

DOCTRINAL CLASS
Concerning Judging

Rev. Theodore Pitcairn
Early 1938

We read: "Judge not lest ye be judged; for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged. (Matt. 7:1-2) Without Doctrine this can be adduced to confirm that it is not to be said of evil that it is evil, thus that we are not to judge that an evil person is evil. But from Doctrine it is allowable to judge, but justly. For the Lord says, Judge a just judgment." (John 7:24, S.S. 512)

In the above passage from the Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture, is pointed out an apparent contradiction in the New Testament, a contradiction which can only be reconciled by Doctrine. When we come to examine the Newest, and last, Testament, the Writings of Swedenborg, we again find an apparent contradiction in what is said concerning judging.

We read: "Therefore a man is never allowed to judge concerning another as to the quality of his spiritual life; for the Lord alone knows this. But everyone is allowed to judge concerning another as to his quality as to moral and civil life; for this is of importance to society." (A.C. 22843).

Similar teaching to the above is given in various places in the Latin Word as is well known in the Church. On the other hand we read:

"Love and faith are meant in the spiritual sense by works . . . From this it is that works signify, not the things which appear in outward form, but the things of the will and the thought. That this is so is known to every one who reflects. Who that is wise regards a man from his deeds alone, and not from his will? If the will is good he loves the deeds; but if the will is evil he does not love the deeds. He sees the deeds but interprets them according to the intention of the will. He that is spiritual attends still less to the deeds, but explores the will; for the reason already given, that deeds in themselves are nothing, but all that they are is from the will." (A. E. 983)

Moral and civil goods can be seen in natural light, a light in which all but the insane can see.

That moral and civil good and evil can be seen in natural light is taught in the Arcana Coelestia as follows:

"The Israelitish nation might have known these laws (that parents are to be honored, that murder, adultery and theft are not to be committed, and that no one should bear false witness) from natural light alone; for what nation is there which does not know them?" (A.C. 8862)

It is self-evident that every man can see natural truth in natural light, not only the truths of natural science, but also truths of civil and moral life, and can judge concerning them from a faculty of natural rational understanding. Were not this true the world would be insane and human society would be impossible.

Both the regenerate and the unregenerate, the spiritual man and the natural man, have this faculty. If this were not so there would be no possibility of a man commencing regeneration, and the world would be reduced to a madhouse. Therefore we read, "Every one is allowed to judge concerning another as to civil and moral life, for this is of importance to society!"

In the Most Ancient Church man was in the order of his life, his celestial and spiritual rational faculties were unperverted, wherefore he came into celestial and spiritual light naturally. In this light he could like the angels distinguish between internal good and evil. The least intonation of the voice expressed a host of affections, every expression of the face expressed innumerable thoughts. To simulate in anything was regarded as a heinous evil, and any one indulging in such a sin could be readily detected by the spiritual deadness such simulation induced on the face.

With the fall, the internal rational faculties of the mind became perverted. Men lost the faculty of perception, wherefore a written Word was given to them. On account of the separation of will and understanding simulation became possible, and the interiors of a man could be hidden from his companions. A man could no longer know the internal life of another from an unperverted perception which could see in the light of heaven, and still more is this true of the present day. Wherefore the law is given: "Therefore it is not allowable to judge concerning another's spiritual life, for the Lord alone know this."

And yet judgment was necessary, wherefore the Word was given and prophets were sent, who told from the Lord the state of the Church, manifesting its evils and falsities until the Lord Himself finally came to judge. Again the church fell away, men became spiritually blind once more, and while men could see the civil and moral evils of the world, no one could see the internal state of the church, the spiritual state of the Christian world. Therefore it was necessary that the Lord should come again to execute a great judgment.

But what of the church now? Man of himself cannot know what is the internal state of the church for of himself he is in natural light and not in spiritual light. Can we therefore know nothing of the internal state of the church?

We read: "To count the number of the beast denotes to explore and know the falsified truths of the church: the number of a man signifies the subject and state of the church. To know these things, and to explore them, is the part of a wise and intelligent man, and therefore it is said, this is wisdom, let him that hath intelligence count its number." (A.C. 10217).

But as man has no wisdom or intelligence from himself, this exploration must be solely from the Lord and not from himself. To see from oneself is to see from natural light, while to see from the Lord is to see from spiritual light. Wherefore we read concerning the number of the beast in the Apocalypse Explained:

"Those who are in enlightenment are to make the inquiry because the quality of the faith of that religion can be seen and thus inquired into by no others. For every thing of the Word by which inquiry must be made and from which there can be judgment is in the light of heaven, and therefore can be seen only from that light, and it is that light which enlightens man; therefore to inquire into the quality of the faith of any religion which has been confirmed by some passages of the Word can be done only by one who is in the light of heaven, consequently who is in enlightenment." (846).

The number concerning numbering in the Arcana continues, showing its danger if done from self as was done by David in numbering the people: "From this it is evident how great a sin it was to number the people; the numbering of the sons of Israel by David signifies the setting in order and disposing of all things of faith and love by self and not by the Lord . . . To the intent therefore that they might be delivered from the sin in numbering the sons of Israel the half-shekel was given as an expiation . . . (by which) is signified purification or liberation from evil by the acknowledgment that all the truths and goods of faith and love, and their setting in order and disposing, are from the Lord and not at all from man. That this is so, namely that all the truths and goods of faith and love are from the Divine and not at all from man, is also known in the church, and likewise that it is evil for man to attribute them to himself; and that those are delivered from this evil who acknowledge and believe that these are from the Lord, for so they claim for themselves nothing which is Divine or from the Divine." (A.C. 10218).

"That there be no plague in them in numbering them. That this signifies lest there be the penalty of evil in doing goods as from self . . . It is said as from self, because the goods which a man does, he does as from self, nor does he perceive otherwise until he is in faith from love. For goods flow in from the Lord and are received by man, and those which are received are at first felt no otherwise than as in himself and from himself; nor is it perceived that they are from the Lord until he comes into knowledge, and afterwards into acknowledgment from faith. For before this he cannot reflect that any thing flows in from the Divine; nor can he at all perceive this, that is, be sensible of it in himself, until he begins to will and love that it be so. This is like the life itself in man, and his two interior faculties of life, which are the understanding and the will. Who before instruction does not believe that life is in himself, and that what he does from this life is of himself, and in like manner his understanding and will? Although both his life in general, and his understanding and will, flow in, the truths of the understanding and the goods of the will out of heaven from the Lord." (A.C. 10219)

From the above it is evident that all the goods of the will and the truths of the understanding equally as the life of man itself flow in from the Lord. Wherefore all judgment which is from such influx is of the Lord alone and not of man.

The quotation continues:

"This they shall give, every one that passeth over upon those who are numbered. That this signifies the ascription to the Lord of all things of faith and love, is evident from the signification of giving, namely, the expiation of the soul, which was a half-shekel, as being liberation from evils by the acknowledgment that every thing of faith and love is from the Lord and nothing from man . . . a shekel denotes truth from good." (A.C. 10221)

What is human cannot be ascribed to the Lord. Wherefore to call the things of faith and love, or truths from good human, is to steal them from the Lord and ascribe them to man. In the passage quoted above it says that "The acknowledgment that all the goods and truths of faith and love are from the Lord and not at all from man is such that they claim for themselves nothing which is Divine or from the Divine." The General Church has taken the opposite position, saying that the acknowledgment and belief that all the goods and truths of faith and love are from the Lord and therefore are Divine makes man Divine, which is the opposite to the truth given in this number, namely that by such an acknowledgment and belief men claim for themselves nothing which is Divine or from the Divine.

From the above it is evident that while with the fall man's internal rational was perverted so that he no longer had inscribed upon him the faculty of judgment in internal things, nevertheless, due to the Lord's First and Second Coming, and by means of the goods and truths of faith and of love out of the Word man may be again elevated out of natural light into spiritual light, and may thus once more come into judgment in internal things, but only insofar as he ascribes all goods and truths of love and faith, and the judgment thence, entirely to the Lord, and nothing of it to himself. And he comes into this perception to the extent that he perceives that any judgment he makes concerning internal things from himself is always false.

Judgment belongs to the Son of Man, and by the Son of Man is signified the Word and also Doctrine from the Word.

It is known generally in the church, that while the New Church will endure for ever, that any particular organization of the church may die. It is also known that when an organization of a church spiritually dies, as seen from without, it may appear to be flourishing and very much alive.

It is self-evident that if the Lord could not give man the light in which to see what organizations are living and what are dead, everything of the church would come into confusion, and into as great if not greater darkness than has ever existed on earth.

In the early days of the Academy a judgment was made concerning the state of the New Church as a whole; not a personal judgment, but a judgment from Doctrine out of the Latin Word. Among other things it was pointed out that the Writings were the Lord in His Second Coming and that to deny the absolute Divinity and Authority of the Writings as the Word of the Lord was

to deny the Divine Human of the Lord as manifested in His Second Coming. In a word that the Convention and Conference as to the prevailing state had ceased to be the Genuine New Church. The Rev. E. S. Hyatt in resigning stated that he resigned from Convention because he believed it dead and without hope of revival.

Mr. Hyatt's letter of Resignation, from the Convention:

"Dear Sir: - I hereby declare my withdrawal from the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America, both as a minister and member of that body. My reason for doing so, is that I am not only unable to regard the General Convention as a genuine form of the New Church, but especially, because its actions and manifest tendencies have been such as to make it impossible for me to have any hope that it will ever become such a form. It is therefore my duty, in loyalty to the New Church itself, to withdraw from such bodies as, like the General Convention, depend so much, for the building up of the New Church, upon human prudence and human intelligence, upon natural goodness and the delusion of internal influx not received into forms of genuine truth; whose trust thus appears to be practically in itself, and only theoretically in the Lord, whose Presence in the Writings they deny. And this that I may be more free to look, and to lead, only to such bodies of the Church as practically acknowledge the Lord in His New Advent, by trusting solely to the guidance of the New Revelation in which He has effected His Second Coming, and in which He is present with His New Church, as her only rightful judge and teacher. Only in proportion as we thus acknowledge Him, do we suffer the Lord Jesus Christ to reign over us as our only God. Trusting that I am prompted in this course, by the desire that His reign may be extended, I withdraw from your organization. - Parkdale, Ontario, 30th September, 1891 - 122." - New Church Tydings, October 1891, page 56.

This of course did not mean that with some a new state might not arise in Convention or Conference. But if such a new state arose, and prevailed, it would no longer be Conference and Convention, not even these names would be retained, for these are entirely disorderly names for living bodies of the New Church.

That the Lord has the power of effecting such a judgment is clear from the following quotation concerning the Protestant Church.

"For God hath put it in their hearts to execute His will and to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, - signifies judgment from the Lord among them, that they might entirely reject and condemn the Roman Catholic Religion, and blot out and exterminate it among themselves, and their unanimous determination to acknowledge the Word, and thereupon to found the Church." (A.R. 749)

In recent years the General Church has questioned the legitimacy of making such judgments as the early Academy made of the Church as a whole.

The denial that such judgment is in order when made out of the Word seen in enlightenment is a sign that the General Church has come into a state of spiritual darkness in which it cannot see essential distinctions necessary for the life of the Church. Such a denial involves a denial of enlightenment from the Lord.

It is a general law that what applies to heaven applies also to the Church.

In the number we will now quote, what is said concerning heaven applies also to the New Church insofar as it really is the New Church; for the Genuine New Church is entirely one with, and acts together with, the New Heaven.

"It was also shown that the entire heaven, both the heaven of spirits and that of angels, may be considered as exercising judgment, some from their office, according to the province of the body to which they belong, and some from this circumstance, that they are willing or not willing to admit spirits into their company; thus every one exercises a judgment in respect to the society, by admitting into it or ejecting from it. The heaven of angels, in like manner, judges of those things which belong to faith, and which are understood by the twelve tribes and the twelve thrones, and also by the (twelve) disciples; for the angels of the three heavens, in like manner, love to admit those who are in the faith into their societies, or they do not admit them, thus they exercise judgment; whereas it is by no means the angels who judge, but the Lord alone, who so arranges all things universally, and the minutest particulars, that it should thus be effected. The angels know no otherwise than that it is they themselves who consent, and who thus admit, for this is done by consent. This now is understood by twelve thrones, by the twelve tribes and by the twelve apostles, - not that they themselves should execute judgment, which idea is entirely false. That it is the Lord alone who judges all was also then manifestly shown to them by a general spiritual idea, which they unanimously confessed they then perceived.")Memorabilia 1323-4)

A similar teaching is given concerning judgment in the Arcana Celestia: "Even unto God shall come the word of them both; he whom God shall condemn. That this signifies a searching and a judgment by means of truth . . . Coming to God denotes to come to the judges, who from truth were to search concerning this matter. Therefore it is said he whom God shall condemn, with the verb in the plural number. Moreover in the original tongue God is in the plural; for the reason that the Divine Truth proceeding from the Lord is shared in heaven in many ways among the angels; for as many as are the angels, so many are the recipients of truth Divine each in its own manner. Hence it is that the angels are called gods and also judges, because the judges are not to judge from themselves but from the Lord. They judged also from the law of Moses, and thus from the Word which is from the Lord. Even at this day judgment is administered from the Lord when it is done from conscience, in accordance with truths." (A.C. 9160).

We read: "The Judicial in heaven is Divine truth from Divine good." (A.C. 9212⁶), and "To judge signifies to instruct in truth." (A.C. 2372)

Concerning the judgment of the Lord we read:

"As the Divine Good judges no one, but the Divine truth, it is said that the Lamb took the book . . . This is meant also by The Father judgeth no one, but hath given all judgment to the Son, because He is the Son of Man. The reason the Divine Good judges no one, is that it explores no one, but the Divine truth because this explores every one. But still it is to be known that the Lord does not judge any one from Divine Truth which proceeds from Him, for this is so united to the Divine Good that they are one; but the spirit man judges himself, for it is the Divine Truth received by man which judges him; and because this appears as if the Lord were judging, it is said in the Word that all will be judged by the Lord.

For when judgment takes place, the Lord is present with all, and from the Divine love wills to save all and also turns and leads all to Himself. They who are in good and the derivative truths follow, for they apply themselves; . . . but they who are in evil and the derivative falsities . . . turn themselves backward from the Lord to hell. From which it is evident that the Lord does not judge any one, but the Divine truth received." (A.E. 297)

Still it appears as if the Lord judged when he called the Jews hypocrites, a generation of vipers, and said they had the Devil for their father.

What is said of the Lord in the above passage, applies in an image to every man who is in the Lord and the Lord in him. Such a man from love wishes the salvation of all and the condemnation of none. He does not judge, and yet he is permitted to a degree to see the Divine truth judging.

A man who is in good never would judge as to whether another after death would go to heaven or to hell, for such a judgment would be of no use and vain. From love he wishes for the salvation of all men, and is free from fantastic curiosity about their final lot. He only judges when judgment is of use to the Church, to the country, or to society; and yet he does not judge for it is the Divine Truth which judges. He is fearful lest any thing of his own judgment enter in. He only regards what the Divine truth has manifested, and he goes not one step further. In any state of life not manifested by Divine Truth, he shuns judging concerning it, knowing that any such judgment would be from himself and therefore false.

Returning now to the quotation with which we commenced our paper, a light begins to appear.

Doctrinal Class
Early 1938

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"Judge not lest ye be judged; for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged. (Matt. 7:1-2). Without Doctrine this can be adduced to confirm that it is not to be said of evil that it is evil, thus that we are not to judge that an evil person is evil. But from Doctrine it is allowable to judge, but justly, For the Lord says, Judge a just judgment." (S. S. 512).

In the spiritual sense the thought of person disappears. In this sense "Judge not lest ye be judged" signifies that a man must not judge concerning any thought or affection as to whether it is true or false, evil or good. Man from himself always judges false judgment concerning his own thoughts and affections, for from himself he sees evil as good and goods as evil, truth as falsity and falsity as truth, particularly in spiritual and celestial or in internal things. While a man must judge as if from himself concerning his thoughts and affections he must acknowledge that this judgment, if genuine, is wholly of the Lord.

The sign that such a judgment is from the Lord and not from himself is that the judgment goes contrary to his natural affections and inclinations, that he sees the truth of the judgment in spite of himself.

AMEN