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“Talked About.”

It is very natural for us to be keenly sensitive in regard to what people say of us, especially if they speak in a manner that is derogatory to our reputation. Nothing but the grace of God in the heart can create any love, forbearance, or forgiveness, toward those who willfully slander us. It is said that Diogenes, being asked, “Of what beast is the bite the most dangerous?” replied: “Of wild beasts, that of a slanderer; of tame, that of a flatterer.” Yet, while mankind wage an unrelenting warfare against the former, they will count the latter as an indispensable friend. “All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” What is worship but an acknowledgment of superiority? How we crave the praise of men! How we long to be *properly appreciated!* and duly noticed!

Did we but know it, we are indeed correctly estimated. In Heaven is kept a faithful, impartial record. Dare we look upon it in Heaven’s pure light?

Suppose this world does us gross injustice? Suppose the brethren and sisters are not as faithful as we think they should be, and the first we know we are “talked about,” as we call it? If what has been said against us be false, then most happy are we. The slander may prove a seasonable warning, whereby we may escape the very things of which we are accused. But if others have spoken of our real faults, let us accept it, like the true

philosopher. Philip of Macedon declared "that he was obliged to the Athenian orators for having corrected him of his errors by frequently reproaching him with them."

We are indebted to the world, to formal professors of religion, and even to fallen angels (as they all work in concert), for their constant watchcare. They look upon our errors with clearer vision than we, and shall we stand amazed if, in this age of degeneracy, they employ the magnifying lens? We cannot praise the tattler, the slanderer, or the mischief-maker; but if "all things work together for good to those who love God," shall we repine because our foes do for us what our friends refuse to do? that is, remind us of our faults, thus rendering valuable aid in our work of overcoming.

"But," says one, "some of my professed friends have been talking about me." Dear brother, dear sister, your best and truest friends are only imperfect human beings, subject to temptation, liable to deviate from the right way. They are sinners like yourself, and have the same wily foe to battle with. Their errors, like your own, must be overcome in the strength imparted by the dear, pitying Saviour. Perhaps they have spoken of your faults. This has displeased you. Had they given you credit for virtues you did not possess, would you have been offended?

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