

THE TEACHING
LEGACY
 OF DEREK PRINCE

Words!

“It’s only words!” . . . “What is there in words?”

How often we hear people use such expressions as these! And how false they are! The truth is, rather, that it is scarcely possible to estimate the power and significance of words. The faculty of language—that is, the power of expression in words, whether spoken or written—is one of the supreme gifts of God the Creator to man the creature whom He formed in His own image and likeness. It is one most important aspect of the likeness between God and man, which is not shared by any creatures of a lower order.

Today, after unremitting efforts to prove the theory of evolution, this faculty of language possessed by man remains one clear and unchallengeable mark of division between him and the animals which evolutionists have never been able to remove or to explain. So long as this barrier stands, the theory of evolution can never provide a satisfactory account of the origin of man.

Language Sets Man Apart

Indissolubly linked with this faculty of language is the faculty of thought and reasoning. If you wish to satisfy yourself of this, analyze the processes of thought that go on in your mind for a short period. You will find that at least eighty percent of your thinking is done in words. In fact, the more refined and subtle a man’s power of reasoning becomes, the more dependent he becomes upon language as the

material of reasoning. The simplest forms of physical sensations and desires—just those things that man shares in common with the animals—can partly be expressed by thought in forms other than language. But as we rise above this level, we find that we have no other means of expression but language. This becomes even plainer if we include under the term *language* the symbolic systems of logic, mathematics and music, which are in reality only specialized forms of the same general faculty.

These conclusions about the importance of language, drawn merely from common human experience, are fully confirmed when we consider what God Himself teaches on this subject. The two supreme revelations of Himself that God has given to man are the Bible and Jesus Christ. Upon both of these, divine authority has conferred the title, “the Word of God.” Could anything give to words, as such, a higher importance than this?



Words Are Things

The two actual human languages in which God's written revelation, the Bible, was first given to man, are Hebrew (and its sister, Aramaic) in the Old Testament and Greek in the New. There is one particularly significant fact that is common to both of these languages. In each of them there is one word—in Hebrew *dabar* and in Greek *rhema*—that can equally accurately be translated either “word” or “thing.” Only the context can show in each instance which translation is to be preferred, and sometimes it is necessary to translate in both ways to give the full meaning of the original.

For instance, the utterance of Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:37 can equally well be translated: “*With God nothing will be impossible,*” or “*With God no word will be void of power.*” We might perhaps express this by saying, “Every word of God contains in it the power for its own fulfillment.”

This peculiarity of Hebrew and Greek, the two languages chosen for divine revelation, is no accident. It illustrates a fundamental principle of the divine nature. With God, *words* are *things*. There is no real distinction between the two. “*God said, ‘Let there be light; and there was light’*” (Genesis 1:3). When God spoke the word, “*light,*” the thing, light, came into being. “*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God*” (Hebrews 11:3). In sober fact, words were the only means that God used to create the whole universe.

Words are the material out of which the whole universe is constructed. It is not too much to say, therefore, that in committing to man the faculty of speech, God committed to man His own divine, creative power. No wonder that it remains the supreme distinguishing mark between man and the animals.

Words from the Heart

The Lord Jesus gave us a further insight into the importance of words when He said: “*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*” (Matthew 12:34). That is to say, the first and fullest revelation of the contents of a man's heart is given in his words.

The heart is the origin and wellspring of a man's whole life (see Proverbs 4:23); but words are the divinely ordained channel through which that life shall flow and find expression.

While a man sits silent in my presence, I cannot sense what is in his heart. But when he speaks, he conveys to my senses in words what is in his heart. Words thus break down the barrier between one human heart and another.

It is for this reason that Jesus Himself is called “*the Word of God.*” By our senses we cannot know God, we cannot search or understand the heart and mind of God. Creation—that is, God's “words” having become “things”—gives us a certain witness of God's eternal power and Godhead (see Romans 1:20), but it does not fully reveal the heart of God.

On the other hand, Jesus, manifested to our senses in human flesh, gives us the full and perfect

revelation of the heart of God. Just as a man's words convey to our senses the invisible thoughts of his heart, so Jesus conveys to our senses the nature of the invisible God. He is, in the deepest sense, the “Word of God”—the perfect expression to our senses of the heart and mind of God, which we could never fully know in any other way. Jesus, the living Word, breaks down the barrier between the heart of God and the heart of man.

Words' Divine Origin

The faculty of speech, then, is of divine origin. It is something wonderful and sacred. It is not to be belittled or misused. Jesus Himself repeatedly warned us against this. “*By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned*” (Matthew 12:37). “*Every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment*” (Matthew 12:36). “*Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one*” (Matthew 5:37).

Our words should be sober, accurate, pure, without exaggeration—sacred instruments used for sacred purposes. Idle words—words used in any other way or for any other purposes—are sins, to be confessed and put away before God can restore His blessing.

It is written of Christ, “*Grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever*” (Psalm 45:2). Of the bride of Christ, the Scripture records:

“Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, and your mouth [or speech] is lovely. . . . Your lips, O my spouse,

drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue.”
(Song 4:3, 11)

To the church Paul commands: “*Let your speech always be with grace*” (Colossians 4:6).

Not only does God desire, through faith, to restore to our words grace and purity. He seeks to restore also that authority and dominion that man held before the fall but lost through sin. In Job 22:28 it is promised to the sinner who will meet God’s conditions of repentance and faith: “*You will also declare a thing, and it will be established for you.*” That is, the decree of a redeemed sinner shall have the same authority as the decree of the Almighty God.

Of Samuel it is written, “*The LORD . . . let none of his words fall to the ground*” (1 Samuel 3:19). That is, the words uttered by Samuel so represented the mind and will of God that they were as sure and effectual as if God had uttered them Himself.

Joshua spoke to the sun and moon, and by his spoken words he arrested their course in the heavens for twenty-four hours. (See Joshua 10:12–14.)

Elijah said to Ahab: “*As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word*” (1 Kings 17:1). It is the sole prerogative of the one true God to control the fall of rain (see Jeremiah 14:22). Yet Elijah declared that the fall both of rain and of dew for a certain period—three and a half years, the New Testament reveals in James 5:17—would be under the control of his word. By his word he could withhold them, and by his word he could liberate

them. Sure enough, for three and a half years no rain or dew fell. Then, by his word—spoken to God in prayer—he liberated them. Thus, in the Old Testament, men controlled, by their words, such manifestations of God’s creative power as the course of the heavenly bodies, and the fall of rain and dew.

In the New Testament, Jesus simply spoke to a fig tree, and it withered from the roots. When His disciples marveled at this, Jesus expressly delegated to them similar, and even greater, authority:

“You will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” (Matthew 21:21–22)

This double promise includes both words spoken to God in prayer and words spoken for God in any other way. Thus, it is the express will and purpose of Jesus to invest the words of His believing disciples with the same effective and creative power and authority that God’s own words possess.

If only we Christians would cease to despise and misuse these sacred instruments. If only we would put away from us all idle and unsanctified speech—foolish talk, jesting, gossip, backbiting, talebearing and exaggeration. We would soon be astonished at the power with which our words would be invested.

Words As Propaganda

If the saints are often blind or indifferent to the significance of

words, Satan at least is not. It was with words that he procured the downfall of our first parents, and since then he has never ceased seeking to usurp the divine authority vested in words and to use these sacred instruments of God against God and against God’s people and God’s purposes in the earth. In Revelation 16:13 we read of “*three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*” The significant feature of the frog in Israel and adjoining countries is that it remains silent in the daytime, but keeps up a ceaseless, repetitive croaking during the hours of darkness. These frogs, therefore, typify as vividly as any image could that peculiar, distinctive feature of modern political methods for which we have coined the word *propaganda*. It describes the ceaseless reiteration of those statements and theories that its authors desire to be believed, to the exclusion of all others.

It is this instrument of words, called *propaganda*, which “the rulers of the darkness of this world” have used to establish every one of the successive anti-Christian dictatorships that have marked the last hundred years of world history. Armaments, military power, secret police, all these have been subordinate to that one great verbal instrument—*propaganda*.

Although the forces behind such *propaganda* are spiritual, being expressly called “*unclean spirits,*” it is—as always—through the lips of men that they must work. Therefore in Psalm 12:4 we read about men, “*who have said, ‘With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?’*” Such men do not

know that Satan is lord over them, controlling their lips for his own purposes. Again, in Psalm 73:8–9:

“They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth.”

No modern writer has ever given in so few words so vivid and accurate a picture of present-day political aims and methods. In truth, the age-long conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, both in the heavenlies and on earth, is coming to its climax in our generation; and the supreme instrument by which the issue is being decided is—words!

Nevertheless, it is not God’s will that His people should be ineffectual, or defeated. *“Do you not know,”* says Paul, *“that the saints will judge the world?”* (1 Corinthians 6:2). Again:

“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments [or imaginations] and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

(2 Corinthians 10:4–5)

It will be seen that the warfare is not in the material or carnal realm, but in the realm of the thoughts and the imagination. And the supremely effective weapons which God has committed to us are—words!

Direct Your Words

There are still the two main directions in which we may turn our words: **towards God** on man’s

behalf, in prayer; or **towards man** on God’s behalf, in proclamation.

The God-ward use of words in prayer is perhaps the greatest task ever committed to man. So often in the past this mighty task has been left to a despised minority. One great purpose of the present outpouring of the Holy Spirit on every section of the church is to bring forth an army of intercessors, willing and able to press the prayer battle to the gates of Satan’s kingdom and to prove that those gates cannot prevail against the Spirit-empowered, Spirit-directed words of a praying church.

For the use of words man-ward in proclamation, the modern media of mass communication—television, radio, print and the World Wide Web—have put at our disposal both means and opportunities that were never granted to any previous generation of Christians. In many cases hitherto, the representatives of Satan have shown greater vision and faith in availing themselves of these media than the children of God. Yet the Bible tells us: *“All things are for your sakes”* (2 Corinthians 4:15).

It is time for Christians to repent of their lack of vision and faith, and then to wrest these media of mass communication from Satan’s grasp, and to use them for the proclamation and extension of God’s kingdom. Thus we shall fulfill the Scripture: *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony”* (Revelation 12:11).

Finally, remember that in this conflict there can be no neutrality. Jesus said: *“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad”* (Matthew 12:30). Neither God nor Satan will accept

compromise. Either we overcome, or we are overcome. Between these two there is no third course.

At the time of the reformation, Luther said: “It is more important to preach the gospel than to live.” At a later crisis in European history, the English orator, Edmund Burke, said: “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” Both these statements apply with no less force today. Individually, and as a body, we Christians confront the supreme crisis of human history. On whose side are you and your words? Are you gathering with Christ? Or are you scattering?

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