

opinion of a person—censoriousness. Our Saviour does not forbid a righteous judgment. The judicial element is in our very nature, and we cannot avoid it. But it must be under the control of Christian principles. Judges, preachers, teachers, parents and others, must condemn the wrong and often publicly censure it. But what the Great Teacher cautions earnestly against is, judging with a censorious or "unkindly spirit—the spirit of animosity and uncharitableness.

#### GOOD REASONS.

The reasons for pursuing this course are clearly given. They are two:

1. Judging in an unkindly spirit condemns ourselves. Frequently the disposition to be severe and censorious towards others indicates the existence of as great an evil in the critic (verse 3). What a severe judgment David pronounced upon the man described by Nathan? But who was the man this described? David himself. "Thou art the man." The Pharisee's judgment on the publican was most unkindly. But who was he that went his way home justified? Yes, it often happens that the man who so often motes that is, a twig (a lesser fault) in the eye of some one else, has a beam, that is, a log (a greater fault) in his own eye. The modern adage puts the same truth in this form, "People that live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones."

2. Judging in an unkindly spirit brings on retaliation. All such rash judgments will meet with due retribution (verse 2). No one can escape this law of reciprocity. A man receives back what he gives. Haman was hanged on his own gallows. Ishmael's hands were against every man's, and consequently every man's hand was against him. "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it." Every act has its appropriate consequences—kindness begets kindness, harshness begets harshness. This law is universal. The retributive principle even goes farther, for it operates in quantity as well as in kind. Nature gives back in proportion as we give—a large sowing, a large harvest. Humanity gives back as we give to it—much kindness given, much kindness received; much cruel criticism given, much received. No one can escape this inevitable law which should be one of the greatest encouragements to love and good works.

#### THE REAL MEANING.

It is worth the time to find out:

1. What the Saviour did not mean by his teaching on judging others.

2. What he did mean by his teaching on judging others.

1. What our Saviour did not mean. (a) We are not to understand that the office of judges or magistrates was intended to be prohibited by these words. Our Saviour was not preaching to a multitude of private persons, showing them their duty.

(b) Nor is the authority of any superiors over their inferiors, rightly constituted, designed to be taken away, or encroached upon. Parents may and ought to give admonition to their children.

(c) Nor are they guilty of the breach of this rule, who, in the execution of their office, proclaim against vice and crime.

(d) Nor is this rule broken by those who, with a kindly spirit, and with a design to reform and not to expose, perform the duty of admonishing and rebuking those in the wrong.

2. What our Saviour did mean. The evil which the Master forbids is censoriousness, that is, a love to find fault. And this, as a rule, has some bitter root of evil from which it proceeds, such as pride and vanity, malice and envy, resentment and revenge, cruelty and unkindness, though very often it flows from mere thoughtlessness or empty-headedness.

(a) In this censorious spirit, there is always a secret joy to find fault; whereas, in a good man, there is quite the contrary spirit.

(b) The censorious man judges without clearness of evidence, upon some idle stories, or bare suspicions; whereas a charitable man is very unwilling to believe evil report.

(c) He has a strong inclination to find his neighbor guilty, accepts of slender proof, sometimes makes up what is wanting in fact with his own malicious inventions.

(d) He has a cruel sharpness in censuring other men's faults; not reflecting on the frailty of human nature in general, nor his own errors and follies in particular. All this is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ, and comes under his condemnation.

#### WHAT TO DO!

1. Employ your harsh judgment first on yourself. "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye." The better we are acquainted with our own defects, the more charitable shall we be to the errors of others.

2. Look charitably on the actions of your neighbor, and don't be too sharp-sighted in spying out his small faults. 3. If it is necessary to criticise a man, go to him kindly as a friend, instead of exposing his reputation as a target to others.

#### SEED THOUGHTS.

The more faults you see in others, the more others will have to see in you.

It is a good rule, when speaking of another, always to imagine him present.

Another good rule is never to speak to a man's dispraise, if you can possibly avoid it.

A third good rule is to speak little about men at all, and more about God and God's truth.

God alone is Judge. Let not men condemn except as God speaks through them.

Censorious judgment is forbidden, but not the judgment which is necessary in order to help others and act wisely ourselves (verse 1).

We are not to judge charitably in order that others may judge charitably of us, but because we love our brothers (verse 2).

The more a man knows of himself, the less he will think he knows about others (verse 3).

Let no one judge harshly of another until he has fought that other's sin in himself, and then he will not judge harshly (verse 5).

#### POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Let some one prepare a brief paper on "The Speak-no-Evil Society." Some hints are given in the foregoing. Use the "Seed Thoughts" to advantage. Give some of them out to be enlarged upon by a number of members. Have some one read in a clear voice the illustrations above, and any others which you may find, at a suitable time in the meeting. Let all resolve to be close in criticism of self, and kindly in criticism of others. "Let brotherly love continue."

### MARCH 29—"MISSIONARY DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF EVANGELIZING THE WORLD."

John 1: 1-3; Matt. 23: 37-39; Mal. 3: 8-10.

#### HOME READINGS.

Mon., Mar. 23. God judging Ethiopia..... Ezek. 29: 3-16  
Tues., Mar. 24. The s-n-s of Ham..... Gen. 10: 6-19  
Wed., Mar. 25. A noble African convert..... Matt. 27: 32-39  
Thurs., Mar. 26. An early African convert..... Acts 8: 26-40  
Fri., Mar. 27. Ethiopia shall know Christ..... Ps. 87  
Sat., Mar. 28. A prophecy about Ethiopia..... Isa. 18: 1-7

There are many difficulties in the way of carrying to a successful issue the great work of evangelizing the world.

1. There are the difficulties external to the church on the mission field.

(a) About one thousand millions of people are in non-Christian lands. It is estimated that fully three-fourths of them have not had an opportunity to learn of Jesus Christ. The problem thus relates to at least one-half of the human race. It involves a number of people equivalent to the population of one hundred and seventy-five Londons or two hundred and twenty-seven New Yorks. This is indeed a great host to reach with the Gospel message. There are still a few lands, such as Thibet, Afghanistan, and parts of Arabia, where the missionary cannot work.

(b) The chief political difficulty is the opposition of governments to the propagation of the Gospel. In the Russian Empire it is not possible to teach freely evangelical truth. The Turkish government by various restrictions renders it exceedingly hard to carry on aggressive work among Moslems.

(c) Another serious hindrance to the work of the missionary is the selfish and unjust treatment of non-Christian nations and races by nominal Christian powers. To this day, for example, the influence of the opium wars constitute a barrier to missionary progress in China. Such actions have aroused antipathy against all foreigners, and created suspicion in the minds of the people. There is also the national feeling found in Japan, which regards the acceptance of Christianity as disloyal to the Emperor. In India there is a false patriotism which identifies love of country with adherence to the ancestral faith.

(d) One of the most grievous obstacles to the spread of the Christian faith is the example set before the heathen by godless tradesmen, sailors, soldiers, travellers, and other foreigners who frequent their cities. These men, living lives of greed and vice before the eyes of the natives, utter defiance of every principle and teaching of the Christian religion, make it hard to persuade men of the reality of the Gospel.

(e) The social difficulties in the path of the missionary are intricate and obstinate. Race, pride, and prejudice meet him in every land. Customs have become second nature, and it requires a great wrench to break loose to join Christianity. In every pagan land and among the Jews, to become a Christian results, as a rule, in social ostracism. Among Moslems, to take such a step even endangers one's life. In India there is the barrier of caste. To become a Christian means giving up one's occupation or means of livelihood. It also severs him from his family and dishonours him.

(f) Then there are difficulties of an intellectual character. Multitudes of the unevangelized cannot read. Sixty per cent. of the people of Brazil are illiterate. In India only six women in every thousand can read; and in China the proportion is still smaller. There is great mental dullness on the part of many savage tribes. In other cases, superstitions, traditions, and false ideas hedge the path. There are linguistic difficulties in the way. Many languages have not as yet the Gospel. There are many languages yet to be reduced to writing, and there is the further difficulty of expressing Christian ideas in heathen words.

(g) Greatest among the difficulties are those of a religious and moral character. There are hundreds of millions of adherents of Confucianism, Hinduism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and other non-Christian religions with the principles deeply rooted, to be won for Christ. Infidel and rationalistic literature is widely read in India and Japan, and this helps to prejudice the minds of those peoples against Christianity. A great lack, too, in the non-Christian world is the want of a sense of sin. This moral