

TALKATIVENESS

Editor's note: The following is taken from an old tract whose author is unknown. The illustration about the steam locomotive will date it around the turn of the 20th century, but its truth is absolutely timeless. *"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom"*. (Prov. 10:19-21) *"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* (Matt. 12: 36-37).

- C.
M.

Talkativeness is utterly ruinous to deep spirituality. The very life of our spirit passes out in our speech, and hence all superfluous talk is a waste of the vital forces of the heart. In fruit growing it often happens that excessive blossoming prevents a good crop, and often prevents fruit altogether; and by so much loquacity the soul runs wild in word bloom, and bears no fruit. I am not speaking of sinners, nor of legitimate testimony for Jesus, but of that incessant loquacity of nominally spiritual persons...of the professors of purifying grace. It is one of the greatest hindrances to deep solid union with God. Notice how people will tell the same thing over and over...how insignificant trifles are magnified by a world of words; how things that should be buried are dragged out into gossip; how a worthless non-essential is argued and disputed over and over; how the solemn, deep things of the Holy Spirit are rattled over in a light manner...until one who has the real baptism of divine silence in his heart, feels he must unceremoniously tear himself away to some lonely room or forest, where he can gather up the fragments of his mind, and rest in God.

Not only do we need cleansing from sin, but our natural human spirit needs a radical death to its own noise and activity and wordiness.

See the evil effects of so much talk.

First, it dissipates the spiritual power. The thought and feeling of the soul are like explosive powder and steam...the more they are condensed and concentrated, the greater their power. The steam that if properly compressed would drive a train forty miles an hour, if allowed too much expanse would not move it an inch; and so the true action of the heart, if expressed in a few Holy Ghost selected words, will sink into the minds to remain forever, but if dissipated in any rambling conversation, is likely to be of no profit.

Second, it is a waste of time. If the hours spent in useless conversation were spent in secret prayer or deep reading, we would soon reach a region of soul life and divine peace beyond our present dreams.

Third, loquacity inevitably leads to saying unwise, or unpleasant, or unprofitable things. In religious conversations we soon churn up all the cream our souls have in them, and the rest of our talk is all pale skim milk, until we get alone with God, and feed on His green pasture until the cream rises again. The Holy Spirit warns us that *"in the multitude of words there lacketh not sin"*. It is impossible for even the best of saints to talk beyond a certain point without saying something unkind, or severe, or foolish, or erroneous. We must settle this personally. If others are noisy and gabby, I must determine to live in constant quietness and humility of heart: I must guard my speech as a sentinel does a fortress, and with all respect for others, I must, many a time, cease from conversation, or withdraw from company to enter into deep communion with my precious Lord. The cure for loquacity must be from within; sometimes by an interior furnace of suffering that burns out the excessive effervescence of the mind, or by an over-mastering revelation to the soul of the awful majesties of God and eternity, which puts an everlasting hush upon the natural faculties. To walk in the Spirit we must avoid talking for talk's sake, must speak in God's appointed time and in harmony with the indwelling Holy Spirit.

"He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit"
(Prov. 17:27). *"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength"* (Is. 30:15)

"Do not be rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few, For a dream cometh through the multitude of business, and a fool's voice is known by a multitude of words. (Eccl. 5:2-3)