

## WHAT GOD CANNOT DO! NO. 568

A SERMON  
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“God, that cannot lie.”  
Titus 1:2.*

TRUTH once reigned supreme upon our globe, and then earth was paradise. Man knew no sorrow while he was ignorant of falsehood. The Father of Lies invaded the garden of bliss, and with one foul lie he blighted Eden into a wilderness, and made man a traitor to his God. Cunningly he handled the glittering falsehood and made it dazzle in the woman’s eyes—“God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Proud ambition rode upon that lie as a conqueror in his chariot, and the city of Mansoul opened its gates to welcome the fascinating enemy.

As it was a lie which first subjugated the world to Satan’s influences, so it is by lies that he secures his throne. Among the heathen his kingdom is quiet and secure, because the minds of the people are deluded with a false mythology. The domains of Mohammed and the Pope are equally the kingdom of Satan, and his reign is undisturbed, for human merit, priestly efficacy, and a thousand other deceptions buttress his throne. The darkness of ignorance, the dungeons of falsehood, and the chains of superstition are the main reliance of that monster who oppresses all the nations with his infernal tyranny.

Since by the lie Satan now holds the world and maintains his power, he everywhere encourages lies and aids their propagation. Look about you and see what a prolific family falsehood has! The children of the untrue are as many as the frogs of Egypt, and like those plagues they intrude into every chamber. The slime of falsehood may be seen upon most things, both in secular and religious life. You have lying news and garbled reports in print, and as for the flying gossip of the tongue, if it touches the characters of good men, beware of believing a word it utters. If you would not have complicity with those who make the lie, be not hasty to entertain it. From the high places of the earth falsehood is not excluded. The untruth glides right royally from the kingly tongue, but is as much a lie as if the ragged mendicant had blurted it forth with low-lived oaths and curses.

What is diplomacy for the most part? Is it not “the art of lying”? Was not he thought to be the best politician who used language to conceal his thoughts? In how many a conference have the plenipotentiaries labored which could overreach, dissimulate, and intrigue to the greatest degree? In the commerce of courts, who knows not that flatteries and lies are the most abundant commodities? The art of king-craft, as practiced by the Most High and Mighty Prince James, whose name dishonors our English Bible, was only and simply the science of lying in the neatest possible manner. In these modern times, the difference between the promises of the hustings and the performances in the House of Commons proves that the lie is still commonly patronized.

Falsehood is everywhere, it is entertained both by the lowest and the highest, it permeates all society, it has ruined the whole of our race, and so defiled the entire world that upright men exclaim, “Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!” In the so-called religious world, which should be as the holy of holies, here too, the lie has insinuated itself. Of old there were prophets who prophesied lies, and dreamers of false dreams, and there were others who spoke the word of God with such bated breath, and after such a fashion, that it was no longer the truth as it came from God, but truth alloyed with human falsehood. It is so today.

There are those wearing the vestments of God's priests who do not hesitate to profess what they do not believe. Such men are the priests of hell. To wear a bishop's miter and teach infidelity—how shall I stigmatize it?—it is nothing less than detestable hypocrisy and robbery. And what shall I say of men of all creeds, all subscribing to the same articles and catechism, when all the world knows they cannot all honestly believe the same thing, and yet differ as much from one another as light from darkness? What shall I say but that shame covers my face that there should be so many ministers of God who are untrue to their convictions, and continue to do and say what they feel to be unscriptural?

In other quarters philosophy is believed and Christianity professed, the traditions of men are put in the place of God's truth. The prophets prophesy lies, and the people love to have it so. Brethren, we have everywhere to battle with falsehood, and if we are to bless the world, we must confront it with sturdy face and zealous spirit. *God's* purpose is to drive the lie out of the world, and let this be *your* purpose and mine. His Holy Spirit has undertaken to drive falsehood out of our hearts, be this our determination, in His strength, that it shall be cut up root and branch, and utterly consumed, then let us walk in the truth, "Buy the truth, and sell it not," hold fast the truth, speak the truth in love, and act the truth in all our deeds, for so shall we be known to be the children of that God of whom our text asserts that He is "God, that cannot lie." After wandering over the sandy desert of deceit, how pleasant it is to reach our text, and feel that one spot at least is verdant with eternal truth. Blessed be You, O God, for You cannot lie.

We will use our text in the following manner this morning, first, while we do not attempt to prove it, *we will remind you of a few things which may confirm your confidence that God cannot lie*, so that our opening remarks shall be *upon the truth of the text*. Then secondly, we will speak upon *the breadth of the text*, endeavoring to show that we must give no narrow interpretation to the words before us, but must receive them with an extent of meaning not usual to the expression, and then, thirdly, *we will try to use the text for our own improvement*, arguing from it that if God cannot lie He ought to receive our loving confidence.

**I.** First, then, let us commune together awhile concerning THE TRUTH OF THE TEXT, not, as we have said, to prove it, because we all believe it, but to confirm our confidence thereon.

I think we shall feel assured that God cannot lie, when we remember that *He is not subject to those infirmities which lead us into falsehood*. Lord Bacon has said, "There are three parts in truth, first, the inquiry, which is the wooing of it; secondly, the knowledge of it, which is the presence of it; and thirdly, the belief, which is the enjoyment of it." In each of these three points, by reason of infirmity, men fail to be perfectly true.

In *the search* after truth, our moral eye is not altogether clear, and therefore we fail to see what we love not, we do not follow truth in a straight line, but are very liable to turn aside to the right hand or to the left, either to obey our prejudices or advance our profit. "Truth lies in a well," said the old philosopher, many go down into that well to find truth, but looking into the water they see their own faces, and become so desperately enamored of their own beauty that they forget poor truth, or dream that she is the counterpart of themselves.

Now the great God cannot be liable to this error, because there is no discovery of truth with Him. He needs not to search anything out, for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." When in Scripture that term is sometimes used—"Shall not God search this out?" when we hear Him spoken of as "searching the heart and trying the reins of the children of men," it is not because He is not perfectly acquainted with all things, but only to set forth the certainty and accuracy of divine knowledge. God having no need to search, or if He had, having nothing in Him which should lead Him to make a dishonest search, therefore He does not lie.

When we have searched out the truth there *is the knowing of it*, and here the falsehood gets a footing in the form of a sin of omission, for we often refuse to know all that we might know. It would be inconvenient, perhaps, for us to be too well acquainted with certain arguments, for then our prejudices must be given up, and therefore we close our eyes to them for fear of knowing the truth. Do not many

men leave passages of Scripture altogether unread because they have no wish to receive the doctrines which are taught in them? Every time you refuse to give a hearing to God's truth, you do in effect lie, because you prefer not to know the truth, which is really to prefer to hold error.

Now nothing of this kind can ever happen with our only wise God. He knows all truth, seeing it all at a glance, and retaining it ever in His mind. In nothing is He ignorant, either willfully or otherwise. He receives truth as His own beloved, and when the world casts her out, she finds a happy shelter beneath His shield. We are quite clear that we frequently fall into the lie through a defect *in our believing*, for we sometimes know more than we care to believe. Truth is grasped by the understanding, but thrust out by the affections. We know her as Peter knew his Lord, and yet deny it after the same fashion as that disciple did his Master. Moreover, through weakness, we are led to doubt what we know to be God's truth, and even to speak unadvisedly with our lips.

Now this can never occur with God, since God is one, and is not to be divided into parts and passions, and His tongue can never be diverse from His heart. God's tongue is His heart, and God's heart is His hand. God is one. You and I are such that we can know in the heart, and yet with the tongue deny, but God is one and indivisible, God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, with Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Then, again, *the Scriptural idea of God forbids that He should lie*. Just review your thoughts about God, if you can. What idea have you formed of Him? If you have read Holy Scripture, and have gotten the slightest shadow of an idea of God, I think you will see that it is utterly inconsistent with the thrice Holy One, whose kingdom is over all, that He could lie. Admit the very possibility of His speaking an untruth and to the Christian there would be no God at all. The depraved mind of the heathen may imagine a monster to be a god who can live in adultery, and in theft, and in lying, for such the gods of the Hindus are described as being, but the enlightened mind of the Christian can conceive no such thing. The very word "God" comprehends everything which is good and great. Admit the lie, and to us at once there would be nothing but the black darkness of Atheism. I could neither love, worship, nor obey a lying God.

Again, *we all know that God is too wise to lie*. Falsehood is the expedient of a fool. It is only a short-sighted man who lies. For some present advantage the poor creature who cannot see the end as well as the beginning states that which is not, but no wise man who can look far into the future ever thinks a lie to be profitable, he knows that truth may suffer loss at first, but that in the long run she is always successful. He endorses that worldly-wise proverb that "Honesty is the best policy" after all, and the man, I say, who has anything like foresight, or judgment, or wisdom, prefers always the straight line to the curve, and goes directly to the mark, believing that this is in the end the best. Do you suppose that God, who must know this, with an intensity of knowledge infinitely greater than ours, will choose the policy of the witless knave? Shall God, only wise, who sees the end from the beginning, act as only brainless fools will choose to behave themselves? Oh! it cannot be, my brethren. God, the all-wise, must also be all-true.

And the lie, again, *is the method of the little and the mean*. You know that a great man does not lie, a good man can never be false. Put goodness and greatness together, and a lie is altogether incongruous to the character. Now God is too great to need the lie, and too good to wish to do such a thing, both His greatness and His goodness repel the thought.

My dear friends, *what motive could God have for lying?* When a man lies it is that he may gain something, but "the cattle on a thousand hills" are God's, and all the beasts of the forest, and all the flocks of the meadows. He says, "If I were hungry I would not tell you." Mines of inexhaustible riches are His, and treasures of infinite power and wisdom. He cannot gain aught by untruth, for "the earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof," wherefore, then, should He lie?

Men are false oftentimes to win applause. See how the sycophant cringes to the tyrant's foot, and spawns his villainy. But God needs no honor and no fame, especially from the wicked. To Him it were the greatest disgust of His righteous soul to be loved by unholy creatures. His glory is great enough even

if there were no creatures, His own self-contained glory is such that if there were no eyes to see it, and no ears to hear it, He would be infinitely glorious, He asks nothing, no respect and no honor of man, and therefore has He no need to stoop to the lie to gain it.

And of whom, again, could He be afraid? Men will sometimes, under the impulse of fear, keep back or even contradict the truth, but can fear ever enter into the heart of the eternal God? He looks down upon all nations who are in rebellion against Him, and He does not even care to rise to put them down. "He that *sits* in the heavens shall *laugh*: the Lord shall have them in derision!" Are not the chariots of the Lord twenty thousand, even thousands of angels? Even these are but as a drop in a bucket, when compared with the deep and infinite sea of His own power. Who, then, shall think that JEHOVAH needs to be afraid? "Fear" and "JEHOVAH" are two words which cannot meet together. Therefore, since there can be no motive whatever which should possibly lead God to lie, we feel well assured that the declaration of Paul is most certainly true—"God, that cannot lie."

Moreover, dear friends, we may add to all this *the experience of men, with regard to God*. It has been evident enough in all ages that God cannot lie. He did not lie when Adam fell. It seemed a strange thing, that after all the skill and labor which had been spent in making such a world as this, so fair and beautiful, God should resign it to the dominion of Satan, and drive the man whom He had made in His own image, out of his home, his Eden, to labor in sweat, and toil, and suffering, until he came to his grave. But God did it, and the fiery sword at the gate of Eden was proof that God could not and would not lie. He might come to Adam, and bemoan himself, crying, "Adam, where are you?" as if He pitied him, and would, if it had been possible, have spared the stroke, but still it must be done, and Eden is blasted, and Adam becomes a wanderer upon the fruitless earth.

Then afterwards, to quote a notable instance of God's faithfulness, when the flood swept away the race of men, and Noah came forth the heritor of a new covenant, we have clear proof that God cannot lie. No flood has ever destroyed the earth since then. Partial floods there have been, and parts of provinces have been inundated, but no flood has ever come upon the earth of such a character as that which Noah saw, hence the rainbow, every time it is painted upon the cloud, is an assurance to us that God cannot lie. Then He made an oath with Abraham that he should have a son, and that his seed should become possessors of all the land in which the patriarch had sojourned. Did not that come true? They waited in Egypt two hundred years, they smarted under the tyrant's lash, they lay among the pots, and yet, after all, with a high hand and with an outstretched arm He brought forth His people, led them through the wilderness, and divided Canaan by lot to them, having driven out the inhabitants of the land before them.

Since that time He made His covenant with David, and how fast has that stood! All the threatenings which He has uttered against the enemies of Israel, how surely have they been fulfilled! Last of all, and best of all, when the fullness of time was come, did not God send forth His own Son, born of a woman, made under the law? Did He not, according to His ancient promise, lay upon Him the iniquity of us all? Were not the incarnation and death of our Lord Jesus the grandest proof of the truthfulness of God which could be afforded. His own Son must leave heaven emptied of His glory, must be given up to be despised and rejected of men, must be nailed to the accursed wood, and be forsaken in the hour of His bitterest grief, herein is truth indeed. I say, if this *must be* according to the promise, and if this *was* according to the fact, then we have the clearest and the surest evidence that God cannot by any possibility be false to His own word. Rightly has He earned the title which His nature claims—"God, that cannot lie."

May I not add as another argument that *you have found Him true!* You have been to Him, dear friends, in many times of trial, you have taken His promise and laid it before His mercy seat, what say you, has He ever broken His promise? You have been through the floods—did He leave you? You have passed through the fires—were you burned? You have cried to Him in trouble—did He fail to deliver you? O you poor and needy ones, you have been brought very low, but has He not been your helper? You have passed hard by the gates of the grave, and hell has opened its horrid jaws to swallow you up,

but are you not today the living monuments of the fidelity of God to His promise, and the veracity of every word of the Most High God? Let these things, then, refresh your memories that you may the more confidently know that He is “God, that cannot lie.”

## II. Let us pass on to look at THE BREADTH OF MEANING IN THE TEXT.

When we are told in Scripture that God cannot lie, there is usually associated with the idea the thought of *immutability*. As for instance—“He is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent.” The word “lie,” here includes beyond its ordinary meaning the thought of change, so that when we read that God cannot lie, we understand by it, not only that He cannot say what is untrue, but that having said something which is true, *He never changes* from it, and does not by any possibility alter His purpose or retract His word. This is very consolatory to the Christian, that whatever God has said in the divine purpose is never changed. The decrees of God were not written upon sand, but upon the eternal brass of His unchangeable nature. We may truly say of the sealed book of the decrees, “Has he said and shall he not do it? has he purposed and shall it not come to pass?”

We read in Scripture of several instances where God apparently changed, but I think the observation of the old Puritan explains all these, he says, “God may will a change, but He cannot change His will.” Those changes of operation which we sometimes read of in Scripture did not involve any change in the divine purpose. God, for instance, sent to warn Hezekiah that according to the common course of nature he must die, and yet afterwards fifteen years were added to his life, God’s purpose having been all along that Hezekiah should live till the end of the fifteen years, but still His purpose equally included that Hezekiah should be brought so near to the gates of death, that in the ordinary course of nature he must die, and then that the miracle would come in was still part of the God’s purpose, that Hezekiah might be cured in a supernatural manner, and be made to live nearer to his God in consequence. God wills a change, but He never changes His will, and when the last great day shall come, you and I shall see how everything happened according to that hidden roll wherein God had written with His own wise finger every thought which man should think, every word which he should utter, and every deed which he should do. Just as it was in the book of decree, so shall it transpire in the roll of human history.

God never changes, then, as to His purpose, and here is our comfort. If He has determined to save us, and we know He has, for all who believe in Him are His elect, then we shall be saved. Heaven shall never by any possibility be defeated by hell. Hell and earth may combine together to destroy a soul which rests upon Christ, but while God’s decree stands fast and firm, that chosen soul is safe, and since that decree never can be removed, let us take confidence and rejoice. No promise has ever been altered, and no threatening either. Still is His promise sure. “I have not said unto the seed of Jacob, seek you my face in vain.” No new decrees have been passed, repealing the past. We can never say of God’s Book, as we can of old law books, that such-and-such an act is obsolete. There is no obsolete statute in God’s Book. There stand promises, as fresh, as new, as vigorous, and as forceful today, as when they first dropped from the mouth of God. The words, then, “God, that cannot lie,” include the very gracious and precious doctrine that He cannot by any possibility change.

But we must not, while talking in this manner, forget the primary meaning, that He cannot *be false* in His thoughts, words, or actions. There is no shadow of a lie upon anything which God thinks, or speaks, or does. He cannot lie in His *prophecies*. How solemnly true have they been! Ask the wastes of Nineveh, turn to the mounds of Babylon, let the traveler speak concerning Idumea and Petra, turn even to the rock of Sidon, and to Your land, O Immanuel. We may boldly ask the traveler, “Has He said, and has He not done it? Have His words fallen to the ground? Has God’s curse been an idle word?” No, not in one single case. All the words of the Lord are sure. The prophecies will be as true as they have been, and the Book of Revelation, though we may not comprehend it today, will doubtless be fulfilled in every stroke and in every line, and we shall marvel how it was that we did not know its meaning, but at present it is enough for us to know its truth—its meaning shall only be learned as the events explain the prophesy.

As God is true in His prophecies, so is He faithful to His *promises*. Have you and I, dear friends, a confidence in these? If so, let us try them this morning. Sinner, weeping and bemoaning yourself, God will forgive you your sin if you believe in Jesus. If you will confess that He is faithful and just to forgive you, He has promised to do so, and He cannot lie. Christian, if you have a promise today laid upon your heart, if you have been pleading it, perhaps for months, and it has not been fulfilled, I pray you gather fresh courage this morning, and again renew your wrestling. Go and say, “Lord, I know You cannot lie, therefore fulfill Your word to Your servant.” If the promises of God were not kept God would lie, they must therefore be fulfilled, and let us believe that they will be, and go to God, not with a wavering spirit, which half hopes that the words may be true, but with the full assurance that they cannot fail. As certainly as we know that day and night shall not cease, and that summer will not fail, so surely let us be convinced that every word of the Lord shall stand.

His *threatenings* are true also. Ah! sinner, you may go on in your ways for many a day, but your sin shall find you out at last. Seventy years God’s long-suffering may wait over you, but when you shall come into another world you shall find every terrible word of Scripture fulfilled, you shall then know that there is a place, “where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched,” you shall then experience the “wailing and gnashing of teeth” unless you repent. If you will believe in Jesus you shall find the promise true, but if you will not, equally sure shall be the threatening. This is a dreadful part of the subject to those who are out of Christ, who have never been partakers of the Holy Ghost. It will be in vain for you to cry to Him then, and ask Him then to change His mind. No, though you should weep oceans of tears, hell’s flames cannot be quenched, nor can your soul escape from the place to which it is finally doomed. Today, while mercy is preached to you, lay hold upon it, but remember, if not, as God cannot lie He cannot suffer you to escape, but you will feel the weight and terror of His arm.

We might thus go through everything which concerns God, from prophesy to promises, and threatenings, and onwards, and multiply observations, but we choose to close this point by observing *that every word of instruction from God is most certainly true*.

It is astounding how much sensation is caused in the Christian church by the outbreak every now and then of fresh phases of infidelity. I do not think that these alarms are at all warranted. It is what we must expect to the very end of this dispensation. If all carnal minds believed the Bible, I think the spiritual might almost begin to doubt it, but as there are always some who will attack it, I shall feel none the less confidence in it. Really, the Book of God has stood so many attacks from such different quarters, that to be at all alarmed about it shows a very childish fear. When a rock has been standing all our lifetime, and has been known to stand firmly throughout all the ages of history, none but foolish people will think that the next wave will sweep it away.

Within our own short life—say some twenty-five years’ recollection—have we not remembered, I was about to say almost as many as twenty-five shapes of infidelity? You know it must change about every twenty years at least, for no system of infidelity can live longer than that. There was the witty system of objection which Voltaire introduced, and how short-lived was that! Then came the bullying, low-lived, blackguard system of Tom Paine, and how short-lived was its race! Then, in more modern times, unbelief took the shape of Secularism, what particular shapes it takes now we scarcely know—perhaps Colensoism is the most fashionable, but that is dying out, and something else will follow it. These creations of an hour just live their little day and they are gone.

But look at belief in Scripture, and at Scripture itself. The Bible is better understood, more prized, and I believe, on the whole, more practiced than ever it was since the day when its author sent it abroad into the world. Its course is still onward, and after all which has been done against it, no visible effect has been produced upon the granite wall of Scriptural truth by all the pickaxes and boring rods which have been broken upon it. Walking through our Museums nowadays, we smile at those who think that Scripture is not true. Every block of stone from Nineveh, every relic which has been brought from the Holy Land, speaks with a tongue which must be heard even by the deaf adder of Secularism, and which says, “Yes, the Bible is true, and the word of God is no fiction.”



Beloved, we may rest assured that we have not a word in the book of God which is untrue! There may be an interpolation or two of man's which ought to be revised and taken away, but the Book as it comes from God is truth, and nothing but truth, not only containing God's Word, but being God's Word, being not like a lump of gold inside a mass of quartz, but all gold, and nothing but gold, and being inspired to the highest degree, I will not say verbally inspired, but more than that, having a fullness more than that which the letter can convey, having in it a profundity of meaning such as words never had when used by any other being, God having the power to speak a multitude of truths at once. And when He means to teach us one thing according to our capability of receiving it, He often teaches us twenty other things, which for the time we do not comprehend, but which by and by, as our senses are exercised, reveal themselves by the Holy Spirit. Every time I open my Bible I will read it as the Word of "God, that cannot lie," and when I get a promise or a threatening, I will either rejoice or tremble because I know that these stand fast.

Dear friends, this leads us, in closing this point, to say that when we read that passage—"God, that cannot lie"—we understand that *His very nature cannot lie*, for He hates lies, wherever there is a lie, God is its enemy. It was to overcome the lie of sin that God sent His Son to bleed, and every day the thoughts of God are centered upon the extermination of evil and the extension of His own truth. Nothing can set forth in words to us the hatred and detestation which God has in His heart of anything which is untrue. O that we knew and felt this, and would glow with the same anger, seeking to exterminate the false, slaying it in our own hearts, and giving it nothing to feed upon in our temper, our conversation, or our deeds.

**III.** But I shall now come to make a practical use of the text, in the third place, by observing HOW WE OUGHT TO ACT TOWARDS GOD IF IT BE TRUE THAT HE IS A "GOD THAT CANNOT LIE."

Brethren, if it be so that God cannot lie, then *it must be the natural duty of all His creatures to believe Him*. I cannot resist that conclusion. It seems to me to be as clear as noonday that it is every man's duty to believe the truth, and that if God must speak and act truth, and truth only, it is the duty of all intelligent creatures to believe Him. Here is "Duty-faith" again, which some are railing at, but how they can get away from it, and yet believe that God cannot lie, I cannot understand. If it be not my duty to believe in God, then it is no sin for me to call God a liar. Will anyone subscribe to that—that God is a liar? I think not, and if to think God to be a liar would be a most atrocious piece of blasphemy, then it can only be so on the ground that it is the natural and incumbent duty of every creature understanding the truthfulness of God to believe in God. If God has set forth the Lord Jesus Christ as the propitiation for sin, and has told me to trust Christ, it is my duty to trust Christ, because God cannot lie, and though my sinful heart will never believe in Christ as a matter of duty but only through the work of the Holy Spirit, yet faith does not cease to be a duty, and whenever I am unbelieving and have doubts concerning God, however moral my outward life may be, I am living in daily sin, I am perpetrating a sin against the first principles of morality.

If I doubt God, as far as I am able I rob Him of His honor, and stab Him in the vital point of His glory, I am, in fact, living an open traitor and a sworn rebel against God, upon whom I heap the daily insult of daring to doubt Him. O my hearers, there are some of you who do not believe in Christ, I wish you would look at your character and position in this light. You are not trusting in Christ for your salvation. Remember, "He that believes not God has made Him a liar," those are John's own inspired words, and you are, every day that you are not a believer in Christ, virtually writing upon your doorpost, and saying with your mouth, "God is a liar, Christ is not able to save me, I will not trust Him, I do not believe God's promise, I do not think He is sincere in His invitation to me to come to Christ, I do not believe what God says." Remember that you are living in such a state as this, and may God the Holy Ghost impress you with a sense of the sin of that state, and feeling this your sin and misery, I pray God to lead you to cry, "Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief." This, then, is our first practical conclusion from the fact that God cannot lie.

Other thoughts suggest themselves. *If we were absolutely sure that there lived on earth a person who could not lie, how would you treat him?* You know there cannot be such a man, there may be a man who *will not* lie, but there cannot be a man of whom it may be said that he *cannot* lie, for alas! we have all the power of evil in us, and we can lie, and to a certain degree it is quite true that “all men are liars.” But if you could be certain that there was a man, out of whose heart the black drop had been wrung, and that he could not lie, how would you act towards him?

Well, I think *you would cultivate his acquaintance*. If you be true yourselves, you would desire his friendship, you would say, “He is the friend for me, I have trusted in such-and-such a man, and he has played the Judas, I asked counsel of another, and he was an Ahithophel, but if this man cannot lie, he shall be my bosom companion, if he will accept me, and he shall be my counselor, if he will but have the goodness to direct me.” I would expect to see a *levee* of all the good in the world waiting at the man’s door. You know how the world, with all its sinfulness, does reverence the man who is true.

We had an instance in our streets the other day, of the good man, and the true, who received homage of all, and yet that man *could* lie, but inasmuch as we never have seen *that he did*, but his life has been straightforward, therefore have we paid him honor, and deservedly so. Well now, if such be the case, should not all Christians seek more and more the friendship of God. “O Lord, be You my familiar friend, my counselor, my guide, if You cannot lie I will lay bare my heart to You, I will tell You all my secrets, I will trust You with all the desires of my heart, I know You can never betray me, or be unfaithful, let there be a union established between my soul and Yours, and let it be broken never.” Let communion with God, be the desire of your hearts on the ground that He cannot lie.

If we knew a man who could not lie, *we should believe him, I think, without an oath*. I cannot suppose that when *he* came into the court of justice they would pass *him* the Bible, no, his word would be better than the oath of ordinary men if he could not lie. You would not want any sign or evidence to prove what he said, you would take his word at once. So should it be with God. Ah! dear friends, God has given us more than His word, He has given us His oath, and yet, strange is it that we who profess to be His children are vile enough to distrust our own Father, and sometimes, if He does not give us signs and evidences, we begin to distrust Him, so that after all I am afraid we rather trust the signs than trust God, and put more confidence in frames and evidences than we do in the naked promise, which is an atrocious sin indeed.

Many believers cannot be comfortable without signs and evidences. When they feel in a good frame of mind—ah! then God’s promise is true, when they can pray heartily, when they can feel the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, then they say, “How God has kept His promise.” Ah! but, my brother, that is a seeing-faith, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” Faith is to believe in God when my heart is as hard as the nether millstone, when my frames are bad, when I cannot pray, when I cannot sing, when I can do nothing good. To say, “He has promised and will perform, He has said that whosoever believes in Christ is not condemned, I do believe in Christ, and therefore I am not condemned,” this is genuine faith.

Again, if we knew a man who could not lie, *we should believe him in the teeth of fifty witnesses the other way*. Why, we would say, “They may say what they will, but they *can* lie.” You might have good evidence that they were honest men usually, but you would say, “They *can* lie, they have the power of lying, but here is a man who stands alone, and cannot lie, then his word must be true.” This shows us, beloved, that we ought to believe God in the teeth of every contradiction. Even if outward providence should come to you, and say that God has forsaken you, that is only one, and even if another, and another, and another should come, and fifty trials should all say that God has forsaken you, yet, as God says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” which will you take—the one promise of God who cannot lie, or the fifty outward providences which you cannot interpret? I know what the devil has been whispering in your ear—

***“The Lord has forsaken thee quite,  
Thy God will be gracious no more.”***



But then, recollect who has said, “Fear you not, for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God.” Which will you believe—the devil’s insinuation, or God’s own testimony? My dear sister, you have been praying for a certain thing for years, you pray, you pray, and you pray again, and now discouragement arises, unbelief says, “God will not hear that prayer, that prayer of yours does not come up before the throne of God, and there will be no answer.” But the Lord has said, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Which will you believe—your unbelief, the long months of weariness, and the anxieties which prompted you to discouragement, or will you believe in the naked promise? Why, if God cannot lie, let us give Him what we would give to a man if he were of the same character—our full confidence even in the teeth of contradiction—for He is “God, that cannot lie.”

If a man were introduced to us, and we were certain that he could not lie, *we should believe everything he said, however incredible it might appear to us at first sight to be.* I shall have an appeal to every soul here present. It does seem very incredible at first sight that God should take a sinner, full of sin, and forgive all his iniquities in one moment, simply and only upon the ground of the sinner believing in Christ. I recollect the time when it seemed to me utterly impossible that I could ever have my sins forgiven. I had a clear sense of the value of pardon, and this thought would be always ringing in my ears—“It is too good to be true that *you* should be pardoned, that *you*, an enemy, should be made into a child, that *you* who have gone on sinning against light and against knowledge, should yet rejoice in union to Christ, the thing is too good to be true.”

But, beloved friends, supposing it should seem too good to be true, yet, since you have it upon the testimony of one who “cannot lie,” I pray you believe it. “*But, sir*”—No, none of your “buts,” He cannot lie. “*Ah! but*”—away with your “ahs” or your “buts,” for JEHOVAH cannot lie. He has said it, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” To believe is to trust Christ. If therefore you are trusting Christ, you must be saved, and whatever you may be, or whatever you may have done, if you will now trust Jesus Christ you have God’s Word for it, and He cannot lie, that you shall be saved.

Come now, will you kick against the promise because of its greatness? Do not so, but let your doubts and fears be hushed to sleep, and now, with the promise of God as your pillow, and God’s faithfulness as your support, lie down in peace, and behold in faith’s open vision the ladder the top whereof leads to heaven. Trust the promise of God in Christ, and depend upon it that He will be as good to you, even to you, as His own Word, and in heaven you shall have to sing of the “God, that cannot lie.”

I would that these weak words of mine, for I am very conscious of their feebleness this morning, may nevertheless have comfort in them for any who have been doubting and fearing, that they may trust my Lord, and sure I am that if they begin a life of faith, they will begin a life of happiness and of security. “The just shall live by faith,” and well may they do so, when they have to trust in a “God, that cannot lie.”

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