

JUDGING

Gary McDade

Judging is a positive and necessary concept which means “to form an opinion about through careful weighing of evidence and testing of premises” (*Webster’s*, p. 653). It is a command of God as taught in John 7:24, “Judge righteous judgment.” Jesus also said, though, in that same verse, “Judge not according to the appearance.” Here Jesus taught us to be cautious in our judging. We should not judge without first carefully assimilating and weighing evidence or testing the necessary premises involved in a matter. The term “judging” has come to take on more of a negative connotation because of the warning in this verse. Yet, we must not ignore the fact that to judge righteous judgment is a command from Christ. Those who say, “It is wrong to judge,” must not have much confidence in themselves or others to righteously judge. Here many fail in living the Christian life by denying the responsibility each Christian has to judge or, as Marshal Keeble used to say, to “be a fruit inspector.”

J. W. McGarvey in his comments on the parable of the talents from Matthew 25:14-30 wrote, “The transfer of the one talent from the slothful servant to him who had ten, indicates, if it have any significance, that the reward of the faithful servants of Christ will be magnified on account of the failure of the unfaithful; and this is but just, for the faithful ones have to resist not only the temptations common to all, but also the discouragement and hindrance arising from unfaithfulness of their brethren” (*Matthew and Mark*, p. 219). There are slothful, unfaithful people, and there are faithful, hardworking people. We must righteously judge, and “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God [fall from the grace of God, footnote in KJV]; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Heb. 12:14-15).

The testimony of scripture is clear on judging (Jas. 2:12-13; Matt. 7:1-5), and a right renewal of interest in it will serve to advance the cause of Christ.