

# The Speaker, the Listener, the Peace.

by Horatius Bonar

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of listening to God's message of peace and receiving reconciliation with Him as the root of all holiness.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 85:8, Isaiah 26:3, Matthew 11:28-30, John 14:27, Romans 5:1, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, Ephesians 2:14, Philippians 4:7, Colossians 3:15, Hebrews 12:14

**Topics:** "Listening to God", "Peace and Holiness"

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## Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the importance of listening to God, who speaks peace to His people. He outlines the roles of the listener, the speaker, and the message, highlighting that true peace comes from God and is essential for a holy life. Bonar explains that peace must precede holiness, as reconciliation with God is the foundation for spiritual growth. He warns against returning to folly, urging believers to embrace the peace offered by God and live consistently in holiness. The sermon calls for a life dedicated to listening to God's voice and responding to His message of peace.

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## Transcript

"I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly." - Psalm 85:8

"I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for he speaks peace to his people, his faithful ones. But let them not return to their foolish ways." - Psalm 85:8

Let us meditate on this verse under the following heads:

(1.) The listener; (2.) the speaker; (3.) the message; (4.) the confidence; (5.) the issue.

I. THE LISTENER. "I will hear," says the writer of this psalm. He speaks as a listener, as one whose ears are open. "He that has ears to hear, let him hear." This is our true attitude, into which we came at conversion. God said, "Hear and your soul shall live"; he "opened our ear to hear as the learned." So we began to listen; and in listening found life. Such is to be our life; a life of listening; not to man, nor self, nor the world, but to God. As creatures, listening is our proper attitude, much more as sinners. Let the willing ear be ours. How much we lose by the closed ear!

II. THE SPEAKER. God, the Lord; God, even Jehovah. Other speakers may win the ear of the multitude, but it is to God the Lord that the saint listens. His voice is powerful. Its tones are penetrating; its words

attractive. God speaks as one entitled to be heard, expecting to be heard. He speaks with authority, waiting for our obedience to the heavenly voice. To less than such a speaker we do not feel constrained to listen, but to Him we must. He speaks, we cannot but hear.

III. THE MESSAGE. "He will speak peace to his people." It is peace that Jehovah speaks, for he is the God of peace; "he makes peace in his high places." Peace is the substance of the message that has all along been carried to us; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near; peace in heaven; peace on earth; peace between man and God; the peace of pardon, the peace of reconciliation, the peace that passes all understanding- peace through the blood of the cross, through Him who is our peace. It might have been wrath, no, ought to have been wrath; but it is not wrath, only peace; for He is patient and slow to wrath; no, God is love!

IV. THE CONFIDENCE. The Psalmist knows what he is to expect from such a God. Before the peace comes, he knows that it is coming; for he knows the God to whom he is called upon to listen. This is the confidence which he has in Him. He does not listen uncertainly, as not knowing what will come forth. He has heard of this God before- of what He does and speaks- and he opens his ear in happy confidence. He is sure that no wrath will come, only love, only peace. This God is the God of salvation- the God who gave his Son. Shall He not then speak peace?

V. THE ISSUE. "Let them not return to folly;" or, and "they shall not return to folly." He does not say, Let them not turn to folly, and then he will speak peace to them; but he will speak peace first, and then they shall not return to folly. This is God's order; the true and divine order; the reverse of man's. It is not first holiness and then peace, but first peace and then holiness. The root of all holiness is peace with God. Until the clouds are rolled away, and the sun shines out, we cannot be warmed and enlightened. Until the frost is gone, and the ice dissolved, the river cannot flow on and water the fields. Christ did not say, Go, and sin no more, and I will not condemn you; but, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more."

We are in rebellion. Our chief controversy with God is as to the gospel of peace. Our unbelief of this is our sin of sins, our master-sin, to which all others are subordinate. How can we abstain from the lesser sins so long as the master-sin remains; so long as there is no peace between us and God, but only rebellion and controversy. The first step to a holy life is being at peace with God. In order to a holy life God must come in and dwell in us. He cannot do this until he has brought us into peace with himself- until we have listened to and believed the tidings of peace which he has spoken. Reconciliation must be the beginning of all indwelling; and this reconciliation is the result of our believing His message of peace.

Nor indeed has the soul leisure to attend to good works or growth in holiness until the question of peace has been settled. That question must ever be foremost, engrossing us absolutely, and leaving no time nor inclination for anything else. It is too momentous to be left in uncertainty; too vast to be taken up along with others. This great point between us and God once settled, we are free to devote our undivided energies to the work of progress; not until then.

A saint then is one who has listened to God; who has heard the words of peace from His lips; who has believed them; who has been reconciled; and who knows that he is so. Therefore He seeks to be holy. He hates his former folly. He does not return to it. He does not make his free pardon a reason for returning to it. Brethren, be consistent! Beware of sin, folly, unholiness of every kind. Be Christians out and out. Show that the peace you have received is a holy peace.

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