

What It Means To Judge Righteously

As most of you in this group know, men and women both in the visible church, and among the unregenerate and wicked unbelievers believe that they have a firm grasp on Matthew 7.1.

They think that they do now have the right, nor the ability to judge a man's heart and his motives.

This is just plain wrong and unbiblical.

I will attempt to lay out the Scriptural basis for judging the actions of another by some statements on the revealed nature of the heart of man and then blend it in with judging a tree by its fruit.

Lastly, I will post the Scripture which gives the Christian the moral authority, the Biblical Authority, and the Biblical DUTY to judge matters with righteous judgement.

THE SCRIPTURE

First, I will state man's heart according to the Scriptures.

Evil Heart

In the King James Bible, there are 19 verses that speak of man's heart or conscience as being wicked or evil (I state this as a matter of fact and not intending to refer to those who have been regenerated).

Ge 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that ***every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.***

Ge 8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; ***for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;*** neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

De 15:9 ***Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart,*** saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.

Ec 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore ***the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.***

Ec 9:3 This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also ***the heart of the sons of men is full of evil,*** and ***madness is in their heart while they live,*** and after that they go to the dead.

Jer 3:17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: ***neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.***

Jer 7:24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in ***the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart,*** and went backward, and not forward.

Jer 11:8 Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but ***walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart:*** therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not.

Jer 13:10 ***This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.***

Jer 16:12 ***And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart,*** that they may not hearken unto me:

Jeremiah 17:9 ***The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:*** who can know it?

Jer 18:12 And they said, There is no hope: but ***we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.***

Mt 12:34 ***O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.***

Mt 12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: ***and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.***

Mt 15:19 ***For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:***

;Mr 7:21 ***For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,***

Lu 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and ***an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.***

Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of ***you an evil heart of unbelief,*** in departing from the living God.

Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an ***evil conscience,*** and our bodies washed with pure water.

By the number of verses here, we can see that man's heart, in its natural state, is evil.

JUDGEMENT

Now, let us turn our attention to the word “judgement” and what it means to “judge”.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

judge

JUDGE, n. L. judex, supposed to be compounded of jus, law or right, and dico, *to pronounce*.

1. A civil officer who is invested with authority to hear and determine causes, civil or criminal, between parties, according to his commission; as the judges of the king's bench, or of the common pleas; judges of the supreme court, of district courts, or of a county court. The judge of a court of equity is called a chancellor.

2. The Supreme Being.

Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Gen.18.

3. One who presides in a court of judicature.

4. One who has skill to decide on the merits of a question, or on the value of any thing; one who can discern truth and propriety.

A man who is no judge of law, may be a good judge of poetry or eloquence, or of the merits of a painting.

5. In the history of Israel, a chief magistrate, with civil and military powers. The Israelites were governed by judges more than three hundred years, and the history of their transactions is called the book of Judges.

6. A juryman or juror. In criminal suits, the jurors are judges of the law as well as of the fact.

JUDGE, v.i. (vide infra; see below)L. judico.

1. To compare facts or ideas, and perceive their agreement or disagreement, and thus to distinguish truth from falsehood.

Judge not according to the appearance John 7.

2. To form an opinion; to bring to issue the reasoning or deliberations of the mind.

If I did not know the originals, I should not be able to judge, by the copies, which was Virgil and which Ovid.

3. To hear and determine, as in causes on trial; to pass sentence. He was present on the bench, but could not judge in the case.

The Lord judge between thee and me. Gen.16.

4. To discern; to distinguish; to consider accurately for the purpose of forming an opinion or conclusion.

Judge in yourselves; is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 1 Cor.11.

JUDGE, v.t. (verbum trānsitīvum) To hear and determine a case; to examine and decide.

Chaos shall judge the strife.

1. To try; to examine and pass sentence on.

Take ye him and judge him according to your law.

John 18.

God shall judge the righteous and the wicked. Eccles.3.

2. Rightly to understand and discern.

He that is spiritual, judgeth all things. 1 Cor.2.

3. To censure rashly; to pass severe sentence.

Judge not, that ye be not judged. Matt.7.

4. To esteem; to think; to reckon.

If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord--

Acts.16.

5. To rule or govern.

The Lord shall judge his people. Heb.10.

6. To doom to punishment; to punish.

I will judge thee according to thy ways. Ezek. 7.

I will now repeat what it means to judge according to the Scriptures by the definition of Judge that we have just seen here in the text.

Judex is the Latin word for Judge that is used as a noun.

4. *One who has skill to decide on the merits of a question, or on the value of any thing; one who can discern truth and propriety.*

A man who is no judge of law, may be a good judge of poetry or eloquence, or of the merits of a painting.

Judico is the (verb intransitive) usage of the word, “judge”

1. *To compare facts or ideas, and perceive their agreement or disagreement, and thus to distinguish truth from falsehood.*

Judge not according to the appearance John 7.

2. *To form an opinion; to bring to issue the reasoning or deliberations of the mind.*

If I did not know the originals, I should not be able to judge, by the copies, which was Virgil and which Ovid.

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Verb Transitive

2. *Rightly to understand and discern.*

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If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord—

Now that we have visited the definitions and biblical usages of the word, “judge”, let us move on to the teaching.

Mt 7:1 ¶ Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Mt 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Mt 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Mt 7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Mt 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Mt 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Mt 7:7 ¶ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Mt 7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Mt 7:9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Mt 7:10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

Mt 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Mt 7:12 ¶ Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

We see here in the first 12 verses of Matthew Chapter 7, the Lord Jesus Christ is setting the context for loving one another as He loved us. I know you are probably gasping to yourselves, “Preacher, how did you come to THAT conclusion?”

Simple. I read the text in context.

The Jewish people, even to this very day, see themselves as the Chosen of God. Taking it further, they believed that the teaching of the Pharisees was the correct manner in which to interpret the Law as far as application. An example...

Mt 23:2 Saying, *The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:*

Mt 23:3 *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*

Mt 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Mt 23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

Mt 23:6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Mt 23:7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

Now here, the Lord Jesus is saying what it is that the Pharisees *do outwardly*.

Were we to take Matthew 7:15-20, to heart, we will see this.

Matthew 7:15-20 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

The tree here, is the Pharisee. The fruit, are the works, or the manner in which they conduct themselves publicly. The thinks that they say as opposed to what they actually do.

This judgement, by the Lord Jesus, is correct according to John 7:24, and consistent with other passages with which the Lord Jesus Christ admonishes the Jewish leadership and the people (John 7 and 8, in particular).

I will finish up by stating what the Apostle Paul says with regard to judging according to righteous judgement.

1Co 6:1 ¶ Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

1Co 6:2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

1Co 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

1Co 6:4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

1Co 6:5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

1Co 6:6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

1Co 6:7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

1Co 6:8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

Now we see here where it is very plain, that the Christian does indeed have not only the authority, but the OBLIGATION to judge even the smallest matters in the Church.

Just to show you all, that I did not create this doctrine of judging with righteous judgement, but rather prior to the 20th century, this was done with regularity in the Church.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible

1 Corinthians 6:2

Verse 2. Do ye not know, etc. The object of this verse is evidently to show that Christians were qualified to determine controversies which might arise among themselves. This the apostle shows by reminding them that they shall be engaged in determining matters of much more moment than those which could arise among the members of a church on earth; and that if qualified for that, they must be regarded as qualified to express a judgment on the questions which might arise among their brethren in the churches.

The saints. Christians, for the word is evidently used in the same sense as in 1Co 6:1. The apostle says that they knew this, or that this was so well established a doctrine that none could doubt it, It was to be admitted on all hands.

Shall judge the world. A great variety of interpretations has been given to this passage. Grotius supposes it means that they shall be first judged by Christ, and then act as assessors to him in the judgment, or join with him in condemning the wicked; and he appeals to Mt 19:28; Lu 22:30, where Christ says that they which have followed him should "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Cmt. on Mt 19:28. Whitby supposes that it means that Christians are to judge or condemn the world by their example, or that there shall be Christian magistrates, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, Isa 49:23, and Daniel, Da 7:18. Rosenmuller supposes it means that Christians are to judge the errors and sins of men pertaining to religion, as in 1Co 2:13,16; and that they ought to be able, therefore, to judge the smaller matters pertaining to this life. Bloomfield, and the Greek Fathers, and commentators, suppose that this means, that the saints will furnish matter to condemn the world; that is, by their lives and example they shall be the occasion of the greater condemnation of the world. But to this there are obvious objections.

(1.) It is an unusual meaning of the word judge.

(2.) It does not meet the case before us. The apostle is evidently saying that Christians will occupy so high and important a station in the work of judging the world, that they ought to be regarded as qualified to exercise judgment on the things pertaining to this life; but the fact that their holy lives shall be the occasion of the deeper condemnation of the world, does not seem to furnish any plain reason for this. To the opinion also of Whitby, Lightfoot, Vitringa, etc., that it refers to the fact that Christians would be magistrates, and governors, etc., according to the predictions of Isaiah and Daniel, there are obvious objections.

(1.) The judgment to which Paul in this verse refers is different from that pertaining to things of this life, 1Co 6:3; but the judgment which Christian magistrates would exercise, as such, would relate to them.

(2.) It is not easy to see in this interpretation how, or in what Sense, the saints shall judge the angels, 1Co 6:3. The common interpretation, that of Grotius, Beza, Calvin, Doddridge, etc., is that it refers to the future judgment, and that Christians will in that day be employed in some manner in judging the world. That this is the true interpretation is apparent, for the following reasons.

(1.) It is the obvious interpretation--that which will strike the great mass of men, and is likely, therefore, to be the true one.

(2.) It accords with the account in Mt 19:28, and Lu 22:30,

(3.) It is the only one which gives a fair interpretation to the declaration that the saints should judge angels, in 1Co 6:3. If asked in what way this is to be done, it may be answered, that it may be meant simply that Christians shall be exalted to the right hand of the Judge, and shall encompass his throne; that they shall assent to and approve of his judgment; that they shall be elevated to a post of honour and favour, AS IF they were associated with him in the judgment. They shall then be regarded as his friends, and express their approbation, and that with a deep sense of its justice, of the condemnation of the wicked. Perhaps the idea is, not that they shall pronounce sentence, which will be done by the Lord Jesus, but that they shall then be qualified to see the justice of the condemnation which shall be passed on the wicked; they shall have a clear and distinct view of the case; they shall even see the propriety of their everlasting punishment, and shall not only approve it, but be qualified to enter into the subject, and to pronounce upon it intelligently. And the argument of the apostle is, that if they would be qualified to pronounce on the eternal doom of men and angels; if they had such views of justice and right, and such integrity as to form an opinion and express it in regard to the everlasting destiny of an immense

host of immortal beings, assuredly they ought to be qualified to express their sense of the smaller transactions in this life, and pronounce an opinion between man and man.

Are ye unworthy. Are you disqualified.

The smallest matters. Matters of least consequence--matters of little moment, scarcely worth naming, compared with the great and important realities of eternity. The "smallest matters" here mean the causes, suits, and litigations relating to property, etc.

John Calvin's Verse Commentary

1 Corinthians 6:2

2. Know ye not that the saints. Here we have an argument from the less to the greater; for Paul, being desirous to show that injury is done to the Church of God when judgments on matters of dispute connected with earthly things are carried before unbelievers, as if there were no one in the society of the godly that was qualified to judge, reasons in this strain: "Since God has reckoned the saints worthy of such honor, as to have appointed them to be judges of the whole world, it is unreasonable that they should be shut out from judging as to small matters, as persons not qualified for it." Hence it follows, that the Corinthians inflict injury upon themselves, in resigning into the hands of unbelievers the honor 1 that has been conferred upon them by God.

What is said here as to judging the world ought to be viewed as referring to that declaration of Christ:

When the Son of Man shall come, ye shall sit, etc.

(Mt 19:28.)

For all power of judgment has been committed to the Son,

(Joh 5:22,)

in such a manner that he will receive his saints into a participation with him in this honor, as assessors. Apart from this, they will judge the world, as indeed they begin already to do, because their piety, faith, fear of the Lord, good conscience, and integrity of life, will make unbelievers altogether inexcusable, as it is said of Noah, that by his faith he condemned all the men of his age. (Heb 11:7.) But the former signification accords better with the Apostle's design, for unless you take the judging here spoken of in its proper acceptation, the reasoning will not hold.

But even in this sense 2 it may seem not to have much weight, for it is as if one should say' "The saints are endowed with heavenly wisdom, which immeasurably transcends all human doctrines: therefore they can judge better as to the stars than astrologers." Now this no one will allow, and the ground of objection is obvious — because piety and spiritual doctrine do not confer a knowledge of human arts. My answer here is this, that between expertness in judging and other arts there is this difference, that while the latter are acquired by acuteness of intellect and by study, and are learned from masters, 3 the former depends rather on equity and conscientiousness.

But 4 "lawyers will judge better and more confidently than an illiterate Christian: otherwise the knowledge of law is of no advantage." I answer, that their advice is not here excluded, for if the determination of any obscure question is to be sought from a knowledge of the laws, the Apostle does not hinder Christians from applying to lawyers. 5 What he finds fault with in the Corinthians is simply this, that they carry their disputes before unbelieving judges, as if they had none in the Church that were qualified to pass judgment, and farther, he shows how much superior is the judgment that God has assigned to his believing people.

The words rendered in you mean here, in my opinion, among you. For whenever believers meet in one place, under the auspices of Christ, 6 there is already in their assembly a sort of image of the future judgment, which will be perfectly brought to light on the last day. Accordingly Paul says, that the world is judged in the Church, because there Christ's tribunal is erected, from which he exercises his authority. 7

Geneva Bible Footnotes

1 Corinthians 6:2

3Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3. He gathers by a comparison that the faithful cannot seek to be judged by infidels, without great injury done to the saints, seeing that God himself will make the saints judges of the world, and of the devils, with his Son Christ. Much more ought they to judge these light and final causes which may be by equity, and good conscience determined.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

1 Corinthians 6:2

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world,...The apostle appeals to them concerning this matter, as a thing well known unto them, or might easily be known by them; for this was either a traditional notion among the Jews, many of whom were in this church, that good men should judge the world; as is said of the righteous in the apocryphal book:

"They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever." (Wisdom 3:8)

and so the Jews say¹, that

"the first day of the month is the beginning of judgment in the whole world, and Isaac sat on a throne, עלמא למידן, "to judge the world":"

or this might be collected, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, out of Da 7:18, but the difficulty is, in what sense the apostle means the saints shall judge the world; not merely in a comparative sense, for so even will the Heathens, the men of Nineveh, and the queen of Sheba, judge and condemn the Jews; nor as assessors on the throne with Christ, for though they shall sit on the same throne with him as reigning, yet not as judging with him, all judgment is solely committed to him: nor merely as approving that judiciary sentence, that will be pronounced by him on the world; for even wicked men themselves, and devils, will be obliged to own the justice of it; but his meaning is, that in a little time the saints, Christian men, men under a profession of Christianity at least, should be governors in the world, and bear the office of civil magistracy in it; which came to pass in a few centuries after the writing of this, and has been more or less the case ever since; and will be more so in the latter day, when kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church; and when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High: upon which the apostle strongly argues,

and if the world shall be judged by you; if such men as you shall bear sway in it, fill up all civil offices in it, even the highest; shall sit upon the benches of judges, and on the thrones of kings, and at last have the government of the whole world; since such honour the saints shall have, and be abundantly capable of it,

are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? is it too high a post, and can you be thought to be unqualified for, and unfit to have such trivial things, of little or no moment and importance, things relating to the common affairs of life, brought before you, and be tried, and judged by you?

Here the apostle reproves them for going to law with one another before heathen judges for little matters; and therein blames all vexatious law-suits. In the previous chapter he had directed them to punish heinous sins among themselves by church-censures. Here he directs them to determine controversies with one another by church-counsel and advice, concerning which observe,

I. The fault he blames them for: it was going to law. Not but that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. But, 1. Brother went to law with brother (1Co 6:6), one member of the church with another. The near relation could not preserve peace and good understanding. The bonds of fraternal love were broken through. And a brother offended, as Solomon says, is harder to be won than a strong city; their contentions are like the bars of a castle, Pr 18:19. Note, Christians should not contend with one another, for they are brethren. This, duly attended to, would prevent law-suits, and put an end to quarrels and litigations. 2. They brought the matter before the heathen magistrates: they went to law before the unjust, not before the saints (1Co 6:1), brought the controversy before unbelievers (1Co 6:6), and did not compose it among themselves, Christians and saints, at least in profession. This tended much to the reproach of Christianity. It published at once their folly and unpeaceableness; whereas they pretended to be the children of wisdom, and the followers of the Lamb, the meek and lowly Jesus, the prince of peace. And therefore, says the apostle, "Dare any of you, having a controversy with another, go to law, implead him, bring the matter to a hearing before the unjust?" Note, Christians should not dare to do any thing that tends to the reproach of their Christian name and profession. 3. Here is at least an intimation that they went to law for trivial matters, things of little value; for the apostle blames them that they did not suffer wrong rather than go to law (1Co 6:7), which must be understood of matters not very important. In matters of great damage to ourselves or families, we may use lawful means to right ourselves. We are not bound to sit down and suffer the injury tamely, without stirring for our own relief; but, in matters of small consequence, it is better to put up with the wrong. Christians should be of a forgiving temper. And it is more for their ease and honour to suffer small injuries and inconveniences than seem to be contentious.

II. He lays before them the aggravations of their fault: Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world (1Co 6:2), shall judge angels? 1Co 6:3. And are they unworthy to judge the smallest matters, the things of this life? It was a dishonour to their Christian character, a forgetting of their real dignity, as saints, for them to carry little matters, about the things of life, before heathen magistrates. When they were to judge the world, nay, to judge, it is unaccountable that they could not determine little controversies among one another. By judging the world and angels, some think, is to be understood, their being assessors to Christ in the great

judgment-day; it being said of our Saviour's disciples that they should at that day sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Mt 19:28. And elsewhere we read of our Lord's coming with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment on all, &c., Jude 14-15. He will come to judgment with all his saints, 1Th 3:13. They themselves are indeed to be judged (see Mt 25:31), but they may first be acquitted, and then advanced to the bench, to approve and applaud the righteous judgment of Christ both on men and angels. In no other sense can they be judges. They are not partners in their Lord's commission, but they have the honour to sit by, and see his proceeding against the wicked world, and approve it. Others understand this judging of the world to be meant when the empire should become Christian. But it does not appear that the Corinthians had knowledge of the empire's becoming Christian; and, if they had, in what sense could Christian emperors be said to judge angels? Others understand it of their condemning the world by their faith and practice, and casting out evil angels by miraculous power, which was not confined to the first ages, nor to the apostles. The first sense seems to be most natural; and at the same time it gives the utmost force to the argument. "Shall Christians have the honour to sit with the sovereign Judge at the last day, whilst he passes judgment on sinful men and evil angels, and are they not worthy to judge of the trifles about which you contend before heathen magistrates? Cannot they make up your mutual differences? Why must you bring them before heathen judges? When you are to judge them, as it fit to appeal to their judicature? Must you, about the affairs of this life, set those to judge who are of no esteem in the church?" (so some read, and perhaps most properly, 1Co 6:4), heathen magistrates, exouthenemenous, the things that are not, 1Co 1:28. "Must those be called in to judge in your controversies of whom you ought to entertain so low an opinion? Is this not shameful?" 1Co 6:5. Some who read it as our translators make it an ironical speech: "If you have such controversies depending, set those to judge who are of least esteem among yourselves. The meanest of your own members are able surely to determine these disputes. Refer the matters in variance to any, rather than go to law about them before heathen judges. They are trifles not worth contending about, and may easily be decided, if you have first conquered your own spirits, and brought them into a truly Christian temper. Bear and forbear, and the men of meanest skill among you may end your quarrels. I speak it to your shame," 1Co 6:5. Note, It is a shame that little quarrels should grow to such a head among Christians, that they cannot be determined by arbitration of the brethren.

III. He puts them on a method to remedy this fault. And this twofold:-- 1. By referring it to some to make it up: "Is it so that there is no wise man among you, no one able to judge between his brethren? 1Co 6:5. You who value yourselves so much upon your wisdom and knowledge, who are so puffed up upon your extraordinary gifts and endowments, is there none among you fit for this office, none that has wisdom enough to judge in these differences? Must brethren quarrel, and the heathen magistrate judge, in a church so famous as yours for knowledge and wisdom? It is a reproach to you that quarrels should run so high, and none of your wise men interpose to prevent them." Note, Christians should never engage in law-suits till all other remedies have been tried in vain. Prudent Christians should prevent, if possible, their disputes, and not courts of judicature decide them, especially in matters of no great importance. 2. By suffering wrong rather than taking this method to right themselves: It is utterly a fault among you

to go to law in this matter: it is always a fault of one side to go to law, except in a case where the title is indeed dubious, and there is a friendly agreement of both parties to refer it to the judgment of those learned in the law to decide it. And this is referring it, rather than contending about it, which is the thing the apostle here seems chiefly to condemn: Should you not rather take wrong, rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Note, A Christian should rather put up with a little injury than tease himself, and provoke others, by a litigious contest. The peace of his own mind, and the calm of his neighbourhood, are more worth than victory in such a contest, or reclaiming his own right, especially when the quarrel must be decided by those who are enemies to religion. But the apostle tells them they were so far from bearing injuries that they actually did wrong, and defrauded, and that their brethren. Note, It is utterly a fault to wrong and defraud any; but it is an aggravation of this fault to defraud our Christian brethren. The ties of mutual love ought to be stronger between them than between others. And love worketh no ill to his neighbour, Ro 13:10. Those who love the brotherhood can never, under the influence of this principle, hurt or injure them.

THE RELAXATION OF MORALS 1Co 5-6.

In the last chapter we considered the revolt against apostolic authority, and now we are to take up another disorder that is a consequence of that one — the relaxation of morals. It is a settled principle that one sin begets another. In hunting I have sometimes thought that I saw just one quail, but when I flushed him there were two, and sometimes a covey. Longfellow in *Hiawatha* uses this language:

Never stoops the soaring vulture
On his quarry in the desert,
On the sick or wounded bison,
But another vulture, watching
From his high aerial lockout,
Sees the downward plunge and follows;
And a third pursues a second,
Coming from invisible ether,
First a speck and then a vulture,
Till the air is dark with pinions.

That illustrates how sins are gregarious — going in troops. I do not believe it is possible for any man or any church to commit a single sin. There are sure to be more than one, if we ever commence at all. It seemed a little thing that they should sin in the way of factions, or that they should sin in the way of revolt against apostolic authority, but these two sins begat this third sin that we are discussing — the relaxation of morals.

The case in point is thus referred to in chapter 5:

It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from 'among you. For I verily, being absent in the body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto 'Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world; but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat. For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.

That is the whole of chapter 5. It is a fine thing for preachers of this day when they have a case of discipline that they have express apostolic authority as to how to treat the case. This man's father had doubtless married the second time, and the son by the first wife took his wife away from the father, i.e., took his stepmother. Paul says, "Ye are puffed up . . . your glorifying is not good." They had written to him saying very complimentary things about themselves — that they were doing fine. He didn't agree with them, not with such disorder as this on hand, and the other disorders that have been discussed.

He tells what to do. He says, "This man must be taken away from among yourselves." The church must do that as a proof that it is a church action. He says, "When you are gathered together," and in the second letter we find that what was done in obedience to this letter was done by a majority vote. So that here is a case that unmistakably calls for church action. Offenses of this kind must not be committed in the church of Jesus Christ, and the injunction is peremptory that the church must withdraw fellowship in such cases.

The next thing besides this church action was apostolic action. Paul could do what the church could not do — what no other preacher except an apostle could do — that is, he could deliver such a one over to Satan. They had accused him of not exercising his apostolic power, and he proposes if they do not heed that, he will use his power. He had the power from Jesus Christ to

deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, but the spirit would be saved in the day of Jesus Christ.

We want to understand what that means. It shows that this one in the church may be by a Christian, and that delivering him to Satan is not his ultimate destruction, but the destruction of his flesh, that his soul may be saved in the day of Jesus Christ. It is necessary that we understand what this means. We find in the book of Job that God turns Job over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, and grievous sores came on him, but it was not that Job might be destroyed by the devil. God says to the devil, "Touch not his life." We see the case of the apostles when Jesus says, "Simon, Satan hath obtained you apostles by asking that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Satan came up to Christ and asked that he might deal with them as wheat, and if they were wheat the sifting would help them, and so even this remarkable case of sifting was not done to destroy the offending brother, but to gain him; and there are some cases that cannot be gained except by stern, prompt discipline.

All over the country we have churches that are suffering for the lack of just that thing, and they are injuring these church sinners. I will illustrate: Suppose in the jungles of Africa a company of people and animals were camped for the night, and they built a stockade to keep off wild beasts, and some of the animals, a cow perhaps, gets unmanageable and bellows and butts around and tries to get out. They turn her out, and let her hear the lion roar, and she wants to get back. The thought is that the one that won't be quiet in good company should be showed that there is worse company on the outside. I heard an old Baptist preacher say, "If you put a wild hog in a pen and he goes to squealing, let him out, and he will strike for the woods and never come back, because he is a hog. But if a sheep is turned out it will bleat around the gate until you open the pen and let the sheep come back on good behavior." If a man is not a converted man he ought not to be in there; let the hog out and let him strike for the woods; if he is a sheep and hears the lion roar he will bleat around to get back, and he will behave himself next time.

The primary object, if a converted man, is to save him; and the second is to purify the church, and this Paul proceeds to argue. He says, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us." Here he uses an Old Testament illustration — the preparation for the Passover. Before the Passover was observed there was the preparation for the Passover. The houses were inspected, the walls were scraped lest there was something left, and leprosy would leave particles sticking to the wall. They were going to keep the feast, and Paul says, "Christ, our Passover Lamb, is sacrificed for us." In other words, "We have a feast to keep — the Lord's Supper — and in order that we may keep that feast let us examine ourselves and see if we be in the faith. Let us inspect our hearts and our lives, because the law is, with the man that is living disorderly, ye must not eat." It does not refer to a common meal. It refers to the Lord's Supper, and the one in disorder may not rightfully partake of the Lord's Supper. Henry

Ward Beecher boasted that in his church there never had been a case of discipline since it was organized. Not that it was a pure church, for it was very impure; never having discipline in it, they had no standard of doctrine and no standard of life. And the first case that ever came up was Beecher himself, and they will bring us up if we, as pastors of churches, are forever silent on the subject of discipline.

Paul now explains. He says, "I wrote you a letter." It was not preserved. It was not necessary to preserve every one of his letters. John says if everything that Jesus said and did had been preserved the world would not hold the books. But enough is preserved to form a guide for God's people. He continues: "And in that letter I wrote you not to keep company with fornicators, and ye misunderstood me." He says, "I did not mean that with respect to the world, for that would mean for you to go out of the world; when I said to keep no company and not eat, I meant with a man who is called a brother; if such a one be a fornicator or an adulterer you are to judge those that are within. What have ye to do with those that are within? What have ye to do with those that are without?" He is showing over whom the church has authority to exercise discipline — not outsiders, but insiders.

The next disorder is in chapter 6: "Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that ye shall judge angels? how much more, things that pertain to this life? If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church? I say this to move you to shame. What? Cannot there be found among you a wise man who shall be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren."

This is a remarkable declaration. I will discuss it a little in order to make an impression on the minds of young preachers, for we have almost gone astray on it in our religious life. There isn't a country or a community in the state that some members in the church do not violate that law, and they say they are not heathen. That is not Paul's point at all. His point is that the saints have the highest Judicatory power vested in them — that they will judge the world and the angels. It is simply a question of two courts — the church-court or the world-court. Which will we take? To which court are we going to appeal the case? That is what he is discussing. This is illustrated in my book, *Baptists and Their Doctrines*, which gives a view of the world-court and the church-court.

He brings up the following points on this discussion: First, that God had placed the judicatory power in the church, as our Lord says, "If any man sin, go right along and convict him of his sin. You have gained the brother." He does not say, "If any member of the church sin against you, whether it is a personal or a public offense, and you know it, you go right along and convict him. of that sin. If you fail, take two of the brethren with you; if he will not hear them, tell it to the human court." No, tell it to the church. There is the judicatory court that Christ established. Here comes up a difference between two brethren on a matter of business. A says that B owes him \$100. B denies it. Shall A go to law with B? A starts to go to law and a third man, G, comes to him and says, "A, you are committing an offense; you are doing wrong," and A refuses to hear C, and C goes off and gets D and E, and A won't yield. Then. if C, D and E come before the church and say, "We are not judging as to the merits in the case; we do not say A is doing wrong in going to law, but we do say A is doing wrong in the kind of court he goes to." Who shall be the arbitrator? A says that he won't listen to the church; B may owe A that \$100, we don't deny that. Here A denies the jurisdiction of Jesus Christ. Suppose A says, "I will hear the church," and the case is put on its merits. Paul says (and the revised version puts an entirely new sense on it), "If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do you set them to judge who are of no account in the church?" In other words, "Is that the way you are going to do? When the case comes up between A and B, are you going to select people that are no account? Haven't you got some disinterested party? Are you going to select a committee of B-partisans, or of A-partisans?" The common version does not give that sense at all. It says, "Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you?"

We come now to the case that will prevent final church action: Suppose you say to A, "Are you willing to leave this matter to a disinterested committee of brethren as to what are the merits of your question? They do not want to say B robbed you, and they do not want to say you harmed B; are you willing for a third disinterested party to take it up and bring it up on the merits of the case before you get to final church action?"

There is a passage upon which I preached one sermon, "Jesus the Arbiter of the Nations." I preached it on the occasion of the meeting of The Hague Conference. It shows even in matters of diplomacy that it is better to settle the matter by arbitration than to go to war. In the millennium there will be no war because Jesus is the arbiter between the nations. If that is to take place on a scale in which nations are involved, why cannot we find in the church a small committee of wise and disinterested brethren that will look into the case and settle it without ever going to final church action? But suppose this committee does not settle the case. They say, "Brethren, we have tried to settle it, and here it is before the church. The question is, does B owe A this \$100? If he does he ought to pay it; if he does not, A ought not to worry about it." If a man won't let his brethren settle these matters for him. what is he going to do at the judgment? He presents a case; he says that rather than go to an outsider why not say, "I will just bear this wrong." Well, but suppose they defrauded him?

I have been defrauded many a time, more than once since I moved to Fort Worth. Why should I parade before outsiders my case?

The saddest case in the Texas affairs of our denomination illustrates that. Here we had a brother, very prominent, who kept bringing cases before the General Convention of Texas, and every time he would bring it they decided against him. He would not let it stay undecided. Finally, he took the case into court, and if any man was ever present one day when that case was on trial and heard the infidel lawyers and the lawyers of other denominations gloat over the Baptist trouble, he would never forget it. Suppose that man had had the sounds preserved in a graphophone, and had that in his family, and when any one would come to see him he would have that instrument to reproduce those vile sentences against our very best men? Oh, it was infamous! Of course it ruined that man. It didn't ultimately hurt the other men, but it surely killed the man that resorted to it.

Paul then announces a fundamental principle. He is discussing the point whether a fornicator or adulterer should be retained in the church, and he says, "Know ye not that a fornicator, an adulterer, a covetous man shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven?" He will be excluded there certainly; he will never get in; the gates will be barred. In other words, Christianity is designed to be a maker of character. If it does not make a man better than he was before, it is not worth anything; 'if it does not make a father a better father, a mother a better mother, a sister a better sister, a brother a better brother, a child a better child — if there is no improvement in the character of the man, then we may be sure that he has never been born again, because the Spirit does not produce that kind of fruit. And Paul says that the fruits of the flesh are manifest. Then he tells what they are and says that the fruits of the Spirit are manifest. "By their fruits ye shall know them," says Jesus.

And then again they were liable to misunderstand. He says, "I don't mean that the murderer never gets to heaven; I don't mean that men who were fornicators never get to heaven, for such were some of you. You belonged to that very crowd, but ye were washed; the Holy Spirit took you in charge; you desired to obey God, not to disobey him."

In other words, the Holy Spirit is greater than total depravity. It can overcome total depravity, because total depravity is of the first birth; but this being born again by the power of the Holy Spirit makes one of another seed, of the word of God, that liveth and abideth forever.

And the murderer can be saved, as thousands of them have been saved. It was the greatest triumph of Christianity to look upon that Corinthian crowd. All the depths of infamy through which some of them had passed could not be named in a mixed audience, but by the power of God they were washed, and they lived, and one of the most remarkable cases as bearing upon it, is the case of the celebrated Augustine. His mother was a saint, and she loved her wild, wayward boy. It seemed that the bridle had been taken off, and the devil was riding him “bareback” down to hell. He, after his conversion, often referred to the shameless infamies he committed. This is a case worthy of consideration. Everyone ought to read Augustine’s confessions. He did not keep on living that life after he was converted; he was one of the greatest preachers that ever lived. What we call Calvinism is the doctrine of Augustine. He saved the church for 300 years from going astray. So Paul says, “Such were some of you; but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified.”

He comes now to something more difficult. He is discussing this debasing sin of fornication, and says, “Every sin that a man doeth is without the body (except this one).” Now instead of sin’s residing in the body and corrupting the spirit, it is the spirit that sins and corrupts the body. Envy, that is not a bodily sin; hate, that is not a bodily sin; malice, that is not a bodily sin; pride, presumption, every sin that a man commits is apart from his body except fornication. There the body is made the instrument of the sin. And Paul brings up this argument, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?” Generally when he refers to the temple, he refers to a church, as he says to this church, “Ye are God’s building, ye are the temple of God,” and where he says, “Every separate congregation groweth up into the holy temple of God, a habitation of the Spirit,” but in this particular case he makes the body of the Christian a temple of the Spirit, because the Holy Spirit enters into him and dwells in him, and if he dwells in him, then the body is the temple in which he dwells.

In closing,

I hope that this matter of judging with righteous judgement has finally begun to make sense to those who were uncertain as to whether this preacher had gone off of the deep end, and had taken matters into his own hands without the backing of the Scriptures.

Now you know that I did not.

Closing prayer...