

THE CALLS OF OUR LIFE

THE DIVINE VOICE IS CONSTANTLY SPEAKING TO MANKIND.

HOW WE MAY RECOGNIZE IT

God Generally Calls To the Higher Spiritual Life In the "Silent Places," and It Will Be Well For Us to Answer, as Did Samuel, "Speak, Lord, For Thy Servant Heareth."

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1902, by Frederick Dixey, of Toronto, at the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Los Angeles, Cal., Oct. 8.—In this sermon the preacher shows how the divine voice is constantly speaking to man and how we may recognize and obey it. The text is I Samuel iii, 9, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

How the mighty men and women of the world found their callings in life would make very interesting reading. Sometimes a genius, like Mozart, is born. From his cradle his parents knew what vocation this child would pursue. At three years of age, with his little chubby fingers, he could make the piano speak with the touch of a master. At five years he appeared in public at the University of Salzburg. At six, with his little sister Marianne, he was travelling about Europe on a concert tour, the pet of kings and queens and the wonder and astonishment of the musical world. But, though Wolfgang Mozart was born to music, most of our great men and women live years and years before they recognize their right sphere in life. Some of them try four or five different lines of work before they place their feet upon the lowest steps to mount their thrones of power. Some, like the Trojan war, had to be bound hand and foot to the masts of duty, else they would have leaped overboard and followed the false wooing of the siren's song.

George Washington did not wish to be a soldier, but a sailor. A British man-of-war came to Chesapeake Bay when he was a young man. He wanted to enlist. A midshipman's commission was obtained for him by his elder brother Lawrence. His trunk was already packed and placed on board ship. But his widowed mother could not bear to let her "baby" leave her side. For her sake he turned his back upon the quarter deck of a British warship and thereby paved his way for the wonderful career which has made his name the most famous in American history. Oliver Cromwell wanted to emigrate to America. He and his family were down at the docks with their tickets in their pockets and had their berths engaged when a royal command forbade him leaving the king's country. Frederick W. Robertson came from a long ancestral line of British officers. He wanted to be a soldier. Indeed, for a time he did wear the soldier's uniform, but practical life firmly made him forego camp life. He entered Edinburgh University. When he became pastor of Trinity Chapel at Brighton he found his right position, which mightily influenced his own generation and will also influence the English-speaking race for all time. Thus many of our most famous men and women have been compelled to grope and struggle along, sometimes for years, for their right vocations in life, just the same as you and I have done in the past or may be now doing in the present. Where there is one Mozart who was born a child famous camp life, a thousand Frederick W. Robertsons whose intellect and material life have developed gradually. First came the seed, then the sprout, then the blossom and then the luscious fruit.

The first calls of the temporal life, as a rule, fall upon unheeding ears. The first calls of the spiritual life in the same way usually fall upon unheeding ears. When God first called to Samuel in the midnight hour, "Samuel, Samuel!" the lad leaped up and ran to the old priest, Eli, supposing that it was he who called him, and said, "Here am I." Then Eli answered: "My son, I have not called thee. Go back to bed." Again Samuel heard the voice, and again he mistook it for a human voice, "Samuel, Samuel!" "What is it, Eli?" asked the boy. "Here I am. I am always ready to wait upon thee." Again the old man answered, "My son, I have not called thee." Then a third time God called, and old Eli said to Samuel: "My son, it is not calling thee, but God. When God calls to thee again do not run to me, but answer, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'" Thus young Samuel was

taught to listen to the voice of the Lord in the midnight hour. Thus I would beg you to heed God's voice when he speaks to you in the "silent places" of life. God generally calls us to our higher spiritual life in the "silent places," as he called Samuel to become the prophet of Israel in the stillness of the midnight darkness.

Where are these "silent places" in which you and I can hear the voice of the Lord? In the first place, I would state that God calls us in the hours of darkness. He calls to us as he called Samuel after the first sleep of the night is over, and we suddenly awake and feel that some one is very near to us and speaking. We cannot see him, but we feel him and hear him. We feel his presence and hear him just the same as we used to recognize our mother's hand and her kiss and her "Good night, my boy," when we were children and she would come and take a last look at us to see that we were all right before going to bed.

Perhaps the reason why God is able to speak to us so clearly in the early hours of the morning can be explained upon natural grounds. Have you never noticed the fact that most of our friends die about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning? As Solomon beautifully symbolizes it, when was the silver cord loosed or the golden bowl broken or the pitcher broken at the fountain or the wheel broken at the cistern when your dear ones were translated? Your brother, how did he go? Your mother said to the nurse, "Now, nurse, I think John is better to-night, but if you need me just give a rap upon the floor and I will come up." It seemed that you were asleep only a little while when a commotion in the house made you leap out of bed. You rushed to your brother's room. You saw the breathing becoming heavier and heavier. At last the doctor said, "He is gone." You looked at the clock, and you heard it striking, "One, two, three." When did your mother die? At noon? In the evening? In the morning? The flush of the setting sun was slowly fading away and its ball of fire was sinking behind the western hills? Oh no. You had been awake all night worrying about her. The last relapse came about 2 o'clock in the morning. Her life went out with the crowing of the cock and with the first glimpse of the dawn. The reason why most people die in the early hours of the morning is because the sun has long been very far away from us. At that time there is less vitality in the air. Then our physical hold on earthly life is weakest. So my friends, as earth grips us less about 2 o'clock in the morning let the Holy Spirit grip us closer to Christ. Let these few minutes in the early morning be to us sacred moments for communion with God. When we awaken don't rebuke the Holy Spirit and break the divine spell. Let us then hear old Eli saying: "The Lord will with whom will thou listen, child; listen, listen to the voice of the Lord."

But the voice of the Lord is heard in the daylight as well as in the darkness, when we are standing upon our feet as we are when we are tramping over the hillsides, or sitting by the seashore, or watching the mad rush of the whirlpool rapids of Niagara Falls, or when we are in the presence of the pyrotechnics of a thunderstorm, or when we watch a bird build her nest, or the wild flower lift up its cheeks to be kissed by the sunbeams in mountain glen, or when we hear the rippling of the brook leaping over the rocks to find a bathing pool in which the feathered songsters can take their morning bath. And of all places where the voice of the Lord can be heard distinctly speaking to us I believe that voice can best be heard in the "silent places" of nature, far away from the habitations of men. A human being cannot hear the voice of the Lord in the woods and on the boundless prairies or from the deck of a steamer or sailing ship cutting the waters of the mighty deep, then I believe it is almost impossible for him to hear the divine voice speaking under cathedral tower or from pulpit in the village kirk. Yet some people make a boast that for them the lips of nature are absolutely dumb. In it they can neither hear the love of man nor the love of God calling them to the better and the nobler and the higher life.

The care and the protection of the divine Father's love always speak to me in the "silent places" of nature. Many years ago the voices of nature sounded for me their divine lessons in one mighty chorus. I stood upon Observatory Point and looked off upon the wonderful Grand canyon of Yellowstone Park. It is one of the most marvellous places of the world. There before you is a valley smooth as the floor of a great cathedral, yet large enough to gather into it one of the nations of the world. From each side of this floor rise two precipitous basaltic

walls over a thousand feet in height, scarred and seamed with battling the elements of the ages, down which at intervals detached rocks thunder, dulling the crash of artillery. Here the "Rock of Ages," of richest blood red tinge, glitters and sparkles in the evening twilight. From yonder cliff a fortress seems to loom, on whose watch-tower keen-eyed eagles have perched their eyes, from which ever and anon one rises and, flying in graceful circles, with sweep of eye reconnoiters the land. Yonder soar up Moran and Bierstadt points, from whose heights those artists painted their famous pictures, varied in every hue and capped with coronets of green foliage. There the river, with serpentine and graceful windings, slowly crawls along to empty her waters into the sea. Then suddenly, like a mad horse, she rears herself and takes the bit into her teeth. With foaming flank and wild roar she dashes and makes one awful leap over the dizzy heights of Yellowstone Falls. There, breaking into millions of pearls, she hides herself behind a curtain of white, at the foot of which glistens a rainbow, a fitting passerelle for the robes of an angel. And so perfect there is the symmetry of the horizon that you cannot tell whether the waters were lost behind curtains of earthly mist or curtains of heavenly cloud.

A scene stupendous, canopied by arch of heaven and lit by light of sun! No one spoke. It seemed as though the angels who had once stood at the feet of paradise had assembled before the sword of fire and out a deep gash into old Mother Earth deep enough to take out her very heart. Then as we stood there my father with his deep voice said, "What a magnificent place in which the nations of the world could be gathered and assembled before the judgment seat of Christ!" "Yes, yes," we all answered. "And what a magnificent place," I said, "for men and women to come and learn about the mercies of the gospel of Jesus Christ! If a sinner would not feel the presence of a living God here he would not feel it anywhere." "Ah," said my father, "that is true." As we listened to the voice of God calling out of the silence of Yellowstone Park, so you may hear the divine voice whenever you go forth to the country hills. You may hear his voice by the moaning sea, in the voices of the woods and the calm, quiet, overpowering simplicity of the blue sky.

One of the "silent places" in which we can hear the voice of God speaking to us is in the hushed home after the undertaker has come and robbed us of the rather or mother or wife or husband or prattling child. How still it is! The friends who attended the funeral are all gone. Still still every thing is still. There was a time when we used to talk about our nerves. We would say, "The doctors tell me I must be quiet." But God knows it is quiet enough now. Why, the old home is so still that there is not the echo of even the palest of a lamp. It is so still that you can hear your heart thump and pound in anguish under your flesh. O God, how still it is! Still, still, still, still. But, my friends, though the bereft home is so still, if you listen carefully in its silence I think you can hear the voice of God speaking.

But, strange to say, I find the "silent places" where God's voice is heard in the busy noise and bustle and hum of a great city. I find them amid the clanging of the electric cars. I find them in the rumble of the big factories. I find them amid the hilarities of social gatherings as well as in the silence of the death chamber. These awful "silent places" should speak to us to-day in God's name; they should rouse us to the unfulfilled opportunities of Christian work as never before. Let me illustrate my thought by a simple experience of my life which shows how a man can be in the world and yet not of it. Many years ago, when a college student, I had an opportunity to deliver a few lectures during my Thanksgiving vacation in old New England. Mother did not want me to go, but I wished to take a beginning in the practice of public speaking as soon as possible. I left my Brooklyn home with a happy heart, but when Thanksgiving eve drew near I became more and more homesick. Oh, how homesick I was! That evening I was in Boston. I walked up and down the streets without a friend. I stood in the depot and saw the happy fathers, with their big bundles on their arms, heading for home. To-morrow was Thanksgiving. I saw the young married folks, with smile and good cheer, taking the grandchildren back to the old home-stead. I saw old people who were old of others. But, though there was laughter and frolic and family gatherings all around me, I was alone. I was in a "silent place." No one cared for me. No one in all that big city spoke to me except on business. I was a "silent place." As my mind runs back those twenty years I say to myself and to you, "How many of us are spiritually living in 'silent places'?"

Are your neighbors part of you? Do they gratefully watch you? When you go through the woods not one leaf turns toward you unless you make it turn. Why? The leaves know you not. When you go through the streets of a great city you meet men; you meet hundreds of men; you meet thousands of men. Do they spiritually see you? Are you spiritually in the city and yet not part of it? How many of the men you pass in daily life look up at you with a stare and say, "You helped me to Christ." You extended to me a saving hand when I was struggling in the quicksands of a great temptation. "By the noble work of your life you have been a Christian example which has inspired me to lead a Christian life." How many of all the men and women you have known in this city life can speak thus to you? One? Ten? One hundred? A thousand? Are you spiritually to your friends what I was in Boston many years ago? Are you in one of the "silent places?"

Then, my brother, if you have neglected the spiritual opportunities of life for the great material world, how have you dealt with those of your own home? Did you never realize that a husband and wife could live side by side for years and never know each other in the deeper and in the holier sense? Did you never realize that there can be great "silent places" between brothers and sisters, between parents and children, between children and parents? "Silent places" there are in which people's souls do not commune and know each other in holy fellowship. My God, can it be that there are spiritual "silent places" between us

and the lives of our dear ones? Can it be that there is any mother here who has not talked with her children about Christ? Is there any wife here who has not talked to her husband about Christ? Are there any men or women here who have spiritual "silent places" in which God is calling them to go and work in his vineyard? Will you go and labor for him?

Giant Whale Tows a Steamer.

The whaling steamer Orion, which Captain Balcom and his associates are operating in connection with their modern station at Sechart, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, B.C., figured in an exciting adventure last week, the outcome of which was for two hours in doubt, while a monster "sulphur bottom" whale, seventy-nine feet in length, towed the steamer seaward at better than fifteen knot speed.

The whale had been harpooned in the ordinary manner, but was not killed, as usual, the bomb attached to the harpoon failing to explode at the critical instant. As the monster was only wounded and enraged there was nothing else to do but pay out line and play the big fish until it should become exhausted. For two hours the whale traveled seaward, towing the steamer. It kept under water the greater part of the time, coming up at quarter-hour intervals to blow; and so hard did it pull that the blades of the harpoon loosened in its flesh.

The steamer grew steadily less, however, until it finally became very weak. The high speed at which it had traveled and the heavy drag of the tow was intensified by reversing the ship's engines. Finally one of the ship's boats crept up on the whale and four hand lances were buried in its vitals.

A Remarkable Career.

Railway Fireman Morley, of Toronto Junction, who was killed in an accident the other day, had a most remarkable career. Although only 24 years of age, Fireman Morley had a remarkable life. He was a naval cadet on the British training ship Conway, where he won several prizes for general proficiency. At the commencement of the Spanish-American war he crossed the ocean and served on Admiral Howell's flagship San Francisco, where he remained two years until the latter vessel was put out of commission. He went out to South Africa with the first contingent of Mounted Rifles, and a year later he arrived home on his twenty-first birthday. Two years and a half ago he took up railroading. He was a remarkably bright young man, and beloved by all who knew him.

London.

London is a shop and a bank, a gaming hell and a cathedral. Its streets are paved with gold and set with thorns. It is the place for a rich man and the place for a poor man. It is all wealth and happiness; it is all poverty and distress. It is a huge paradox. Many things are possible in London that are also impossible. If it so please you, you may possess the ability to do so, you may live not merely a double life, but half a dozen different lives, which will never clash with one another. You may be in London at the same time a priest and a pirate. It is big enough for both of you.—J. H. M. Abbott in The Spectator.

RESCUED FROM THE DEADLY CLUTCHES

One More Cure of Bright's Disease by Dodd's Kidney Pills.

Mr. Theodore Young, of Smith's Falls, was Beyond the Doctor's Aid—Now He's Well and Strong. Smith's Falls, Ont., Oct. 9.—(Special.) Mr. Theodore Young, a well-known citizen of this place, is one of the many Canadians who have been rescued from the clutches of the much dreaded Bright's Disease, by Dodd's Kidney Pills.

"For two years," says Mr. Young, in relating his experience, "I was afflicted with Bright's Disease. My doctors told me I could get no relief. My urine was very dark and I lost considerable blood, making me so weak I could scarcely stand. I also used many medicines without getting relief."

"Hearing of wonderful cures by Dodd's Kidney Pills I led me to try them, and after using the first box I found great relief. After using four boxes I was able to go to work, which I had been unable to do for some time. I recommend Dodd's Kidney Pills to all who are afflicted as I was."

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