



**J**UDGE not, that ye be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. <sup>3</sup> And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? <sup>4</sup> 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? <sup>5</sup> 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 7:1-5)

The Lord did not annul the responsibility of the believer to judge with righteous judgment (i.e. by the Word of God), but not to judge with a presumed personal immunity to that same judgment: *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* (John 7:24) If we judge by the Law of God, it is not OUR judgment, but His! If God has judged an act or a lifestyle a sin, then we must agree with God's judgment in the matter.

I am again including a story taken from an old tract I collected many years ago from Old Paths Tract Society of Shoals Indiana by same title of this devotion:

### **Is Your Pocket Unbuttoned?**

A serviceman wrote of a bit of unintended comedy which he witnessed in the Army. It happened during a company inspection at the Redstone Arsenal in Alabama, the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command.

The inspection was being conducted by a full colonel. Everything had gone smoothly until the officer came to the man standing just next to the soldier who recalled the incident.

The colonel stopped, looked the man up and down, and snapped, "Button that pocket, trooper!"

The soldier, more than a little rattled, stammered, "Right now, sir?"

"Of course, right now!" was the reply.

Whereupon the soldier very carefully reached out and buttoned the flap on the colonel's shirt pocket.

For some reason peculiar to our human nature, it is always easier to see the unbuttoned pockets of others than it is to see our own. Splinters in other's eyes seem to be more obvious than the planks in our own eyes.

Criticism is not all bad. In fact, it is necessary to any improvement. *5 Open rebuke is better than secret love. 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.* (Prov 27:5-6) There is no virtue in viewing the world through rose-colored glasses, any more than there is in seeing it through lenses that are perpetually blue. The color of the glass does not change the world.

Honesty itself may lead to an appraisal of faults. Simple realism demands recognition that though, as Browning's Pippa said, *'God is in heaven indeed, all is not well however on earth.'*

The point is, the process should not all be one-sided. Fault hunting has its place, so long as we use a looking glass more often than a magnifying glass when judging others. It was George Bernard who remarked that "the best reformers the world has ever seen are those who start on themselves." As Paul has counseled, *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.* (1 Cor 11:31)

Even when our pockets are buttoned, it is often helpful not to say much about the unbuttoned pockets of others. Once we give a feeling of dislike or irritation the reality of expressing it in words, we have strengthened that feeling and reduced the likelihood that it will ever change.

And we ought to cultivate the ability to see the virtues of others as well as their failings. It is less than honest to pass a dozen strong points in silence in order to dwell on one fault.

Most of us have enough to do to keep ourselves functioning at top efficiency without taking on the responsibility of lining others up.

In fact, the essence of hypocrisy is not deceit or pretense. It is the disposition to put on others requirements we do not live by ourselves. This was a fault of the Jewish clergy of Jesus' day, and even more so reflects the same among our modern 'pulpit dandies' who call themselves, erroneously, ministers of God TODAY:

**T***HE scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.* (Matt 23:2-12)

However small the issues seem, let's just be sure we have our own pockets buttoned before we undertake to button the pockets of others.

**End of Tract**

Instead of judging the sins of others with the eye of an eagle, and our own with those of the mole; let us reverse the process and judge our own sins with the eye of an eagle, and others with the eyes of a mole.