Educating the Tongue

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Ephesians 4:29.

The apostle, seeing the inclination to abuse the gift of speech, gives direction concerning its use. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,” he says, “but that which is good to the use of edifying.” The word “corrupt” means here any word that would make an impression detrimental to holy principles and undefiled religion, any communication that would eclipse the view of Christ, and blot from the mind true sympathy and love. It includes impure hints, which, unless instantly resisted, lead to great sin. Upon everyone is laid the duty of barring the way against corrupt communications.

It is God’s purpose that the glory of Christ shall appear in His children. In all His teaching Christ presented pure, unadulterated principles. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Constantly there flowed from His lips holy, ennobling truths. He spoke as never man spoke, with a pathos that touched the heart. The truth never languished on His lips. With fearlessness He exposed the hypocrisy of priest and ruler, Pharisee and Sadducee.

The great responsibility bound up in the use of the gift of speech is plainly made known in the Word of God. “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:37), Christ declared. And the psalmist asks, “Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour” (Psalm 15:1-3).

Cultivate a prayerful frame of mind and educate the tongue to speak right words, that will bless in the place of discouraging. Talk of the goodness, the mercy, and the love of God. Put
away all unbelieving words and all that is cheap and common. Let the words be sound words, that cannot be condemned, and the peace of God will surely come to the soul.

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