

The Power of Words

by Bill Crews

Said Napoleon I, the “conqueror,” “There are only two powers in the world, the sword and the pen; and in the end the former is always conquered by the latter.” Or, as another put it, “The pen is mightier than the sword.” However, it is not the pen itself, but what the pen is employed to write, that is, words, that have such power. Words are “signs of ideas,” “vehicles of thought,” capable of so much good, or of so much evil. George Mogridge, a 19th century English author, wrote: “Bad words are as influential as the plague and the pestilence. They have wrought more evil than battle, murder, and sudden death. They creep through the ear into the heart, call up all its bad passions, and tempt it to break God’s commands. A few bad words got into the ear of the mother of mankind, and they led her to eat the forbidden fruit, and thus to bring death (and sin - bc) into the world.”

Bad words have power. The Bible warns against “every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4: 14), “the error of the wicked” (2 Pet.3:17), the lies of hypocritical men (1 Tim.4:1-3), “perverse things” spoken by men who would arise among the elders (Acts 20:29-30), “false teachers who shall privily bring in destructive heresies” (2 Pet. 2:1-2), any perversion of the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-9), believing every one who professes to be a prophet of God having the Spirit of God (1 John 4:1), lying power, signs and wonders, and unrighteous deceit, and workings of error (or strong delusions) (2 Thess. 2:9-12), “smooth and fair speech” designed to “beguile the hearts of the innocent” (Rom. 16:18). These warnings are still in the Bible, and the deceptive teachings they admonish against are very much alive in the world today.

On the other hand, good words also have power, and the best of all good words and the most powerful are those contained in the gospel of Christ. Jesus said, “It is the spirit that (NKJV -Spirit who) giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life” (John 6:63). When He said to the apostles, “Would you also go away?” Peter responded, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:67, 68). Jesus declared, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). John wrote words which are capable of leading men to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that through that faith they may have eternal life (John 20:30-31). God draws the lost unto Christ by words; those who are taught of God and who hear and learn are those who come unto Christ (John 6:44-45). Jesus commanded the apostles to preach the gospel unto every creature in all the world (Mark 16:15-16), to teach all the nations (Matt. 28:19), to be His witnesses from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). Cornelius and his house were to hear words whereby they could be saved (Acts 11:13-14). The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to those who will believe it (Rom. 1:16-17). The sword of the Spirit is the word of God (Eph. 6: 17). The words of the Scriptures are able to make the man of God complete, to furnish him unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The word of God’s grace is able to build up the believer and to give him an eternal inheritance (Acts 20:32). In that same “sermon” Paul referred to the gospel as “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:28).

God’s plan has not changed. He still communicates with, appeals to, calls, reasons with, convicts, convinces, converts, saves man by means of those same words. The preaching done in our pulpit, the teaching done in our classes, the articles run in this paper are all expressly designed to appeal to, to reason with, and to affect and motivate our listeners and readers to become Christians or to become stronger Christians. We would not think of concealing this purpose or of knowingly employing anything other than the gospel of Christ. Of course we cannot compel people to attend our services and to listen, nor can we compel anyone to receive this paper and to read its contents, but what marvelous potential is there when the words of truth are taught. Will you weigh all that we teach by the perfect scales of God’s word for men to day -- the New Testament of Jesus Christ?

254602