

## The destructive voice of gossip

Allow me to share with you a quotation that has been important to me over the years. It is an entry from the journal of Millie B. Farrimond, the grandmother of my friend Tisha Mecham, who brought it to my attention. The message is profound. Little things make such a big difference! These are Millie's words:

"Among the gifts of the spirit which have been mine is the gift to dream true dreams. ... I have seen many things in them that have later come to pass. I wish to share one of these experiences with you.

"... It was my great privilege to labor for many years with the youth of the Church. ... I learned to love them deeply ... and [was given] the power to look into their hearts and see [the temptations and struggles they faced]...

"...This is the case of a very young girl. People misjudged her and a terrible scandal arose. There was much malicious gossip. I was greatly troubled about the things I heard [not knowing whether she was guilty or innocent]...then one night I dreamed I saw Satan.

He had set a trap for this beautiful girl. I saw him standing there by his terrible trap; he had his eyes on the girl and was beckoning to her. She seemed not to see the danger and was about to enter the trap when all of a sudden she realized [her] mistake and turned and ran away in the opposite direction. I saw Satan in his anger and disappointment...sending out a vicious bulldog after her. The dog overtook her and tore her into tiny bits. I could see those tiny particles flying in all directions, and yet the girl [still] stood there before me: I wondered at the meaning of it. Then I heard a voice say [this]:

'The bulldog you see is Satan's most vicious tool. It is known as malicious gossip. What you saw him tear into tiny bits and scatter to the far winds, and you thought was the girl, [was] her reputation.'

I shall never forget the pain in my heart as I looked upon this girl stripped of her reputation which had been [as] much a part of her as her very body, and saw the look of helplessness and anguish in her face. Yet...relief and joy...came to me to know that she was...innocent of the things she had been so harshly accused of."

Having learned the truth, Sister Farrimond helped the girl safely through her afflictions.

Now please note this. After successfully resisting a terrible temptation, and feeling really good about herself, this young woman stood by in helpless anguish as her friends -- many of them Church 'friends' and

perhaps even Church leaders -- destroyed her reputation through malicious gossip. Those 'friends' had no idea that they were unwitting agents of Satan. In the dream Satan sent a dog to tear her apart; in real life he sent members of the Church to destroy her! Imagine! In his anger Satan used Church members to punish a girl for making a righteous choice!

Did these good-hearted Church-goers deliberately mean to destroy her? No. When they shunned her and told stories behind her back were they intentionally trying to 'tear her apart'? Of course not; but they reasoned that when good people do bad things the right thing to do is to expose them -- and then shun them ("That'll teach 'em to be good!".) And all the while, Satan laughs with glee!