

Reading Thoughts

Great guilt rests upon you and also upon your parents, who have flattered your pride and folly. They have sympathized with you when reproved, and have given you to understand that they thought it uncalled for. You, Sister O, have thought yourself handsome. Your parents have flattered you. You have sought acquaintance with unbelievers. Aside from your profession, your actions have been unbecoming a prudent, modest girl. But when it is taken into the account that you profess to be a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, you have disgraced your profession. O my sister, did you think those clerks could not see through the gloss you threw about you? Did you think they were so captivated with your pretty face that they could not see beneath the surface and read your true, superficial character? When you placed upon your head the adorning borrowed from Sister R's store, and then displayed yourself as if on exhibition before those clerks, did you think this was not discerned? **Did you forget that angels of God were in attendance, and that their pure eyes were reading your thoughts, the intents and purposes of the heart, and taking cognizance of every act, and delineating your true, frivolous character?** While you were engrossed with your small talk to the clerk with whom you were fascinated, because he flattered your vanity, could you have stood before the looking glass you would have seen the gestures, the whisperings, among those who were observing you, and laughing because you were making such a foolish show. You were bringing a stain upon the cause of truth. Could you have entered that store unobserved a short time after you stepped out, and have heard the conversation after you had lingered as long as decency would permit, you would have learned some things you never thought of before. You would have been wounded and humbled to learn how you were viewed by even frivolous clerks. The very one who flattered you to your face joined in the laugh and sport of his companions upon your vain course. 2T 180.2

There are many who are really troubled because low, debasing thoughts come into the mind, and are not easily banished. **Satan has his evil angels around us; and though they cannot read men's thoughts, they closely watch their words and actions.** Satan takes advantage of the weaknesses and defects of character that are thus revealed, and presses his temptations where there is the least power of resistance. He makes evil suggestions, and inspires worldly thoughts, knowing that he can thus bring the soul into condemnation and bondage. To those who are selfish, worldly, avaricious, proud, fault-finding, or given to detraction,—to all who are cherishing errors and defects of character,—Satan presents the indulgence of self, and leads the soul off upon a track that the Bible condemns, but which he makes appear attractive. RH April 8, 1884, par. 2

The adversary of souls is not permitted to read the thoughts of men; but he is a keen observer, and he marks the words; he takes account of actions, and skillfully adapts his temptations to meet the cases of those who place themselves in his power. If we would labor to repress sinful thoughts and feelings, giving them no expression in words or actions, Satan

would be defeated; for he could not prepare his specious temptations to meet the case. But how often do professed Christians, by their lack of self-control, open the door to the adversary of souls! Divisions, and even bitter dissensions which would disgrace any worldly community, are common in the churches, because there is so little effort to control wrong feelings, and to repress every word that Satan can take advantage of. As soon as an alienation of feeling arises, the matter is spread before Satan for his inspection, and the opportunity given for him to use his serpent-like wisdom and skill in dividing and destroying the church. There is great loss in every dissension. Personal friends of both parties take sides with their respective favorites, and thus the breach is widened. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Criminations and recriminations are engendered and multiplied. Satan and his angels are actively at work to secure a harvest from seed thus sown. Worldlings look on, and jeeringly exclaim, "Behold how these Christians hate one another. If this is religion, we do not want it." And they look upon themselves and their irreligious characters with great satisfaction. Thus they are confirmed in their impenitence, and Satan exults at his success. ST May 17, 1883, par. 20

Then, children, ask God to do for you those things that you cannot do for yourselves. Tell Jesus everything. Lay open before Him the secrets of your heart; for **His eye searches the inmost recesses of the soul, and He reads your thoughts as an open book.** When you have asked for the things that are necessary for your soul's good, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.⁶The Youth's Instructor, July 7, 1892. AH 299.5

Now, children, if you would not wish to be like this unhappy man, you must learn to govern yourselves while young. Don't give way to fretful, unkind feelings; but **remember that the Lord reads even the thoughts of the heart, and nothing is concealed from his all-seeing eye.** Right acts, right thoughts, will be remembered in heaven, and every victory you gain when tempted to do wrong, every temptation manfully resisted, will be recorded in heaven. Don't forget, dear children, that evil deeds are faithfully recorded, and will bring their punishment unless repented of, and confessed, and washed away by the atoning blood of Jesus. It is easier to go in an evil way than to do right; for Satan and his angels are constantly tempting to do wrong. AY 58.1

Teach Children to Enter Reverently—Parents, elevate the standard of Christianity in the minds of your children; help them to weave Jesus into their experience; teach them to have the highest reverence for the house of God and to understand that when they enter the Lord's house, it should be with hearts that are softened and subdued by such thoughts as these: "God is here; this is His house. I must have pure thoughts and the holiest motives. I must have no pride, envy, jealousy, evil surmising, hatred, or deception in my heart; for I am coming into the presence of the holy God. This is the place where God meets with and blesses His people. **The high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity looks upon me, searches my heart, and reads the most secret thoughts and acts of my life.**"¹⁵Testimonies For The Church 5:494. CG 541.3

In the multitude that listened to Christ's teaching there were many Pharisees. These noted contemptuously how few of His hearers acknowledged Him as the Messiah. And they questioned with themselves how this unpretending teacher could exalt Israel to universal dominion. Without

riches, power, or honor, how was He to establish the new kingdom? **Christ read their thoughts and answered** them: COL 76.1

Reading Simon's thoughts, Christ answered them before he had spoken, thus showing that He was a prophet of prophets. "Simon," He said, "I have somewhat to say unto thee.... There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou has rightly judged." DG 238.1

With searching glance, Christ takes in the scene before Him as He stands upon the steps of the temple court. With prophetic eye He looks into futurity, and sees not only years, but centuries and ages. He sees how priests and rulers will turn the needy from their right, and forbid that the gospel shall be preached to the poor. He sees how the love of God will be concealed from sinners, and men will make merchandise of His grace. As He beholds the scene, indignation, authority, and power are expressed in His countenance. The attention of the people is attracted to Him. The eyes of those engaged in their unholy traffic are riveted upon His face. They cannot withdraw their gaze. **They feel that this Man reads their inmost thoughts, and discovers their hidden motives.** Some attempt to conceal their faces, as if their evil deeds were written upon their countenances, to be scanned by those searching eyes. DA 157.4

Like a flash of light, the Saviour's words to the nobleman laid bare his heart. He saw that his motives in seeking Jesus were selfish. His vacillating faith appeared to him in its true character. In deep distress he realized that his doubt might cost the life of his son. **He knew that he was in the presence of One who could read the thoughts, and to whom all things were possible.** In an agony of supplication he cried, "Sir, come down ere my child die." His faith took hold upon Christ as did Jacob, when, wrestling with the Angel, he cried, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Genesis 32:26. DA 198.4

The Pharisees prided themselves on their obedience to the law; yet they knew so little of its principles through everyday practice that to them the Saviour's words sounded like heresy. As He swept away the rubbish under which the truth had been buried, they thought He was sweeping away the truth itself. They whispered to one another that He was making light of the law. **He read their thoughts, and answered** them, saying,— DA 307.3

On the journey through Galilee, Christ had again tried to prepare the minds of His disciples for the scenes before Him. He told them that He was to go up to Jerusalem to be put to death and to rise again. And He added the strange and solemn announcement that He was to be betrayed into the hands of His enemies. The disciples did not even now comprehend His words. Although the shadow of a great sorrow fell upon them, a spirit of rivalry found a place in their hearts. They disputed among themselves which should be accounted greatest in the kingdom. This strife they thought to conceal from Jesus, and they did not, as usual, press close to His side, but loitered behind, so that He was in advance of them as they entered Capernaum. **Jesus read their**

thoughts, and He longed to counsel and instruct them. But for this He awaited a quiet hour, when their hearts should be open to receive His words. DA 432.2

For a moment the divinity of Christ flashed through His guise of humanity. The high priest quailed before the penetrating eyes of the Saviour. **That look seemed to read his hidden thoughts,** and burn into his heart. Never in afterlife did he forget that searching glance of the persecuted Son of God. DA 707.2

This knowledge is the secret spring from which flows all power. It is through the exercise of the faculty of faith that we are enabled to receive and practice the word of God. No excuse can be accepted, no plea of justification received for the failure to know and understand the will of the Lord. The Lord will enlighten the heart that is loyal to Him. **He can read the thoughts and intents of the heart.** It is useless to plead that if it had been so and so, we would have done so and so. There is no if about God's requirements; His word is yea and amen. There can be no question in the heart of faith as to the power of God to perform His promises. Pure faith works by love, and purifies the soul. FE 341.2

We have had great light and privileges at these meetings, and now let us retain the impressions that have been made upon our hearts. When we feel the least inclined to commune with Jesus, let us pray the most. By so doing we shall break Satan's snare, the clouds of darkness will disappear, and we shall realize the sweet presence of Jesus. Let us here resolve that we will not sin against God with our lips, that we will never speak in a light and trifling manner, that we will never murmur or complain at the providence of God, and that we will not become accusers of our brethren. We cannot always hinder the thoughts that come as temptations; but we can resist the enemy so that we shall not utter them. **The adversary of souls is not permitted to read the thoughts of men; but he is a keen observer, and he marks the words and actions, and skillfully adapts his temptations accordingly.** If all would labor to repress sinful thoughts and feelings, giving them no expression in words or acts, Satan would be defeated; for he would not know how to prepare his specious temptations to meet their cases. HS 146.2

But prayer is not understood as it should be. Our prayers are not to inform God of something He does not know. The Lord is acquainted with the secrets of every soul. Our prayers need not be long and loud. **God reads the hidden thoughts. We may pray in secret, and He who sees in secret will hear, and will reward us openly.** MYP 247.2

Satan cannot read our thoughts, but he can see our actions, hear our words; and from his long knowledge of the human family, he can shape his temptations to take advantage of our weak points of character. And how often do we let him into the secret of how he may obtain the victory over us. Oh, that we might control our words and actions! How strong we would become if our words were of such an order that we would not be ashamed to meet the record of them in the day of judgment. How different will they appear in the day of God from what they seem when we utter them.—The Review and Herald, February 27, 1913. MYP 328.1

These words are being fulfilled today. Read and understand the revealed truth of God. **A heavenly Watcher marks our words and deportment, and reads the motives that prompt us to action.** We have no time now to be idle and indifferent. We must strive to develop a Christian character. Our spiritual understanding must be cleansed, purified, sanctified, and ennobled. All are now taking sides. It is ours now to choose a blessing or a curse. Now is the time for us to purify our minds by obeying the truth. RH September 19, 1899, Art. A, par. 10