We Shall Not Lie, or Bear False Witness

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Exodus 20:16.

The ninth commandment requires of us an inviolable regard for exact truth in every declaration by which the character of our fellow men may be affected. The tongue, which is kept so little under the control of the human agent, is to be bridled by strong conscientious principles, by the law of love toward God and man.

False-speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression
of the countenance, as falsehood may be told as effectually as by words. All intentional overstatement, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor’s reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale-bearing. Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment.

He [Jesus] teaches that the exact truth should be the law of speech. “Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay.” ... These words condemn all those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. They condemn the deceptive compliments, the evasion of truth, the flattering phrases, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world. They teach that no one who tries to appear what he is not, or whose words do not convey the real sentiment of his heart, can be called truthful....

Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan.... We can not speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth.

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