

Names Written on the Earth



“O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.” (Jer 17:13)

One of the stories told by the beloved pastor of Texas, the late Dr. George W. Truett, was about a young lady who was brought before the church for discipline because of a violation of the church covenant. It was suggested that she be dropped from the rolls of the church.

As the debate developed, Rev. Dr. Truett said, “Let us call the church treasurer and have him read the record of giving of every member of the church, and then let us vote to drop every member who has violated God’s Law against covetousness.” That bombshell cleared the air of accusers, as did the reminder of Jesus: *“He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her.”* (John 8:7)

God does not tell us, with certainty, what it was that Jesus wrote twice upon the earth, but He does give us some evidence in the words of the prophet, Jeremiah above. Whatever it was, it must have been sin, and the sin must have been associated with the names of every accuser present. The principle of judging does not preclude righteous judgment which the Lord commands of us, but it does preclude judging out of a sinful heart. *“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”* (John 7:24)

This seems to be a particularly hard lesson to teach concerning the explicit words of Christ. It seems that everyone prefers the ‘easy out. *“Judge not that ye be not judged.”* (Matthew 7:1) This makes things so very uncomplicated doesn’t it? No courage is required because no judgment is necessary. That is the philosophy of the world, my friends. Read the rest of what Christ says on the subject: *“For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 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? 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.”* (Matt 7:2-5)

The underlined words of Jesus inform us of the means of judgment. The beam in our eye is the greater sin than that with which we have attempted to judge another. So does that reject the righteous judgment which Christ has commanded? Not at all – it

reinforces it! Remove the beam (egregious sin) from your own by living the righteous life expected of a Christian, then you may judge with the righteous judgment of God's Word all sins. One danger which we must avoid in judging: To judge is not the same as to condemn. Condemnation is for God alone. We are not only to edify one another in the church body, but we are to admonish and exhort as well to righteousness. We do not accomplish this by going behind another's back with a gossiping tongue, but face to face in love and sincerity.