

(3.2) Truth Speaks in Silence

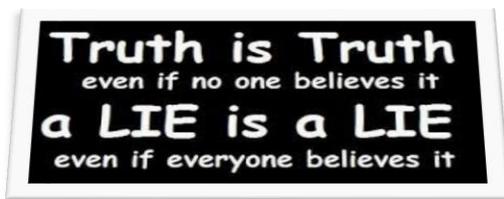
Solomon, chosen by God *asks for a listening heart*¹. He says, I am your servant; *give me discernment that I may know your testimonies*.² *Guide me with Your teaching by listening to your words*.³ *May Your teaching soak in like the rain, and Your utterance drench like the dew, like a downpour upon the grass, like a shower upon the crops*.⁴

The Israelites said to Moses, “*You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we shall die.*”⁵ Not that way for me, O Lord, not that way, do I pray, but rather with the Prophet Samuel I humbly and earnestly plead: “*Speak, for your servant is listening.*”⁶

Let not Moses, nor any of the Prophets speak to me, but You speak rather, O Lord God, the Inspirer and Enlightener of all the Prophets, for You alone, without them, can perfectly instruct me while they without You will avail me nothing. They may indeed speak words, but they give not the spirit. Beautifully do they speak, but if You be silent they move not my heart. They give the letter of the Law, but You disclose its Spirit. They announce mysteries, but You unlock their secret meaning. They declare the commandments, but You empower us to fulfill them. They point out the Way but You give inner strength to walk in it. They work outwardly only, but You instruct and enlighten our inmost selves. They water without but You *bring forth the flow of living water*.⁷ We hear their words, but You impart understanding to the hearing.

So let not Moses speak to me, but do You speak, O Lord, my God, the eternal Truth, in case I die and be fruitless. If I am only reproved outwardly, and not enkindled within, I might be condemned at the Judgment because the word was heard and not lived up to, known and not loved, believed and not witnessed.

Speak then, Lord, for your servant understands *You have the words of eternal life*.⁸ Speak to me, that it may bring comfort to my soul and improvement of my whole life, and be conducive to your praise and glory, and everlasting honor.



This article is based on Book 3, Chapter 2 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal reflection on his writing; if any of it helps give credit to Thomas of Kempis; if any of it fails the responsibility is mine. (rfm)
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¹ 1Kings 3:9-10

² Psalm 119:125

³ Psalm 78:1

⁴ Deuteronomy 32:2

⁵ Exodus 20:19

⁶ 1Samuel 3:10

⁷ John 7:38

⁸ John 6:68