

Gossip: Spirit of Prophecy Quotes

If a brother is supposed to have erred, his brethren and sisters should not whisper it among themselves and comment upon it, magnifying these supposed errors and faults. Much of this work is done, and the result is that the displeasure of God rests upon those who do it, and Satan exults that he can weaken and annoy those who might be strong in the Lord. The world sees their weakness and judges this class and the truth they profess to love, by the fruits manifested in them. {5T 615.1}

Those who enjoy talking should see that their words are select and well chosen. Be careful how you speak. Be careful how you represent the religion you have accepted. You may feel it no sin to gossip and talk nonsense, but this grieves your Savior, and saddens the heavenly angels. {FE 457.2}

Let all, in the fear of God and with love to their brethren, close their ears to gossip and censure. Direct the talebearer to the teachings of God's word. Bid him obey the Scriptures and carry his complaints directly to those whom he thinks in error. This united action would bring a flood of light into the church and close the door to a flood of evil. Thus God would be glorified, and many souls would be saved. {5T 609.3}

The teacher can do much to discourage that evil habit, the curse of the community, the neighborhood, and the home--the habit of backbiting, gossip, and ungenerous criticism. In this no pains should be spared. Impress upon the students the fact that this habit reveals a lack of culture and refinement and of true goodness of heart; it unfits one both for the society of the truly cultured and refined in this world and for association with the holy ones of heaven. {Ed 235.3}

We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character? Let the children, and the youth as well, learn what God says about these things: {Ed 235.4}

Note: the vegetarian cannibals in the church

The chief requisite of language is that it be pure and kind and true--"the outward expression of an inward grace." God says: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8. And if such are the thoughts, such will be the expression. {Ed 235.1}

The best school for this language study is the home; but since the work of the home is so often neglected, it devolves on the teacher to aid his pupils in forming right habits of speech. {Ed 235.2}

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"Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Proverbs 18:21. {Ed 235.5}

The halfhearted and worldly, those who are given to gossip, who dwell on the faults of others, while neglecting their own, should be separated from the work. {7T 202.2}

Few are willing to follow the Savior's example of meekness and humility. Many ask the Lord to humble them, but are unwilling to submit to the needful discipline. When the test comes, when trials or even annoyances occur, the heart rebels, and the tongue utters words that are like poisoned arrows or blasting hail. {5T 176.1}

Evil speaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. How miserable is the talebearer, the surmiser of evil! He is a stranger to true happiness. {5T 176.2}

It pains me to say that there are unruly tongues among church members. There are false tongues that feed on mischief. There are sly, whispering tongues. There is tattling, impertinent meddling, adroit quizzing. Among the lovers of gossip some are actuated by curiosity, others by jealousy, many by hatred against those through whom God has spoken to reprove them. All these discordant elements are at work. Some conceal their real sentiments, while others are eager to publish all they know, or even suspect, of evil against another. {5T 94.2}

I saw that the very spirit of perjury, that would turn truth into falsehood, good into evil, and innocence into crime, is now active. Satan exults over the condition of God's professed people. While many are neglecting their own souls, they eagerly watch for an opportunity to criticize and condemn others. All have defects of character, and it is not hard to find something that jealousy can interpret to their injury. "Now," say these self-constituted judges, "we have facts. We will fasten upon them an accusation from which they can not clear themselves." They wait for a fitting opportunity and then produce their bundle of gossip and bring forth their tidbits. {5T 94.3}

Satan has many helpers. Many who profess to be Christians are aiding the tempter to catch away the seeds of truth from other hearts. Many who listen to the preaching of the word of God make it the subject of criticism at home. They sit in judgment on the sermon as they would on the words of a lecturer or a political speaker. The message that should be regarded as the word of the Lord to them is dwelt upon with trifling or sarcastic comment. The minister's character, motives, and actions, and the conduct of fellow members of the church, are freely discussed. Severe judgment is pronounced, gossip or slander repeated, and this in the hearing of the unconverted. Often these things are spoken by parents in the hearing of their own children. Thus are destroyed respect for God's messengers, and reverence for their message. And many are taught to regard lightly God's word itself. {COL 45.1}

Christians should regard it as a religious duty to repress a spirit of envy or emulation. They should rejoice in the superior reputation or prosperity of their brethren, even when their own character or achievements seem to be cast in the shade. It was the pride and ambition cherished in the heart of Satan that banished him from heaven. These evils are deeply rooted in our fallen nature, and if not removed they will overshadow every good and noble quality and bring forth envy and strife as their baleful fruits. {5T 242.1}

We should seek for true goodness rather than greatness. Those who possess the mind of Christ will have humble views of themselves. They will labor for the purity and prosperity of the church, and be ready to sacrifice their own interests and desires rather than to cause dissension among their brethren. {5T 242.2}

Heart work is needed. Then the tongue will be sanctified. There is much talking which is sinful and should be avoided. She should set a strict watch before the door of her lips and keep her tongue as with a bridle, that her words may not work wickedness. She should cease talking of others' faults, dwelling upon others' peculiarities, and discovering others' infirmities. Such conversation is censurable in any person. It is unprofitable and positively sinful. It tends only to evil. The enemy knows that if this course is pursued by Christ's professed followers, it is opening a door for him to work. {2T 185.2}

I saw that when sisters who are given to talk get together, Satan is generally present, for he finds employment. He stands by to excite the mind and make the most of the advantage he has gained. He knows that all this gossip, and tale-bearing, and revealing of secrets, and dissecting of character, separate the soul from God. It is death to spirituality and a calm religious influence. {2T185}

When these tea and coffee users meet together for social entertainment, the effects of their pernicious habit are manifest. All partake freely of the favorite beverages, and as the stimulating influence is felt, their tongues are loosened, and they begin the wicked work of talking against others. Their words are not few or well chosen. The tidbits of gossip are passed around, too often the poison of scandal as well. These thoughtless gossipers forget that they have a witness. An unseen Watcher is writing their words in the books of heaven. All these unkind criticisms, these exaggerated reports, these envious feelings, expressed under the excitement of the cup of tea, Jesus registers as against Himself. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." {CD 423.1}

The sin of evil speaking begins with the cherishing of evil thoughts. Guile includes impurity in all its forms. An impure thought tolerated, an unholy desire cherished, and the soul is contaminated, its integrity compromised. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." If we would not commit sin, we must shun its very beginnings. Every emotion and desire must be held in subjection to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly repelled. To your closet, followers of Christ. Pray in faith and with all the heart. Satan is watching to ensnare your feet. You must have help from above if you would escape his devices. {5T 177.1}

The tongue that delights in mischief, the babbling tongue that says, Report, and I will report it, is declared by the apostle James to be set on fire of hell. It scatters firebrands on every side. What cares the vendor of gossip that he defames the innocent? He will not stay his evil work, though he destroy hope and courage in those who are already sinking under their burdens. He cares only to indulge his scandal-loving propensity. Even professed Christians close their eyes to all that is pure, honest, noble, and lovely, and treasure up what ever is objectionable and disagreeable, and publish it to the world. {5T 57.2}

You have yourselves thrown open the doors for Satan to come in. You have given him an honored place at your investigation, or inquisition meetings. But you have shown no respect for the excellencies of a character established by years of faithfulness. Jealous, revengeful tongues have colored acts and motives to suit their own ideas. They have made black appear white, and white black. When remonstrated with for their statements, some have said: "It is true." Admitting that the fact stated is true, does that justify your course? No, no. If God should take all the accusations that might in truth be brought against you, and should braid them into a scourge to punish you, your wounds would be more and deeper than those which you have inflicted on Brother ----- . Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression. You have no right to gather up every report against him and use them to ruin his reputation and destroy his usefulness. Should the Lord manifest toward you the same spirit which you have manifested toward your brother, you would be destroyed without mercy. Have you no compunctions of conscience? I fear not. The time has come for this satanic spell to lose its power. If Brother ----- were all that you represent him to be,-- which I know he is not, your course would still be unjustifiable. {5T 57.3}

When we listen to a reproach against our brother, we take up that reproach. To the question, "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" the psalmist answered, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." {5T 58.1}

What a world of gossip would be prevented if every man would remember that those who tell him the faults of others will as freely publish his faults at a favorable opportunity. We should endeavor to think well of all men, especially our brethren, until compelled to think otherwise. We should not hastily credit evil reports. These are often the result of envy or misunderstanding, or they may proceed from exaggeration or a partial disclosure of facts. Jealousy and suspicion, once allowed a place, will sow themselves broadcast, like thistledown. Should a brother go astray, then is the time to show your real interest in him. Go to him kindly, pray with and for him, remembering the infinite price which Christ has paid for his redemption. In this way you may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. {5T 58.2}

A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood, sinking like a barbed arrow into some heart, inflicting an incurable wound. Thus a doubt, a reproach, may be cast upon one by whom God would accomplish a good work, and his influence is blighted, his usefulness destroyed. Among some species of animals, if one of their number is wounded and falls, he is at once set upon and torn in pieces by his fellows. The same cruel spirit is indulged by men and women who bear the name of Christians. They manifest a pharisaical zeal to stone others less guilty than themselves. There are some who point to others' faults and failures to divert attention from their own, or to gain credit for great zeal for God and the church. {5T 59.1}

A few weeks since I was in a dream brought into one of your meetings for investigation. I heard the testimonies borne by students against Brother ----- . Those very students had received great benefit from his thorough, faithful instruction. Once they could hardly say enough in his praise. Then it was popular to esteem him. But now the current was setting the other way. These persons have developed their true character. I saw an angel with a ponderous book open in which he wrote every testimony given. Opposite each testimony were traced the sins, defects, and errors of the one who bore it. Then there was recorded the great benefit which these individuals had received from Brother -----'s labors. {5T 59.2}

We, as a people, are reaping the fruit of Brother -----'s hard labor. There is not a man among us who has devoted more time and thought to his work than has Brother ----- . He has felt that he had no one to sustain him, and has felt grateful for any encouragement. {5T 59.3}

Gossipers and news carriers are a terrible curse to neighborhoods and churches. Two thirds of all the church trials arise from this source. {2T 465.2}

Floating rumors are frequently the destroyers of unity among brethren. There are some who watch with open mind and ears to catch flying scandal. They gather up little incidents which may be trifling in themselves, but which are repeated and exaggerated until a man is made an offender for a word. Their motto seems to be, "Report, and we will report it." {TMK 184.3}

These talebearers are doing the devil's work with surprising fidelity, little knowing how offensive their course is to God. If they would spend half the energy and zeal that is given to this unholy work in examining their own hearts, they would find so much to do to cleanse their souls from impurity that they would have no time or disposition to criticize their brethren, and they would not fall under the power of this temptation. {TMK 184.4}

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. Eph. 4:15. {HP 289.1}

I wish we could have a pledge in our hearts that we would not utter any one word against a brother or a sister. Remember that they also are tempted, it may be more strongly than you. . . . Those who are really the most erring are in greatest need of your help. *Do not gossip about them and make remarks about their character, but go to them in the love of Jesus and the love of the truth and try to help them.* . . . {HP 289.2}

By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Matt. 12:37. {OHC 291.1}

God has given every youth the talent of speech to be improved for Him. This is a most important trust. . . . Let your words be life-giving, pointing those around you to the Savior. Let them bring sunshine instead of gloom, harmony instead of animosity. Say nothing that you would not be willing to say in the presence of Jesus and the angels. Utter no word that will stir up strife in another heart. However provoked you may feel, restrain the hasty word. If you are Christlike in speech and action, those who associate with you will be blessed by the association. Righteous words and deeds have a more powerful influence for good than all the sermons that can be preached. {OHC 291.2}

The talent of speech should be used to glorify God. Too often it is used to convey evil reports. This grieves away the Holy Spirit. Let us remember that we have a Savior who has bidden us [to] come unto Him with all our burdens. He will give us peace of mind, and He, too, will adjust that which to us seems so full of entangling difficulties. "Come unto me," He pleads, "all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." . . . {RC 283.5}

Those who have indulged in words of complaint and criticism shall . . . pledge that henceforth, by the Lord's help, they will not speak evil of their brethren and sisters, but will take everything to God in prayer, and follow out the instruction He has given regarding the pointing out of wrongs in our fellow men. Every church member may in his daily conduct be so exemplary, so prudent and careful in speech, so kind and compassionate, that he will be esteemed by all as one who fears and loves God. Such a man will have an influence for good over all his associates. {RC 283.6}

He who would build up a strong, symmetrical character must give all and do all for Christ. The Redeemer will not accept divided service. Daily he must learn the meaning of self-surrender. He must study the Word of God, getting its meaning and obeying its precepts. Thus he may reach the highest standard of Christian excellence. There is no limit to the spiritual advancement that he may make if he is a partaker of the divine nature. Day by day God works in him, perfecting the character that is to stand in the day of final test. Each day of his life he ministers to others. The light that is in him shines forth and stills the strife of tongues. Day by day he is working out before men and angels a vast, sublime experiment, showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings. {HP 148.3}

Let us not spare ourselves, but carry forward in earnest the work of reform that must be done in our lives. Let us crucify self. Unholy habits will clamor for the mastery, but in the name and through the power of Jesus we may conquer. To him who daily seeks to keep his heart with all diligence, the promise is given, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38, 39). . . . God Himself is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." And "whom he justified, them he also glorified" (verse 30). {HP 148.4}

Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings, striving for conformity to the divine image, there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen. {HP 148.5}

He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. Prov. 17:9. {OHC 293.1}

The psalmist asks, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." When anyone comes to you with a tale about your neighbor, you should refuse to hear it. You should say to him, "Have you spoken of this matter to the individual concerned?" ... Tell him he should obey the Bible rule, and go first to his brother, and tell him his fault privately, and in love. If the directions of God were carried out, the floodgates of gossip would be closed. {OHC 293.2}

Instead of gossiping, thus creating mischief, let us tell of the matchless power of Christ, and speak of His glory, thus magnifying and lifting up the Lord God of hosts and training ourselves to sing the song of victory in the kingdom of glory. By beginning to sing songs of triumph and thanksgiving now, we may prepare ourselves to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb when we meet on the sea of glass. {UL 306.4}

The Lord will be with us during this life, if we allow ourselves to be led by His Spirit and do not neglect to glorify His name. We should bring as much of heaven as possible into this life. The light of heaven shining into the heart will be imparted in words of pleasantness, in deeds of kindness, to those who are near us. Having acquainted ourselves with God, when He comes we will be able to say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us" (Isa. 25:9).--Manuscript 111, Oct. 19, 1901, a sermon preached in the St. Helena Sanitarium chapel. {UL 306.5}

The door of the mind should be closed against, "they say" or "I have heard." Why should we not, instead of allowing jealousy or evil surmising to come into our hearts, go to our brethren, and, after frankly but kindly setting before them the things we have heard detrimental to their character and influence, pray with and for them? . . . {TMK 184.5}

Let us diligently cultivate the pure principles of the gospel of Christ, the religion, not of self-esteem, but of love, meekness, and lowliness of heart. Then we shall love our brethren and esteem them better than ourselves. Our minds will not dwell on the dark side of their character; we shall not feast on scandal and flying reports. But "whatsoever things are ...of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," we shall "think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). {TMK 184.6}