

BY THY WORDS

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Everyone will be familiar with the adage, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Yet, they will also be familiar with the adage, “The pen is mightier than the sword.” (Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s play, *Richelieu, or, The Conspiracy*, Act II, Scene II) The truth is that words are powerful. They can harm, and they can heal. They can even reveal what is in a man’s heart.

Noah Webster defined *heart* as *the seat of the affections and passions, as of love, joy, grief, enmity, courage, pleasure etc.* and also as the seat of the will; hence, secret purposes, intentions or designs. God knows what is in every man’s heart, and He is not deceived by appearances. When Samuel the prophet considered replacing King Saul with Eliab, God said to him, “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7) Before King David died, he told his son Solomon, “Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.” (1 Chronicles 28:9)

God knows the hearts of men, yet He judges them by the things that they say and do, because those things make manifest the heart. Through Jeremiah the prophet, God said to His people, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” (Jeremiah 17:9, 10)

When the Son of God came into the world, He performed many miracles, and those miracles served as signs that he is indeed the Son of God. Even so, the religious leaders did not believe in Him. When He cast demons out of people, the Pharisees said, “This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” (Matthew 12:24) Jesus answered that He cast out demons by the Spirit of God, and He warned the Pharisees about blaspheming the Holy Spirit by rejecting the Spirit’s clear witness to Him. (Matthew 12:25-32) He said that anyone not taking His side is against Him. He then said:

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (Matthew 12:33-37)

In this analogy, if a man has a good heart, then he will do good. If he has an evil heart, then he will do evil. If Satan is evil, then he will not do good by releasing his prisoners; he will rather do evil by keeping them in bondage. If Jesus did a good work by casting out demons and so diminishing Satan’s kingdom, then Jesus Himself is good. The Pharisees spoke against Jesus, the Son of God, and against the Holy Spirit who bore witness to Jesus; therefore, they opposed God, and so they ought to have given up their pretense to serve God. They spoke against Jesus and against the Holy Spirit, and this made manifest the evil that was in their hearts.

There is a future day of judgment, a day of reckoning, and all men will be held accountable for the things they have done. They will also be held accountable for the things they have said, especially what they have said concerning Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the Son of God, the world's one true king, and the Father has given Final Judgment to Him. (John 5:22) He will come again into the world, and, when He does, He will judge the world. He said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28, 29) In the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John the apostle, Jesus said to the church in Thyatira, "All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (Revelation 2:23)

Christians today do not await Christ's First Advent, but they do await His Second, and they ought to do so remembering that He will judge men according to what they have done and what they have said. Saint Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Ephesians 5:3-5)

Let us long for the return of the Lord Jesus. As we wait for Him, let us live in such a way that we need not be ashamed at His Coming. Let us be righteous, not only in what we do, but in what we say.

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.