



THE CHRISTIAN IS SURROUNDED BY MANY VOICES. There is the thin, vaporous voice of popular entertainment, and the faux-authoritative yet highly suspicious voice of the news media. There is the slippery, cynical voice of politics and the winsome voice of advertising. There is the trustworthy voice of a friend, and the suspect voice of a foe.

Whether they be audible or visible, we are daily bombarded with myriad voices that, each in their own way, work to lead us down a path of their choosing.

We cannot escape the voices. It is a loud and clamorous chorus, with each part imagining that it sings the lead. Short of retiring to a stone cave devoid of electricity or delivery of mail or newspaper, we will not escape the persistent cacophony so long as our feet tread the shifting crust of this earth.

Since we cannot turn them all off, what are we to do? We are only human, after all, and inevitably, sadly, we will bend to one or more of the sweeter melodies (and the sweetest are invariably the most suspect).

We may not be able to silence the voices, but we can *filter* them. We can train our ear for the only one, trustworthy voice—the voice that always tells the truth, and always leads us in the best direction.

“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

*John 10:3-5*

It is necessary that they should be taught to follow, and not stray away into the unfenced fields of wheat which lie so temptingly on either side. The shepherd calls from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice and follow on; but if a stranger call, they stop, lift up their heads

in alarm, and if the call is repeated, they turn and flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. I have made the experiment often.

*Thomson*

Oh, that we would run in alarm from the voice of the stranger, the one who wishes us no good. Even the Christian may listen to the wrong voices; even the believer may give passing allegiance to the wrong authorities which will—either immediately or eventually—undermine his ability to stand.

There is only one voice that instills in us the strength of character and profitable dependency to ensure that when the storm blast hits, we will still be standing. There is only one voice that strengthens with love, builds up with reproof, and encourages with mercy.

There is only one voice of matchless grace, one voice that will always—*always*—lead us in the right direction. In this voice there is no cynicism, no sarcasm, no treachery or deceit. It will not beguile with syrupy sentiment, nor will it storm with feigned rage.

It is the voice of hope, of surety, of light.

Above all it is the voice of truth and life.

“All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

*John 10:8-11*

That voice—that *life*—belongs to Christ Jesus the Lord.

