

# The Link Between Being and Non-Being

by Horatius Bonar

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*God's word is the link between being and non-being, and it continues to be active in the universe, speaking to us through creation, providences, Sabbaths, and the Bible, and ultimately forming the new creation within us.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:3, Psalm 33:6, John 1:1, Hebrews 11:3

**Topics:** "The Power of God's Word", "Divine Communication"

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## Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the profound connection between God's spoken word and creation, illustrating how God's authority and power are manifested through His speech. He explains that the act of creation is both immediate and mediate, with God's word serving as the vital link between non-being and being. Bonar highlights that God's word continues to resonate in the universe, sustaining all things and speaking to humanity through creation, scripture, providences, and the Sabbath. He urges listeners to recognize the divine voice in everyday life and the importance of responding to it. Ultimately, Bonar calls for a deeper understanding of the power of words, both divine and human, and the responsibility that comes with them.

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## Transcript

"God said." --Genesis 1:3

THIS chapter, in many places, prefixes the name of God to what is said or done, that there may be no mistake as to the speaker or doer, and that God himself may be prominently presented to us in his divine personality. We read, "God created"; "God made"; "God saw"; "God divided"; "God called"; "God set"; "God blessed"; "God formed"; "God planted"; "God took"; "God commanded." But the most frequent word here is, "God said." As it is elsewhere written, "He spake and it was done"; "he commanded the light to shine out of darkness"; "the worlds were framed by the word of God"; "upholding all things by the word of his power."

God's "word" is then the one medium or link between Him and creation. Creation is in one sense immediate,--the result of direct power; in another, it is mediate, as accomplished by the intervention of speech. How far this mode of statement is a condescension to man's weakness, we will not say; but the frequency with which it is repeated, shews what stress God lays on it. There was evidently an intervention of something corresponding to human speech, if, indeed, the actual words were not spoken just as they are set down. Between the "nothing" and the "something,"--non-existence and creation,--there intervenes only the word; but after that many other agencies come in, animate or inanimate,--second causes, natural laws and processes,--devolving the great original fiat; for it is only as in connection with it that these laws

and processes have any power at all. The power or energy of the original "word" still lasts, still vibrates through the universe, still keeps creation in motion, still preserves the sequences and orderliness of all created things above and beneath.

He is the sovereign Speaker and the sovereign Worker. All are under his authority. He saith to this creature, Go, and it goeth; and to another, Come, and it cometh. He sits on his throne commanding the universe.

It is that same word that is still acting; as efficacious, as potent as at the first. Why does yon sun still move and shine? Not merely because of a word spoken some thousands of years since; but because that word is operative and energetic still. We read the original "God said" in every revolution; in every sunrise and sunset. "By the same word are these things kept in store." Vitality, growth, beauty, fruitfulness, are indications, not of a past power, but of a present energy; a continuation of the original impulse, or rather of the very same original impulse still prolonged and working. "My Father worketh hitherto."

When the Son of God was here, it was thus he acted in doing His miracles. He spake and it was done: "Lazarus, come forth"; "Young man, arise"; "Damsel, arise"; "Be opened." It was a word that was still the medium. And in His case we see the fitness; for He was "the Word." But there is the same fitness in the first creation, for He was Himself the Creator. It was He who spoke the creating word at first. His words are the words of authority and power.

This God (and this Son of God) speaks to us still. He does not keep silence though our outer ears hear no sound.

1. He speaks to us in Creation. This earth and these heavens are the echo of his voice. God speaks to us in each part of his handiwork. It is not "nature's voice" as men speak. It is the true, authentic voice of God. He speaks each day to us, and is never silent. As He spake at first, and the universe heard his voice, so he speaks to us now. Shall we hear or not?

2. He speaks to us in the Word itself. This Book embodies His words. Creation is the visible embodiment of His power and wisdom; it is the result of His words. His power came forth in speech as a channel or medium. This book of His is, in a different way, the effect of His speaking. It is his written wisdom and power. There is His voice to us. The thunder and tempest are his loud voice of grandeur; the sunshine and the gentle breeze His still small voice; but deeper, clearer, keener, softer, yet more penetrating than all these, is His word. Men speak of the Bible being the thoughts of God, but not His words. As if you could speak of a certain piece of music apart from the notes which compose it, or of the sea apart from the drops which make it up; as if you might say that creation embodied the general purpose of God, but not any minute or special designs. That Book is what it is because it contains the words of God. To our outer ear God speaks to us; and through our outer ear to our inner man. For it is through the word, and in connection with it, that God communicates with us. That word quickens: "Thy word hath quickened me." That word produces faith: "Faith cometh by hearing." That word strengthens, comforts, heals, nourishes, revives. It gets into contact with each part of our souls, and works its own work here. And it does this because it is divine. No human words could be trusted to work the work in a human soul so unrestrictedly. It is not eloquence, nor poetry, nor argument; but something more than all these together; something peculiar and indescribable, which man could not have formed, and which he cannot understand, that makes it so suitable for the soul of a foolish and sinful man.

3. He speaks to us in Providences. Let us listen reverently to everything that happens, and we shall recognise a divine voice, and divine words in all. No providence is dumb. No sorrow, no joy, no sickness, no recovery, no calamity, public or private, is dumb. "God said" sounds out from them all. By them God is pursuing us at every step, and all the day stretching out his hands to a disobedient and gainsaying race. How articulate, how eloquent are the daily events of the commonest life on earth. Yet we close our ears! Day unto day utters speech, yet we will neither interpret nor hearken!

4. He speaks to us by His Sabbaths. I mention this especially because of its connection with the creation-scene. Each Sabbath is to us a silver trumpet speaking direct from God. It gives no uncertain sound. It speaks of grace, and love, and rest. It is God's weekly invitation to the weary. He who would take from us our Sabbaths would silence the voice of God.

Thus it is that God speaks to us. Yet deeper than all these there is a divine and irresistible voice speaking to our inner man. Not separate from the word, yet still distinct,--the direct, sovereign, almighty voice of God by which the new creation is formed. Hence it is that out of many hearing the same sermon, or reading the same Bible, some believe, and some believe not. As in the old creation, so in the new, it is God that is the speaker and the worker. "Behold, I make all things new." The new creating words come from His lips to souls dead in sin.

What noble and mighty things are words! Through them we wield the mind of our fellow men. We cannot operate on dead matter through them, as God can, but on living souls we can. What a responsibility on us for our words! What a danger and sin in idle or evil words. Let our words be ever true and holy.

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