

A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION  
OF  
MATTHEW 7:1

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for  
the Bachelor of Divinity degree  
Grace Theological Seminary  
May 1955

## PREFACE

The purpose of this monograph is to decide the primary meaning of the text. The writer believes the verse has definite historical significance, but also wishes to handle the verse as a Divine principle which is applicable in many ways. The writer intends to show that this verse refers to making judgments which we have no power to make and if we do persist in doing this, we will be judged by God.

Appreciation is wont to be made to the entire faculty of Grace Theological Seminary and the many friends who make the school possible. A special word of appreciation is made to the Reverend Benjamin Hamilton for his helpful counsel concerning this paper and his direction for the format. Many others have given willing advice in handling this problem and have gone out of their way to help the writer. For this wonderful spirit, I am especially grateful.

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GREEK TEXT

Westcott and Hort

Μὴ κριθετε, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε.

There are no important textual variations.

ENGLISH VERSIONS

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The Tyndale Version, 1534

IVDGE not, that ye be not iudged.

The Cranmer Version, 1539, the Geneva Version, 1557, and the Rheims Version, 1582 agree with the above rendering.

The Authorized Version, 1611

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

The New Testament, George R. Noyes, 1868, the New Testament, Hezekiah Woodruff, 1882, the Emphasized New Testament, Joseph Bryant Rotherham, 1897, the American Standard Version, 1901, the Numeric New Testament, Ivan Panin, 1913, the Revised Standard Version, 1952, and the Douay Version agree with the above rendering.

The Twentieth Century New Testament, 1898-1901

Do not sit in judgement upon others, so that others may not sit in judgement upon you.

Moffat's New Testament, 1913

Judge not, that you may not be judged yourselves.

The Centenary Translation, Helen Montgomery, 1924, agrees with the above rendering.

The American Bible, 1931

Pass no more judgments upon other people, so that you may not have judgment passed upon you.

The Basic English New Testament, 1941

Be not judges of others, and you will not be judged.

Williams' New Testament, 1937

Stop criticising others, so that you may not be criticised yourselves.

The Gospels Translated into Modern English,  
J. B. Phillips, 1953

Don't criticise people, and you will not be criticised.

ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

## ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

### Historical-Religious Background

Since the text under consideration is included in the portion of Scripture known as the Sermon on the Mount, some indication should be given as to why Christ must further interpret the Law with a special emphasis upon the inward, heart attitude. It is generally known that the Law had been modified by the religious leaders of the day and had been used accomodatingly by them. Many false conceptions had arisen concerning the coming Messiah and the Kingdom which was to be offered at His coming.

One of the most outstanding things occurring during this intertestament period was the great creation of a mass of tradition, comment and interpretation, such as portions of the Mishna, Gemara, and many others. These writings were so superimposed upon the Law that obedience was transferred from the Law itself to the traditional interpretation.

This being the case, religious leaders began to arise. They were known and are known to us as the Sadducees and the Pharisees. Scofield relates that

the Pharisees were strictly a sect having taken an oath to remain true to their principles. "They were correct, moral, zealous, and self-denying, but self-righteous and destitute of the sense of sin and need."<sup>1</sup> The Sadducees were known to deny the supernatural as such and were the religious rationalists of the day.

By understanding somewhat of the situation into which the people were living, we can see their immediate need of a spiritual cleansing from the filth of false teaching. It is no wonder the legalist of the time of Christ sought His life and to rid themselves of this so-called "intruder."

I think it is fair to ask just what was the position of the Jews in general, and of the Pharisees and Sadducees in particular, during the first quarter of a century of Roman supremacy. The most noteworthy thing, according to Fairweather, was the spirit of the people.<sup>2</sup> There was a great revival of patriotic feeling. They greatly revered the Law and their interpretations, but they rated still higher their freedom and the country. They felt it a religious duty to

<sup>1</sup>C. I. Scofield (ed.), The Scofield Reference Bible (New edition; New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 996.

<sup>2</sup>William Fairweather, The Background of the Gospels or Judaism in the Period Between the Old and New Testaments (4th ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1926), p. 168.

rebel against Rome and because of this they had conceived in their minds and were teaching the idea of a political Messiah. He would restore the earthly kingdom of Israel.

The Legalists of the day were greatly disappointed in the coming of Christ. They were looking for one to come that would rid them of their overlords by force and who would save them out of their calamity. Some believed that he would "sweep away the Romans by the breath of his mouth."<sup>3</sup> However, as we read in the Gospel record, we see One claiming to be this Messiah, not coming with destruction but with peace. This was a blow to them and they realized that if they were to have position and power, it would not come through this Messiah.

Not only does this One come in peace, but He comes with teachings which are contradictory to those of the religious leaders of that day. The people as a whole, had been under the influence and teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees for many years and needed to be rescued from the bonds of rigid legalism and tradition. Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, shows to His followers that mere externalism in religion is to be condemned. The coming of the Kingdom would involve

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<sup>3</sup>Shailer Mathews, A History of New Testament Times in Palestine (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1899), p. 104.

repentance on the part of the nation as a whole. They must needs see that the Law was to be realized through a righteous spirit and an inward heart attitude.

The Sermon on the Mount crushed many theological monuments. It also crushed many political ambitions. It is because of this that the religious leaders sought to find flaws in His teaching and later to put Him to death.

Our text is found within the teachings of this Sermon on the Mount. Not only does the text under consideration lay down for us a divine principle, but also it was a direct attack upon one of the official functions of the Pharisees. They were self-appointed judges.

Do not get the impression that it was just for the benefit of the Pharisees that these divine injunctions were reinterpreted and brought back to their original meaning. The Sermon on the Mount was given for the instruction of the people. It was to bring them back to a pure heart religion.

It was with this setting that Christ came. He must needs prepare the people for the Kingdom of God. He had to undo the false teachings and false concepts of the day. Through this pure teaching many were drawn to Him but because of His teaching the leaders, who sought position for themselves, turned against Him.

## Doctrinal Background

It is not the writer's purpose to write about the doctrine of the Kingdom, but since many say that the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount are strictly for the millennial age, a word of caution is presented.

From the study of the doctrine of the Kingdom, it is evident that we are not living in the Millennial Kingdom of God. The writer agrees that the teachings concerning the Kingdom of God will be realized to the fullest when the Kingdom of God is ushered in. However, the writer does not agree that we are simply to set aside these teachings until the Kingdom is set up. There is a sense in which the Kingdom of God is set up in the heart of every believer.

In order for there to be a kingdom, there must be a king, an active reign, and subjects who will serve this king. When a person accepts Christ he receives the King within his heart. He becomes a subject of this King, and through his life this King is able to rule in a sinful world. These principles are for us. Because of our sinful nature, we can never be perfect in these things, but as Christians we are to strive for the point of perfection. Since we are to be the citizens of this Kingdom, we want to

be ready for the transition that takes place when the Kingdom is ushered in.

The teaching of the Law on the subject of judging is found in Lev. 19:15. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour." The type of judging spoken of in this passage is justice. There shall be no partiality shown whether the person being judged is poor or of higher rank. Justice is to be done to all.

It is the writer's opinion that the judging spoken of in Mt. 7:1 is of a more serious character. In this text Christ is speaking of judging the souls of men and not merely the temporal acts of right and wrong as set forth in Lev. 19:15.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The Major Problem

What is the meaning of Christ's words, "Judge not," as found in Mt. 7:1?

Minor Problem

What is the meaning of the phrase, "that ye be not judged," that is, who is referred to as doing the judging?

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

Minor Problem: What is the meaning of the phrase, "that ye be not judged," that is, who is referred to as doing the judging?

Judgment of God View

What is the meaning of the phrase, "that ye be not judged," that is, who is referred to as doing the judging?

Many of the commentators do not discuss this problem, although it is definitely connected with the interpretation of the first part of the verse. Those who do discuss the problem are divided into two camps, the one camp taking the judgment of God view and the other taking the judgment of men view.

The judgment of God view is well stated by Alford when he says:

"Judged" i.e. 'by God,'...The bare passive, without the agent expressed, is solemn and emphatic... The sense then is 'that you have not to answer before God for your rash judgment and its consequences.'<sup>1</sup>

Others who hold this interpretation are Lenski,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Alford, The Greek Testament (London: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1874), I, 69.

<sup>2</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Columbus, O.: The Wartburg Press, 1943), p. 288.

Lange,<sup>3</sup> Meyer,<sup>4</sup> and Williams.<sup>5</sup>

### Judgment of Men View

The judgment of men view is also self-explained by the words used to describe the view. This view is held by such men as Ortleib,<sup>6</sup> Benson,<sup>7</sup> Plumptre,<sup>8</sup> Hagen.<sup>9</sup> Calvin also held this view and he says: "I denounces a punishment against those severe judges, who take so much delight in sifting the faults of others. They will not be treated by others with greater kindness, but will experience, in their turn, the same severity which they had exercised towards others. As nothing is dearer or more valuable to us than our reputation, so nothing is more bitter than to be condemned, or to be exposed to the reproaches and infamy of men...the Lord executed this punishment by the instrumentality of men."<sup>10</sup>

These are the views briefly stated. Both

views are well stated and are very important when

trying to decide the meaning of the major problem.

Some of the commentators seemingly decide what Christ

<sup>3</sup>John Peter Lange, The Gospel According to Matthew, A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures ed. by Philip Schaff (12th ed. rev.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), I of N. T., 138.

<sup>4</sup>Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of Matthew (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), p. 162.

<sup>5</sup>A. Lukyn Williams, Vol. I of The Gospel According to St. Matthew, The Pulpit Commentary ed. by H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1892), XV, 280.

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These are the views briefly stated. Both views are well stated and are very important when attempting to decide the meaning of the major problem. Some of the commentators seemingly decide what Christ

<sup>6</sup>Henry Cowles, Matthew and Mark (New York: Appleton and Co., 1887), p. 75.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Benson, The New Testament (New York: T. Carlton & J. Porter, n.d.), I, 78.

<sup>8</sup>E. H. Plumptre, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," A Bible Commentary for English Readers ed. by John Charles Ellicott, (London: Castle and Co., Ltd., n.d.), VI, p. 39.

<sup>9</sup>G. Campbell Morgan, The Gospel According to Matthew (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1929), pp. 71-72.

<sup>10</sup>John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmann Publ. Co., 1949), Matthew Vol. I. p. 176.

is talking about when He says "Judge not," and then fit the last part of the verse into their interpretations.

In undertaking to distinguish these views, we will first examine the judgment of men view. This view briefly stated says that if we judge our fellow man we will in turn be judged by our fellow man here in this life. If we set ourselves up as an overlord over our brethren, they will closely examine our lives by the same standards.

This view leans heavily upon the context and the context does go on to discuss matters of justice between men. Because of the context Morgan holds that the phrase, "that ye be not judged," must refer to man's judgment. He says:

Our Lord then proceeds to give reasons against such judgment. First, retributive judgment will fall back upon the man who exercises such judgment. Of course there are different interpretations of the meaning of the words, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." Does He mean with what judgment we judge our fellow man we shall be judged by God? Some commentators tell us so. We may judge our fellow man falsely; God cannot. We come to wrong conclusions because of the limitations of our being; God cannot come to wrong conclusions. That can hardly therefore be the meaning.<sup>11</sup>

Morgan is the only commentator the writer has found who holds the condemnatory judgment view in referring to Christ's words of "Judge not," in verse one, and then interprets the second phrase of the

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<sup>11</sup>Morgan, op. cit., p. 72.

verse, "that ye be not judged," and the immediate context as referring to the judgment of man.

Since Morgan does hold that Christ's words, "Judge not," refer to condemnatory judgment, it would seem that the "that ye be not judged" would refer to a judgment higher than that which man exercises. For so great a crime of judging things in which only God has the power, it is logical to assume that the one guilty of the crime would ultimately stand before God to answer for his sin.

Since it is common usage in prohibitions to find the present imperative followed by a ἵνα clause with the aorist subjunctive, it is difficult to conclusively prove anything from exegesis. If anything, the use of the aorist would point to punctiliar or summary action. This would certainly lean toward the judgment of God view in that His judgment is conclusive and final.

Major Problem: What is the meaning of Christ's words, "Judge not," as found in Mt. 7:1?

### The Popular View

The author has found it very difficult to distinguish between these views. The majority of the commentators have certain convictions but readily allow for other views. Very few commentators take special space to discuss this verse, but the writer has done his best to distinguish between the views and to give the results in the following interpretations.

You will take note that the popular view is not documented. Into this view fall many who have not studied the Scriptures, but take delight in plucking for themselves portions of God's Word which will defend their position. Many of us have had this verse, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," used by an unbeliever in his defense that we are judging him concerning his salvation. He strongly asserts that the Bible says we are not to judge and that we as believers are out of bounds by trying to explain to this one that his state is one of sin and that he needs the Saviour.

I mentioned this view as specifically used by the unbeliever but is not the believer sometimes guilty of the same assumption? To state a typical case of this is a matter of divorce and remarriage. When

a pastor takes his stand about what the Word of God teaches about marriage and divorce and it comes right down to a specific case among the people in his church, he might be surprised of how many born again believers will arise and claim that we are not to judge in these matters. I mention this as a popular view. It is widespread.

being on the lookout for mistakes which  
 in the lives of others. This view is well  
 by Dr. Brown who says:

the context make it clear that the thing here  
 condemned is that disposition to look unfavorably  
 on the character and actions of others, which  
 leads invariably to the pronouncing of rash,  
 unjust, and unlovely judgments upon them. No  
 doubt it is the judgments so pronounced which are  
 here spoken of; but what our Lord aims at is the  
 spirit out of which they spring. Provided we  
 possess this unlovely spirit, we are not only war-  
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 necessary discrimination, are often constrained  
 to do so for our own guidance. It is the viola-  
 tion of the law of love involved in the exercise  
 of a suspicious disposition which alone is here  
 condemned.

Others agreeing are: Barnes,<sup>13</sup> Calvin,<sup>14</sup> Carr,<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup>David Brown, Matthew-John Four Gospels Critical  
History Commentary, (Philadelphia: William J. &  
 Charles, 1857), p. 93.

<sup>14</sup>John Calvin, Explanatory and Practical Notes  
on the Gospels (New York: Harper & Bros. Publ., 1850),  
 p. 94.

<sup>15</sup>Calvin, ibid., p. 94.

<sup>16</sup>A. Carr, The Gospel According to the Matthew  
Evangelist at the University, (New York, 1903), p. 11.

## The Spirit of Judging View

This view states that we are to be on guard against developing an attitude or spirit of setting ourselves up as judges over others. It speaks of gradually sliding into the habit of judging and as continually being on the lookout for mistakes which appear in the lives of others. This view is well stated by Dr. Brown who says:

The context makes it clear that the thing here condemned is that disposition to look unfavorably on the character and actions of others, which leads invariably to the pronouncing of rash, unjust, and unlovely judgments upon them. No doubt it is the judgments so pronounced which are here spoken of; but what our Lord aims at is the spirit out of which they spring. Provided we eschew this unlovely spirit, we are not only warranted to sit in judgment upon a brother's character and actions, but, in the exercise of a necessary discrimination, are often constrained to do so for our own guidance. It is the violation of the law of love involved in the exercise of a censorious disposition which alone is here condemned.<sup>12</sup>

Others agreeing are: Barnes,<sup>13</sup> Calvin,<sup>14</sup> Carr,<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>David Brown, Matthew-John Four Gospels Critical & Explanatory Commentary, (Philadelphia: William S. & Alfred Martien, 1859), p. 63.

<sup>13</sup>Albert Barnes, Explanatory and Practical Notes on the Gospels (New York: Harper & Bros. Publ. Co., 1863), p. 92.

<sup>14</sup>Calvin, loc. cit.

<sup>15</sup>A. Carr, The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Cambridge at the University Press, 1908), p. 71.

Plumptre,<sup>16</sup> Robertson,<sup>17</sup> Ryle,<sup>18</sup> Smith,<sup>19</sup> and Williams.<sup>20</sup>

The Rash-Conscious View

This view is held by the majority of the com-

mentaries consulted. Briefly stated this view holds

that we are not to judge rashly, unkindly, or censor-

iously. This view allows us to judge certain things,

always with a loving and true spirit. This inter-

mediate view is held by Cowles, who says:

"Judge not"—i.e., censoriously, severely. The  
 except need not be strained to forbid all judg-  
 ing of other's conduct as right or wrong, for the  
 passing of such judgments is inevitable to think-  
 ing minds, and moreover is no less obligatory than  
 inevitable. As social and moral beings, we ought  
 to have opinions as to what is morally right and  
 to disapprove the morally wrong... But Jesus  
 bids us to judge candidly and never censoriously.<sup>21</sup>

Other advocates of this view are the following:

<sup>22</sup> Clarke, <sup>23</sup> Lange, <sup>24</sup> Waithy, <sup>25</sup> Pool, <sup>26</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Plumptre, loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup>Thomas Archibald Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), Vol. I, 60.

<sup>18</sup>John Charles Ryle, Expository Thoughts on the Gospel According to St. Matthew (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1900), p. 62.

<sup>19</sup>W. C. Smith, The Sermon on the Mount, p. 276  
The Sermon Bible, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1900), p. 172.

<sup>20</sup>A. Lukyn Williams, Vol. I of The Gospel Accord-  
ing to St. Matthew, The Pulpit Commentary ed. by H. D. M.  
 Spence and Joseph S. Exell, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls  
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### The Rash-Censorious View

This view is held by the majority of the commentators consulted. Briefly stated this view holds that we are not to judge rashly, unkindly, or censoriously. This view allows us to judge certain things, but always with a loving and true spirit. This interpretation is held by Cowles, who says:

"Judge not"--i.e., Censoriously, severely. The precept need not be strained to forbid all judging of other's conduct as right or wrong, for the forming of such judgments is inevitable to thinking minds, and moreover is no less obligatory than inevitable. As social and moral beings, we ought to have opinions as to what is morally right and to disapprove the morally wrong.... But Jesus warns us to judge candidly and never censoriously.<sup>21</sup>

Other advocates of this view are the following:

Benson,<sup>22</sup> Clarke,<sup>23</sup> Lange,<sup>24</sup> Whitby,<sup>25</sup> Pool,<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Cowles, loc. cit.

<sup>22</sup>Benson, loc. cit.

<sup>23</sup>Adam Clarke, New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Carlton & Philips, 1854), I, 180.

<sup>24</sup>Lange, loc. cit.

<sup>25</sup>Daniel Whitby, "A Paraphrase and Commentary on the Four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles," of A Critical Commentary and Paraphrase on the Old and New Testament and the Apocrypha, ed. by Symon Patrick et al. (Philadelphia: Frederick Scofield & Co., 1887), VI, 78.

<sup>26</sup>Matthew Pool, Annotations on the Holy Bible, (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., n.d.), III, 30.

Binney,<sup>27</sup> Holden,<sup>28</sup> Warren,<sup>29</sup> Buttrick,<sup>30</sup> Scott,<sup>31</sup>  
and Bengel.<sup>32</sup>

Hypocritical Judgment View

This view emphasizes the idea that we are not  
to judge hypocritically. This view especially brings  
out the historical aspect of the unfair judging of the  
Scribes. Our own judgments are unfair because we  
are in our own sinful condition when making these  
judgments. This view is well stated by Bengel:

Text

The very fact of having a righteousness that is  
far better than that of the scribes and Pharisees  
might lead the disciples into the vicious fault  
of the scribes and Pharisees who set themselves  
up as judges over all others, gloried in their  
own false holiness, and despised all others. . . .  
What he forbids is the self-righteous, hypocritical  
judging which is false and calls down God's  
judgment on itself.<sup>33</sup>

Other advocates of this view are the following:

Wansel,<sup>34</sup> Davies,<sup>35</sup> McClendon,<sup>37</sup> Weiss,<sup>38</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Amos Binney, The People's Commentary, (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1878), p. 44.

<sup>28</sup>George Holden, The Christian Expositor, (2nd ed. rev., London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1837), p. 28.

<sup>29</sup>Israel P. Warren, The Four Gospels, (Boston: American Tract Society, 1867), I of N. T., 23.

<sup>30</sup>George A. Buttrick, "General Articles on the New Testament; Matthew; Mark," The Interpreters Bible ed. by G. A. Buttrick et. al. (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), VII, 324.

<sup>31</sup>Thomas Scott, The Holy Bible (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1830), V, 54.

<sup>32</sup>John A. Bengel, Gnomon of the New Testament (Philadelphia: Perkinpine and Higgins, 1860), XI, 131.

### The Hypocritical Judgment View

This view emphasizes the idea that we are not to judge hypocritically. This view especially brings out the historical aspect of the unfair judging of the Pharisees. Our own judgments are unfair because we forget our own sinful condition when making these accusations. This view is well stated by Lenski when he says:

The very fact of having a righteousness that is far better than that of the scribes and Pharisees might lead the disciples into the vicious fault of the scribes and Pharisees who set themselves up as judges over all others, glories in their own false holiness, and despised all others. . . . What He forbids is the self-righteous, hypocritical judging which is false and calls down God's judgment on itself.<sup>33</sup>

Other advocates of this view are the following:  
Meyer,<sup>34</sup> Mansel,<sup>35</sup> Davies,<sup>36</sup> McClarion,<sup>37</sup> Weiss,<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup>Lenski, loc. cit.

<sup>34</sup>Meyer, loc. cit.

<sup>35</sup>H. L. Mansel, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," The Holy Bible ed. by F. C. Cook (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1878), I of N. T., 101.

<sup>36</sup>Newton Davies, "Matthew," The Abingdon Commentary (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1929), p. 907.

<sup>37</sup>Alexander McClaren, St. Matthew Chapters I to VIII, Expositions of Holy Scripture (London: Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.), p. 325.

<sup>38</sup>Bernard Weiss, Commentary on the New Testament (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1906), I, 15.

Bruce,<sup>39</sup> Parker,<sup>40</sup> and Schaffer.<sup>41</sup>

Warning Against Condemnatory Judgment View

According to this interpretation we are not to judge to the extent of condemnation. The place of judgment is to be left to God and we are not to judge our brother. There is an allowance for reproving your brother when needed. This view is well stated by Matthew Henry who says:

The prohibitions Judge not: We must judge of ourselves, and judge of our own acts, but we may not judge our brother, not magistrally, nor assume such an authority over others, as we allow them over us; since our rule is, to be subject to one another. . . .<sup>42</sup>

Other commentators who hold this view are  
 Alford,<sup>43</sup> Gill,<sup>44</sup> Cerdlestone,<sup>45</sup> Valpy,<sup>47</sup>

<sup>39</sup>Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.), V, 50.

<sup>40</sup>Hermann Olshausen, Biblical Commentary of the  
Expositor, trans. A. G. Hamrick (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1858), I, 328.

<sup>41</sup>Alford, loc. cit.

<sup>39</sup>Alexander B. Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," The Expositor's Greek New Testament ed. by Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1951), I, 65.

<sup>40</sup>Joseph Parker, "Matthew," The People's Bible (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1888), XVIII, 207.

<sup>41</sup>Charles F. Schaffer, "Annotations of the Gospel According to Matthew," The Luthern Commentary ed. by H. E. Jacobs (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1895), I, 158.

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Other commentators who hold this view are Olshausen,<sup>43</sup> Alford,<sup>44</sup> Gill,<sup>45</sup> Girdlestone,<sup>46</sup> Valpy,<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.), V, 50.

<sup>43</sup>Hermann Olshausen, Biblical Commentary on the New Testament, trans. A. C. Kendrick (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman and Co., 1858), I, 328.

<sup>44</sup>Alford, loc. cit.

<sup>45</sup>John Gill, An Exposition of the New Testament (London: William Hill Collingridge, n. d.), I, 54.

<sup>46</sup>Charles Girdlestone, The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1835), p. 61.

<sup>47</sup>E. Valpy, The New Testament with English Notes (Boston: A. J. Valpy, 1839), III, 45.

Grant,<sup>48</sup> and Makrakis.<sup>49</sup>

### The Roman Catholic View

This view is set aside by itself, because it is

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For Jesus, etc. To be understood in the  
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 here condemned is the hypocritical self-deception  
 of thinking oneself morally better than others.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>F. W. Grant, "The Gospel of Matthew " The Numerical Bible (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Bible Truth Depot, 1899), V, 96.

<sup>49</sup>Apostolos Makrakis, Interpretation of the Entire New Testament (Chicago: Orthodox Christian Educational Society, 1949), p. 154.

### The Roman Catholic View

This view is set aside by itself because it is unique. I brings out very well the true feelings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. They carefully show that the hierarchy of the church have the right to condemn those who are without. This view is stated by a Roman Catholic Publication, which says:

Do Not Judge, etc.: To be understood in the sense of "Do not condemn, that you may not be condemned." Christ forbids uncharitable criticism by private persons of their fellow-man. He does not forbid those in authority to pass judgment or condemn, nor does He forbid the individual the use of discernment in spiritual matters. What is here condemned is the hypocritical self-deceit of thinking oneself morally better than others.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>A Commentary on the New Testament (The Catholic Biblical Association, 1842), p. 61.

## THE WRITER'S INTERPRETATION

As pointed out in the preface, it is the writer's purpose to discover the primary meaning of our text. The writer does believe that Our Lord had a definite historical purpose in mind as was discussed in the essential background material. There were those there who had to have their view corrected concerning the matter of judging his fellow man. As to the audience to which He spoke these things, they were characterized by the word "blessed." However, we must remember that Christ must have spoken, as the whole of the New Testament does, to believers. Then too, God's Word is written that we might examine ourselves to see if the characteristics of the sons of God are typical of our lives. There is no doubt in the writer's mind that there were those listening to our Lord who were guilty of continually judging their fellow man as to whether or not he was acceptable to God.

In undertaking the writer's interpretation we will follow three lines of argument: the linguistic, the doctrinal, and the contextual. The writer holds that the primary meaning of the verse under consideration, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," teaches us that we

are not to judge taking the place of God, or we will be judged by God. *Diagnostic Argument*

An investigation of the words in the original text will do much to substantiate our view but will not conclusively prove it. The verb in the text is *ἵνα μὴ κρίνετε*. It is clear that we have the present imperative of *κρίνω* with the negative *μὴ*. Chamberlain points out in his book *The Greek New Testament* that with the present imperative, it is linear and either means 'stop' what you are doing, or 'don't get the habit' of doing it. If the act is already in progress, the former is the meaning: *ἵνα μὴ κρινώμεθα* (Mt. 6:19), 'stop hearing treasure on earth.' If the act has not begun, it would mean, 'don't get into the habit of hearing treasure on earth.' The majority of instances come under the first word; i.e. it is used to negative a hypothetical statement. Cf. Mt. 7:1; John 6:20.

From what we know of the Pharisees this act will be established and they had been doing this thing. Our Lord here uses the negative to show that they were to stop judging.

Those who hold the spirit of judging view the present imperative as their main premise and it cannot be denied. However it can also be seen that He is commanding us not to judge in things which we have

<sup>1</sup>William Douglas Chamberlain, *The Greek New Testament* (New York: The William Co., 1952), pp. 159, 160.

## The Linguistic Argument

An investigation of the words in the original language will do much to substantiate our view but will not conclusively prove it. The verse in the Greek is Μὴ κρίνετε, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε. It is noted that we have the present imperative of κρίνω used with the negative μὴ. Chamberlain points out in the uses of μὴ:

With the present imperative, it is linear and either means 'stop' what you are doing, or 'don't get the habit' of doing it. If the act is already in progress, the former is the meaning: μὴ ἀποθησαύριζετε (Mt. 6:19), 'stop hoarding treasure.' If the act has not begun, it would mean, 'don't get into the habit of hoarding treasure on earth.' The majority of instances come under the first head; i.e. it is used to negative a hypothetical statement. Cf. Mt. 7:1; John 6:20.<sup>1</sup>

From what we know of the Pharisees this act was well established and they had been doing this very thing. Our Lord here uses the negative to show his hearers that they were to stop judging.

Those who hold the spirit of judging view use this present imperative as their main premise and it cannot be denied. However it can also be seen that He is commanding us not to judge in things which we have

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<sup>1</sup>William Douglas Chamberlain, The Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1952), pp. 159, 160.

no power to discern. He says that we are not to judge so "that we should not be judged," Mt. 7:1.

Machen points out that the purpose is expressed by ἵνα with the subjunctive. He also says:

In addition to the use by which it expresses purpose, ἵνα with the subjunctive is very frequently used after words of exhorting, wishing, striving, and in various ways that are not easily classified.<sup>3</sup>

The implication here is that if we do persist in judging others in matters which do not concern us, we shall be judged. It is for this purpose that we are not to judge.

ἵνα is again used but now with the aorist subjunctive. Machen says:

The aorist subjunctive refers to the action without saying anything about its continuance or repetition, while the present subjunctive refers to it as continuing or as being repeated. Thus ἵνα ἴδω means simple in order that I may loose, while ἵνα ἴδω means in order that I may be loosing, or the like.<sup>4</sup>

This agrees with Lenski when he says that the punctiliar aorist of κρίνω refers to God's final judgment; and that if the durative idea was to be expressed the present subjunctive would have been used.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Gresham Machen, New Testament Greek for Beginners (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), p. 131.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid <sup>4</sup>Ibid

<sup>5</sup>Lenski, loc. cit.

This would allow for our view that this refers to the judgment of God. The writer does not agree with Lenski that only the final judgment of God is in view. For those who are without, this judgment will come at the great white throne judgment. But those believers who are guilty of this sin will reap the judgment of God at the bema seat of Christ.

## The Contextual Argument

The purpose of this argument is to show that the immediate context of the passage under consideration will allow for our view.

It is our view that Christ is giving this injunction to correct wrong methods of obtaining righteous living, especially in the days of His earthly ministry. Many commentators say that Christ is answering various questions about current problems which come from His hearers, but the majority of them hold that this is part of the Sermon on the Mount.

Even though there is no connective between the previous words of chapter 6, and a new subject is introduced, this new subject is very much in keeping with the exhortations and warnings that have proceeded concerning the so-called righteous living of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Plumptre admits the difficulty but overcomes it when he says:

The plan and sequence of the discourse is, as has been said, less apparent in this last portion. Whether this be the result of omission or of insertion, this much at least seems clear, that while chap. v. is mainly a protest against the teaching of the scribes, and chap. vi. mainly a protest against their corruption of the three great elements of the religious life -- almsgiving, prayer, and fasting -- and the worldliness out of which that corruption grew, this deals chiefly with the temptations incident to the more advanced stages of that life when lower forms of evil have

been overcome -- with the temper that judges others, the self-deceit of unconscious hypocrisy, that danger of unreality.<sup>6</sup>

In the verse following our text, Mt. 7:2, we read, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

This verse goes on to illustrate the folly of our judging others. We are not only unfaithful to our God, but also we set up standards of judgment for ourselves in the eyes of man. It is certainly true that if we condemn another for a sin which we are guilty of, it sets a standard for our own hearts. The Holy Spirit is there not only to convict us of that sin, but also to convict us of our unfair judgment of another. Certainly there can be no joy or peace when we continually regard these things in our hearts and the fruits of the Spirit are not exemplified.

Being one of the prominent evils of the day, usurping the throne of judgment is condemned along with the other forms of so-called self-righteousness.

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<sup>6</sup>Plumptre, loc. cit.

### The Doctrinal Argument

Theologians do not discuss this subject under a special head nor is it discussed at any length under other topics of discussion. It is correct to call this the doctrinal argument, since the writer means to discuss here the teaching of judgment in God's Word, especially in the light of our text.

The word κρίνω is translated by many different words in the New Testament. Morgan points out:

In the Authorised Version it is translated in all these ways: Avenge, condemn, decree, esteem, go to law, ordain, sentence to, think, conclude, damn, determine, judge, sue at the law, call in question.<sup>7</sup>

By this grouping we are able to see that the basic usage of the word has the idea of distinguishing, or coming to some conclusion. This is precisely what our English word 'judge' means. When something is judged, it is decided on way or another. Sometimes it motivates one to action, sometimes it conditions a passive position.

One of the things that has been most confusing to the writer as he read the commentators concerning this verse, has been the failure to distinguish between the type of judging as found in God's Word. There are two kinds of judging; one type which we are

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<sup>7</sup>Morgan, loc. cit.

told that we are to exercise, and the other, we are not to commit. This factor makes this verse difficult to interpret if the difference is not strictly drawn.

In verse one of chapter seven of Matthew, Christ tells us that we are not to judge. Then immediately down in verse six of this same chapter He says, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine..." Here we are to distinguish and make a decision. Paul in 1 Cor. 5:3 says that he judges this one who is living in sin.

The best passage that illustrates the two types of judging is found in Rom. 14:10-13:

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Paul brings out the two types of judging in these verses. The type forbidden we will call censorious judgment; the type which we are expected to exercise can be called moral judgment.

Moral judgment is simply deciding between what is right and what is wrong. In civil law this can be simply illustrated. If we see a man stealing a car, we know that this is wrong because it openly trans-

gresses the law. It would be our duty to go to the court, if asked, and testify of what we have seen. The same is true in regard to God's statutes. If a man openly transgresses God's Law, such as the case of the man reported commonly as a fornicator in 1 Corinthians, chapter five, we, as Paul, have a right to reprove this one and when qualified, take action. We notice that Paul does not condemn this one, but he is put out of the church for a time of testing that he might examine himself to see whether or not he truly is a believer. This type of judgment, that is, moral judgment is not what Christ is speaking against in Mt. 7:1. However it is necessary that we have a word of caution here. Our moral judgment could be right, but our heart attitude might be wrong. This must be done in love.

The type of judging under consideration in our text and the one we are commanded not to exercise, is what the writer chooses to call censorious judgment. This is what Paul speaks about in the Romans passage quoted above. Why are we not to judge our brother? Because we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. There is only One who is qualified to judge in the sense of condemnation. There is only One who is able to look into the heart of man.

We must remember that we are servants. We have a master. Who are we to judge another man's

servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. (Rom. 14:4) To continue the same illustration as used above, we see this man stealing a car. As said before we have a right to a moral decision that this act is wrong. However, we are not qualified to send this man to prison for this act. This must be done by a qualified judge who has the power to decide concerning this case.

As for God's Law there is only One qualified to be the judge. He is the One who is able to look into the heart of man and the only One, because of His nature whose judgments are never wrong. He knows the motive behind every action, whether selfish or otherwise.

The author's view is that the "Judge not," of Mt. 7:1 definitely refers to this censorious type of judgment. In the light of historical evidence and especially from the Word of God we know that the Pharisees were guilty of judging men concerning the position in the Kingdom of God. Our Lord here gives this injunction so that His disciples will not fall into the same temptation. He has already told them that they should have a righteousness that is far better than that of the scribes and Pharisees, so a word of caution is needed.

We are not to judge censoriously because if we do we will be judged by God. As shown in handling

the minor problem, this does not refer to the great white throne judgment. Christians do not appear before this throne, only the unbeliever. The author does not hold the position that there is no judgment for the believer here on earth. From 1 Cor. 11:32 we learn that we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned, with the world. Concerning this verse Hoyt remarks, "When they will not judge themselves, He judges His children, He chastens them; for He loves them."<sup>8</sup> Truly the child of God is judged by God, for within the believer there is ever a voice that reminds us of our sin. If we unjustly censor or rashly condemn those around us, how true it is that there is a beam in our own eye which must be removed. Sometimes the Spirit of God so convicts us of our sin that the joy and peace of God leaves us until there is a time of repentance.

As related in the preface, we must remember that Christ is laying down a true principle. As to regarding the various interpretations, by studying this as a divine principle, all the different views are true, with the exception of the Roman Catholic view.

It is very true that if we unjustly condemn

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<sup>8</sup>Herman A. Hoyt, "The Corinthian Epistles" (Class Notes, Grace Theological Seminary, 1954), p. 51 (Mimeographed).

and judge men, they in turn will judge us by our own standards. They will exercise a form of the "lex talionis," or the law of reciprocity.

We are not to fall into the habit of developing a critical spirit, for there is no other thing that will tend to harden our hearts and make us callous toward others. We must remember that it is impossible to judge affirmatively the motives of men. How quickly we try to figure out why he did this or that, when we do not have the power to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Plumptre has laid down four rules of conduct that we a Christian's should strive to remember. He says:

- (1.) Judge no man unless it be a duty to do so.
- (2.) As far as may be, judge the offence, and not the offender.
- (3.) Confine your judgment to the earthly side of faults, and leave their relation to God, to Him who sees the heart.
- (4.) Never judge at all without remembering your own sinfulness, and the ignorance and infirmities which may extenuate the sinfulness of others.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Plumptre, loc. cit.

PARAPHRASE

Stop practising unrighteous judgment, in  
order that you may not enter into judgment by God.

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