Lord, not a true follower of the Lord, and,

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hence, should not have mercy extended to him beyond what he uses properly in copying his Lord. The amount of his likeness to the Lord (in love) will be shown by his mercy, and generosity of thought, word and deed toward his fellows.

Oh, that all the Spirit-begotten ones, the "New Creation," could realize that this spirit of judging (condemning), alas! so common (indeed, almost the "besetting sin" of the Lord's people) measures their lack of the spirit of Love--their lack of the Spirit of Christ--which, totally absent, would prove us "none of his." (*Rom. 8:9*) We are persuaded that the more speedily this fact is realized the more speedily will progress the great transformation "from glory to glory," so essential to our ultimate acceptance as members of the New Creation.

But few of the Lord's people realize to what extent they judge others, and that with a harshness which, if applied to them by the Lord, would surely bar them from the Kingdom. We might have feared that, under our Lord's liberal promise that we shall be judged as leniently as we judge others, the tendency would be to too much benevolence, too much mercy, and that "thinketh no evil" might be carried to an extreme. But no! All the forces of our fallen nature are firmly set in the opposite direction. It is more than eighteen centuries since our Lord made this generous proposal to judge us as leniently as we will judge others, and yet, how few could claim much mercy under that promise! It will be profitable for us to examine our proneness to judge others. Let us do so, prayerfully.

The fallen or carnal mind is selfish; and proportionately as it is *for* self it is *against* others--disposed to approve or excuse self and to disapprove and condemn others. This is so thoroughly inbred as to be an unconscious habit, as when we wink or breathe. This habit is the more pronounced with advanced education. The mind recognizes higher ideals and standards and forthwith measures everyone by these, and, of course, finds something at fault in all. It

delights in rehearsing the errors and weaknesses of others,

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while ignoring its own along the same or other lines--and sometimes, even, hypocritically denouncing the weaknesses of another for the very purpose of hiding its own or giving the impression of superior character along the line in question. Such is the mean, contemptible disposition of the old fallen nature. The new mind, begotten of the Spirit of the Lord, the holy Spirit of Love, is in conflict with this old mind of selfishness from the start, under the guidance of the Word of the Lord--under the Law of Love and the Golden Rule, and becomes more and more so as we grow in grace and knowledge. At first all New Creatures are but "babes in Christ" and appreciate the new Law only vaguely; but unless growth is attained and the Law of Love appreciated and measured up to, the great prize will not be won.

The Law of Love says: For shame that the weaknesses and shortcomings of brethren or of others should be exposed before the world; for shame that pity and sympathy did not at once advance to speak a word in their defense, if too late to spread over their faults a mantle of charity to hide them entirely! As our noble, loving Master declared on one occasion, when asked to condemn a sinner: "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." The person without frailties of his own might be to some extent excusable for assuming unbidden of the Lord the position of executioner of Justice--taking vengeance on wrongdoers, exposing them, etc.; but we find that our Master, who knew no sin, had so much Love in his heart that he was disposed rather to condone and forgive than to punish and expose and berate. And so it will doubtless be with all begotten of his Spirit: in proportion as they grow up into his likeness they will be the last to pray for vengeance--the last to execute punishments by tongue or otherwise, until so commanded by the Great Judge. He now, on the contrary, instructs us, "Judge nothing before the time," and declares, "Vengeance is mine."

Well has the Apostle delineated the spirit of Love, saying, "Love suffereth long and is kind"--to the wrongdoer. "Love envieth not" the success of others, seeks not to detract from

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their honor nor to pull them back from it. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," and, consequently, never seeks

to detract from the splendor of others to make self shine by contrast. It "doth not behave itself unbecomingly," immoderately --it has no extreme and selfish desires and avoids extreme methods. Love "seeketh not that which is not her own"--does not covet the honors or wealth or fame of others, but delights to see them blessed, and would rather add to than detract from these blessings. Love "is not easily provoked," even to render just recompenses: remembering the present distress of the entire race through the fall, it is sympathetic rather than angry. Love "thinketh no evil"; it not only will not invent and imagine evil, but is so disposed to give the benefit of any doubt that "evil surmisings" are foreign to it. (Compare *1 Tim. 6:4*.) Love "rejoiceth not with iniquity, but rejoices with the Truth [rightness]": hence, it would delight to uncover and make known noble words or acts, but would take no pleasure in, but avoid, exposing ignoble words or deeds. Love "covereth all things," as with a mantle of sympathy--for nothing and nobody is perfect, so as to stand full inspection. Love anticipates and has her mantle of benevolence always ready. Love "believes all things"--is not disposed to dispute claims of good intention, but rather to accept them. Love "hopes all things," disputing the thought of total depravity so long as possible. Love "endures all things"; it is impossible to fix a limit where it would refuse the truly repentant one. "Love never faileth." Other graces and gifts may serve their purposes and pass away; but Love is so elemental that, attained, it may always be ours--throughout eternity. Love is the principal thing. *1 Cor. 13:4-13*

But if to tell uncomplimentary truth is to violate the Law of Love and the Golden Rule, what shall we say of the still more disreputable, still more unlovely, still more criminal habit so common, not only amongst the worldly and nominally Christian, but also among true Christians--that of telling about others disreputable things not positively known to be the truth. Oh shame! shame! that any of the Lord's

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people should so overlook the Lord's instruction, "speak evil of no man"; and that any but the merest babes and novices in the Law of Love should so misunderstand its message--that any without the most indubitable proofs at the mouth of two or three witnesses, and then reluctantly, should even believe evil of a brother or a neighbor, much less to repeat it--to slander him upon suspicion or hearsay evidence!

We Should Judge Ourselves

"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged [punished, corrected of the Lord]." 1 Cor. 11:31

The Golden Rule would surely settle this disposition to "gossip" about others and their affairs. What slanderer wishes to be slandered? What gossip wishes to have his matters and difficulties and weaknesses discussed either publicly or confidentially? The "world" has little else to talk about than gossip and scandal, but the New Creation should preferably be dumb until the love and plan of God have furnished them with the great theme of which the angels sang--"Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good will toward men." Then the "words of their mouths and the meditations of their hearts" will be acceptable to the Lord and a blessing to those with whom they come in contact.

The Apostle, commenting upon the tongue, shows that this little member of our bodies has great influence. It may scatter kind words that will never die, but go on and on blessing the living and through them the yet unborn. Or, "full of deadly poison," it may scatter poisonous seeds of thought to embitter the lives of some, and to blight and crush the lives of others. The Apostle says--"Therewith bless [honor] we God, even the Father; and therewith curse [injure] we men,...out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" *James 3:8-11*

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"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"; so that when we are gossiping about others, "busybodying" in their affairs, it proves that a large corner of our hearts, if not more, is empty as respects the love and grace of God. This thought should lead us at once to the throne of grace and to the Word for a filling of the Spirit such as the Lord has promised to those who hunger and thirst after it. If, still worse than idle gossiping and busybodying, we have *pleasure* in hearing or speaking evil of others, the heart condition is still worse: it is overflowing with bitterness--envy, malice, hatred, strife. And these qualities the Apostle declares are "works of the flesh and the devil." (*Gal. 5:19-21*)

Would that we could astound and thoroughly awaken the "New Creation" on this subject; for if ye do these things ye will surely fall, and no entrance will be granted such into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Fitting for the Kingdom leads us in the very opposite direction, as the Apostle Peter declares, "Add to your faith patience, brotherly kindness, *love*; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall; but gain an abundant entrance into the Kingdom." (*2 Pet. 1:5-11*) The Apostle James is very plain on the subject and says: "If ye have bitter envyings and strife in your hearts, glory not and *lie not against the truth*. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." (*James 3:14,15*) Whoever has such a slanderous and bitter spirit has the very reverse of the Spirit of Christ, the holy Spirit, the spirit of Love: let him not lie either to himself or to others--let him not glory in his shame --let him not thus put darkness for light, the spirit of Satan for the Spirit of the Anointed.

Proceeding, the Apostle declares the secret of the confusion and unrest which has troubled the Lord's people at all times, to be in this unclean, only partially sanctified condition of the heart, saying, "where envying and strife is, there is confusion [disquiet, unrest] and every evil work." (*James 3:16*) If these weeds of the old fallen nature are permitted to grow they will not only be noxious but will gradually

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crowd out and kill all the sweet and beautiful flowers and graces of the Spirit.

Proper Judging of Ourselves

The Apostle Paul refers to our proper growth as a New Creation and our proper judging or criticizing of ourselves, saying, "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit--perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord." (*2 Cor. 7:1*) "Let a man examine himself"--let him note the weaknesses and filthinesses of his fallen, fleshly nature and seek to cleanse himself, "putting off" the deeds of the "old man" and being renewed, changed from glory to glory, more and more into the image of God's dear Son, who is our Exemplar as well as our Redeemer and Lord. But the Apostle Paul urges that we cleanse not only our flesh as much as possible, but also our spirits, or minds--that the

new mind, the holy resolution, or will, be given full control, and that every thought be brought into captivity to the will of God as expressed by and illustrated in Christ.

It will be in vain that we shall endeavor to cleanse the flesh and to bridle the tongue if we neglect the heart, the mind, the spirit, in which are generated the thoughts, which merely manifest themselves in filthiness of the flesh-- by words and deeds. Only by prayer and perseverance can this cleansing necessary to a share in the Kingdom be accomplished --"perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord." Not that we may hope, either, to effect an absolute cleansing of the flesh. It is the absolute cleansing of the will, the heart, the spirit, that the Lord demands (implying as complete a cleansing of the flesh and tongue as we can accomplish). Where he sees the heart pure and true to him and his spirit and law of Love he will, in due time, give the new body suited to it. "Blessed are the pure in *heart*, for they shall see God." ***Matt. 5:8***

How appropriate here are the Apostle's words (***2 Thess. 3:5***): "The Lord *direct your hearts* into the love of God"--the love that is gentle, meek, patient, long-suffering--that seeketh

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not more than her own, and that is not puffed up, nor envious--that thinketh and speaketh no evil, but trusteth and is kind and considerate according to the Golden Rule. We need to have our hearts *directed* into this love, for as a New Creation we are walking in a new way--not after the flesh but after the Spirit. And the Lord alone is our competent guide and director--though he may use various of his "members" as his mouthpieces. "Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee [from the past], saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." ***Isa. 30:21***

"Yea, I Judge Not Mine Own Self--He That Judgeth Me Is the Lord"

There are a few of the New Creation--remarkably few, though--who seem disposed to judge themselves unmercifully. Properly they criticize their every fault and weakness and desire to be rid of every blemish; but improperly they forget that the Lord knows us not and judges us not according to the *flesh*, but according to the *spirit*--the intent, the will, the desire, the effort. They give too much heed to the words of Pharisees, "I thank thee that I am not as other men," and too little heed to the inspired words of the Lord,

respecting the grounds of his acceptance, and the virtue of the precious blood in cleansing from all sin. They forget, in their reasonings on the matter, that if they were perfect or could do perfectly they would need no Savior, no Advocate. They forget that "by grace ye are saved" and not by works of the flesh.

Such need to apply to themselves the Apostle's words, "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of any man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing of myself [amiss as a steward], yet I am not thereby justified: but he that judgeth me [and all] is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels [intentions] of the heart." *1 Cor. 4:3-5*

Our confidence is in the Lord, and not in our weak, fallen

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flesh. We have learned of the grace and mercy of God toward all who are trusting him and seeking to walk *after* the spirit of Love, even though unable to walk fully *up to* its perfect requirements. We are not hoping, therefore, to be perfect in the flesh but perfect in spirit, in intention; and that our faith and zeal will (through the merit of our Redeemer) be counted as making up for our actual blemishes, which we hate and strive against daily. As we consider the matter we ask--Does God love us who by nature were children of wrath even as others? Is he for us, willing to assist us and to give us credit for every good desire and effort, even though it result in partial or total failure? Yes, the Lord answers: "The Father himself loveth you." The Apostle adds--If God so loved us, while we were yet sinners, that he gave his Only Begotten Son for our redemption, "shall he not with him freely give us all things [needful to us in our race for the prize he sets before us in the Gospel]?" Surely if he loved us while sinners, he loves us still more tenderly now--now that he has adopted us into his family--now that he sees in our hearts an earnest desire to do his will. Let us, then, be of good faith and approach with courage to the throne of the heavenly grace, that we may *obtain mercy and find grace to help* in every time of need. *Heb. 4:16*

A word of warning, however, is needed on the other side of this question. We have all known instances in which humility and lack of confidence, and fear and distrust of God's grace, have given place to an opposite condition of brazen self-assurance and total blindness to faults and pharisaical

thanks for being better than other men. Alas! this is a most deplorable and we fear hopeless state! Faith is needful, but it must be faith in God and not in self. The occasion of such a deflection will generally be found in a neglect of the Law of Love and the Golden Rule. The perversion of love for the Lord, love for his gracious plan, love for the brethren of the New Creation and sympathetic love for the world of mankind is--self-love, self-importance, self-honor, self-glorification. Let us beware of this side track which leads far from the Lord and his Spirit and his Kingdom. Though leaders

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are specially liable to this snare, others also are exposed to it. Some very deficient in every qualification for teachers become sadly "puffed up in their fleshly minds"--proud, knowing nothing, "but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil-surmisings ...from such withdraw thyself. For godliness with contentment is great gain." *1 Tim. 6:4-6*; see also *1 John 3:9,10*.

The Church Should Judge Some Matters

While individually we are not to judge, or condemn, but to await the Lord's time for public manifestation of his decision in respect to each member of his body, the "New Creation," yet in some cases the Church [congregation--*Ecclesia*] is in duty bound to judge. For instance, the Apostle mentions a case of fornication publicly acknowledged by the offender against morals, and known to the entire Church; he declares that in fellowshiping such a confessed libertine the Church had erred; and forthwith he exercised his apostolic authority in excommunicating the transgressor, separating him from the fellowship of the believers, figuratively delivering him over to Satan, to chastisements, for the destruction of his carnality, that the spirit, the new mind, might thus ultimately be saved, in the day of the Lord, in the reckoning time at the close of this age.

1 Cor. 5:5

Only the Lord himself or one of his apostles (the special twelve, of whom Paul was the last, chosen to Judas' place) would have the authority, the right, to proceed in the manner declared; just as only an apostle could have dealt as Peter did with Ananias and Sapphira. (*Acts 5:1-11*) The Apostle Paul explains his position further, saying, "I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators. Yet not altogether [forbidding dealings] with fornicators of this

world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world." He would have them see that it is one thing to have business dealings with the unsanctified, and an entirely different matter to

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recognize such as fellow-members of the New Creation. The lowering of the moral standard would be no kindness to the transgressor, either; he would be more helped by seeing that his uncleanness separated him entirely from the Lord's people; and if really begotten of the Spirit of God he would the more quickly and the more keenly realize his true position, learn the lesson and repent. The Church practiced a mistaken charity toward the offender and, thereby, risked a general demoralization amongst its members, and also a contagion amongst all believers in other congregations who might learn of the conditions prevailing at Corinth.

The Apostle outlines briefly the duty of the faithful in such cases; and we paraphrase his words as follows: What I have written unto you is, that you should not have fellowship with a man known as a "brother" if he be a *fornicator*, or *covetous*, or an *idolater*, or a *reviler*, or a *drunkard*, or an *extortioner*--no, not so much as to eat with such. Indeed, I am not attempting to judge the world; but I am urging that you as a Church should judge those whom you accept as brethren. God will judge the outsiders: your duty is to put away from your midst wicked persons. *1 Cor. 5*

The Apostle follows this argument by criticizing the fact that in disputes between brethren there was a disposition to go to worldly law-courts for justice instead of enduring the wrong patiently if it were endurable, or, if unbearable, taking it to the Church as a court of last resort. The Apostle urges that if God is selecting the Church to be the future judge of the world, its members should certainly be no less fair and honorable and just in their decisions than the world, even now. The least esteemed in the Church should be trustworthy in such matters. Is there not one in your midst in whose wisdom and integrity all could trust implicitly, and to whose decision disputants would bow?

"Why do ye not rather take wrong?" Why do ye not suffer injustice, if you consider the decision unfair?--why not suffer loss, rather than perpetuate quarrels or resort to public courts with charges against each other? Nay, says the

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Apostle, I perceive that not only are you unwilling to suffer injustice for the sake of peace and harmony in the body of Christ, but worse, and more of it: there are some among you willing to do wrong and defraud--even their brethren. Are you not as the Lord's Church seeking to attain the Kingdom? And "know ye not that the unrighteous [unjust] shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither *fornicators*, nor *idolaters*, nor *adulterers*, nor *effeminate*, nor *abusers of themselves* with mankind, nor *thieves*, nor *covetous*, nor *drunkards*, nor *revilers*, nor *extortioners* shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified; but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." ***1 Cor. 6:1-11***

This statement of offenses which would debar from the Kingdom is to be a guide respecting offenses which should debar from fellowship in the Church. In respect to all these things, then, the words apply--"Put away from among yourselves that wicked person," whosoever he may be, that is guilty of any of these offenses.

"If Thy Brother Trespass Against Thee"

But is not this in conflict with our Lord's command, "Judge not that ye be not judged?" Must we not first judge the evildoer individually, and then talk, or gossip, about his evil deeds, or do "evil speaking" respecting him, so that the entire Church may know and repudiate the evildoer?

By no means: the divine arrangement is fully in harmony with itself when rightly understood. If A and B have a difference, and A *believes* himself to be defrauded by B, he must not judge B in the sense of condemning him. He may only say, "There is a difference between us, and I feel sure that I am right; though B may feel equally confident that he is right and that I have not been wronged." A may not disfellowship B on this account, for to do so would be to *judge* him--to *condemn* him. He may say, to himself, "The matter is trivial, anyway, as between brethren, and I will let it drop, believing that B, as a brother in the Lord, would

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not wrong me intentionally, and that it may be that my view and not his is the wrong one."

However, if he be not able to take this view he still must not judge, must not decide, that he is right and B wrong--but must *go to* B and explain how the matter appears to him,

and if possible reach a kind, brotherly agreement, perhaps by mutual concessions. But if they cannot agree, he may ask two or three of the wisest brethren of the Church, C and D (brethren in whose sincerity B as well as himself would have great confidence), to *go with him* to see B on the subject--not to condemn B, for even A himself must not have judged, or condemned, him; but to hear the matter in the presence of A and B and give their advice to both. This should result satisfactorily to all--especially if all have the spirit of love one for the other and the desire to do right toward one another as members of the anointed body. But if peace is not yet established, there still is to be no judging, no condemnation; for two or three brethren cannot "*judge*" but only the Church.

If when A took with him C and D, they gave their opinion against A and in favor of B, that should end the matter. Under such conditions A cannot take the question to the Church. He evidently would be quite self-opinionated and "heady" to carry the matter further. The Lord's instructions give him no further privilege (*Matt. 18:15*); but if he were still dissatisfied, we know of no principle that would be violated if he took two or three other able and unprejudiced brethren, E, F, G, to B, for a fresh hearing of the case and for their advice.

But if, when A took C and D to B, they all sided with A's contention that B had wronged him and refused to desist, and if B after a reasonable time refused or neglected to right the wrong, A would be privileged in conjunction with C and D to call a meeting of the Church, to whom the whole matter should be rehearsed by both A and B--for it is to be supposed that if B still associates with the Church he recognizes its counsel and authority, and it is to be presumed also

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that B is conscientious. When the Church hears the matter, it is not to be forgotten that only the *justified and sanctified* constitute the Church, and that they are sitting in *judgment* in the name of their Lord and Head and to deliver *his judgment*. The matter is not to make a factional fight in the Church, but to preserve its unity in the bonds of peace. A and B, of course, should not vote, nor should anyone vote who felt any other than a desire to express the Lord's judgment in the matter. The decision should be unanimous, or practically so--even though this should require some modification of the extremes of sentiment. Let justice always be tempered with mercy, "Considering thyself, lest thou also

be tempted." *Gal. 6:1*

The Church's decision is to be accepted as final by all; and whoever refuses to accept and conform to its requirements in such a matter of morals (not of conscience) is to be unto the others "as an heathen man or a publican"--until such time as he shall cease to defy the Church--when, of course, he shall be forgiven and received fully into fellowship as before. The object is not to cast the brother off utterly; but merely to show disfavor toward his wrong course with a view to assisting him to its correction. To treat such an one "as an heathen man and a publican" would not mean to slander or dishonor him even after he had been cast off. The Lord's people are not to be slanderers or backbiters under any circumstances: the general command--"Speak evil of no man," covers the case exactly. We are neither to speak ill of, nor to look cross at, publicans and sinners, nor to refuse to do business with them; but we are to withhold from them the special fellowship and courtesy appropriate to the brethren of the New Creation and possessed of the holy Spirit and its love, joy and peace.

Should B refuse to hear the Church and to desist from doing wrong to A, and then later repent and be received back into full fellowship, his contumacy should be remembered against him if at any time he were nominated for the duties of an Elder. He would need to manifest a decided

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change before being considered fit for that service; for even if he were thoroughly conscientious, his course would, at least, prove him rather obtuse as respected right where his personal interests were involved. Indeed, to refuse to heed the counsel of three brethren and to necessitate the bringing of the wrong to the Church for adjudication would be an unfavorable indication, even if he afterward heard the Church and obeyed it and made amends to A.

Forgive, Seventy Times Seven Times

Suppose that when A went first to B, to discuss the injustice done to A, the conference resulted in B's acknowledging his fault and endeavoring to right the same to the best of his ability; or suppose he thus repented after the second visit of A with C and D, what should be the attitude of A toward B? He should forgive him, and that most heartily. He may not even put upon him a penalty but remember the words--"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the

Lord!" But how often may this be kept up? How many times must we forgive if he repents? How long must we bear with his weaknesses? "Seven times?"--asked Peter. Our Lord's answer comes down to us equally--"I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." We must forgive the trespasses of others as we would have our Father in heaven forgive our trespasses against his divine law. If tempted to despise our brother on account of his weaknesses, we must think of our own weaknesses, and remember that he who shows no mercy shall receive no mercy.* *James 2:13*

Offenses Against the Church

We have considered the procedure proper in judging offenses against the individual; but in the case of the fornicator mentioned by the Apostle, and in other supposable cases, the offense might be against no particular member of -----

*See, additionally, Chapter vi--"Discipline in the *Ecclesia*."

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the *Ecclesia*; but against the whole--against the cause we unitedly represent. What then should be the mode of procedure?

It might be the same as in the individual grievance, if the sin were not public property. But if the matter were publicly known, it would be the duty of the elders to cite the offender before the Church for trial, without the preliminary private visits; because the publicity had taken it beyond any private settlement. Likewise, if it were a case of slander against the elders or any of them, the hearing should be by the Church and not privately; because the slanderers, if they conscientiously thought they had a good cause, yet had neglected the Lord's rule ("Go to him alone," and afterward "Take with thee two or three others") and had spread scandalous and defamatory tales, had thereby *carried* the matter beyond the power of *individual* rectification and *made* it a matter for the Church.

In such cases it would be proper for the slandered Elder to call together the Board of Elders as representatives of the Church, and to deny the calumnies and ask that the slanderers be indicted to answer charges of slander and false-witnessing before the Church; because their offense was toward the Church (1) in that it was contrary to the rules laid

down by the Head of the Church and contrary to decency and good morals; and (2) because the slander being against an Elder chosen by the Church was thus a slander against the entire Church selecting him. The slanderers should be condemned and rebuked and required to acknowledge their error; but after doing this they would have a right to proceed against the Elder supposed to be in error, just as they should have done at first.

We Must All Appear Before the Tribunal of Christ
--2 Cor. 5:10--

The "we" of this text, undoubtedly refers to the Church--the New Creation. It is not, however, to be confounded with the gathering of "all nations" before the Son of Man when he shall come in his glory and all the holy messengers with

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him, as recorded in *Matt. 25:31-46*. When the Son of Man "shall sit on the throne of his glory" he has promised that his faithful *Ecclesia*, his Bride, shall share that throne and glory, and shall share in that Millennial judgment of the nations, including "all that are in their graves."

The Church's judgment is evidently pictured and described by our Lord in *Matt. 25:14-30* and *Luke 19:12-26*.

It will take place in the end of this age and be the first work of the King at his second advent, before he begins to deal with the world. He will first reckon with his own servants, to whom he intrusted various stewardships of wealth and influence, talent and opportunity, which they have been more or less faithful, persevering and self-sacrificing in using. These must all be reckoned with, and the faithful be rewarded and given rule over two cities, five cities or ten cities--otherwise designated "the joys of thy Lord." The rewards will not all be alike as respects glory and honor, though all will be glorious and honorable. "As star differeth from star in glory" so shall be those who will share the First Resurrection to "glory, honor and immortality."

1 Cor. 15:41

Faithfulness, love, zeal will be the tests. Those who have talents and bury them in the earth, in business or pleasure or sloth, will thus show lack of love and appreciation--and consequently unworthiness of the Kingdom, and will not enter "the joys of the Lord," nor be permitted to reign with him in the blessing of the world.

"The Lord Knoweth How"

--2 Pet. 2:9--

"I will trust, and not be afraid." *Isa. 12:2*

"The storm-clouds are rolling across the horizon,
And peal upon peal of the thunder is heard:
The flashes of lightning are vivid and awful:
Yet never a fear in this bosom is stirred,
For is it not written, and everywhere shown,
'The Lord knoweth how to deliver His own!'

"The gleam of the sword can be seen in the distance,
The moans of the wounded and dying we hear;
And warfare and bloodshed are growing more rampant:
But none of these things can awaken a fear,
For is it not written, and everywhere shown,
'The Lord knoweth how to deliver His own!'

"The foe we contend with is artful and cunning,
And many, indeed, are the snares he has laid:
We are not unmindful of Satan's devices,
Though of his temptations we are not afraid;
For is it not written, and everywhere shown,
'The Lord knoweth how to deliver His own!'

"'The Lord knoweth how,' though we often are puzzled,
And to our conceptions no pathway is clear;
But since we are guided by Infinite Wisdom,
The word He hath spoken forbids every fear:
For is it not written, and everywhere shown,
'The Lord knoweth how to deliver His own!'

"'The Lord knoweth how,' is our strength in our weakness,
The promise of sunshine, though storm-clouds appear;
A peaceful assurance amid every battle,
The way of escape from each trial and fear;
For is it not written, and everywhere shown,
'The Lord knoweth how to deliver His own!'"