

# MAKING GOD A LIAR

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THE PENNY PULPIT, MAY 26, 1850\*

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believed not the record which God gave of his Son." --1 John V. 10.

I SHALL remark at this time upon the second clause of this verse--"He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." I will endeavour to show--

I. What unbelief is not.

II. What it is.

III. In what sense unbelief makes God a liar.

IV. Notice some of the manifestations of unbelief.

V. Briefly advert to the results of unbelief.

I. WHAT UNBELIEF IS NOT. Multitudes of persons speak against unbelief without exactly understanding what it is. It becomes necessary to spend a few moments in showing what unbelief is not, and then what it is. Unbelief is not the mere absence of faith. It is not a mere negative state of mind at all. Neither is unbelief a mere intellectual attitude, or state, caused by a want of sufficient evidence. Neither is unbelief a state of blank ignorance of God and of his truth. Neither does unbelief consist in a state of entire ignorance of the existence and attributes of God. Unbelief is not mere disbelief or belief in the opposite of what the Bible says is true. Unbelief is not an intellectual state at all. The Bible represents unbelief as a sin; therefore it is not a necessary state of mind.

II. WHAT UNBELIEF IS. Of course, if it is sin, it must be a voluntary state of mind; the Bible complains of it as a spirit which we have no right to indulge, represents it as a great crime in us for which we are accountable. Now, if this be the fact, it must be a voluntary state of mind; because if we could not help it, the Bible could not denounce it as one of the greatest of sins, and call upon us to cease from it. Again, it is really the opposite of faith. What is faith? Faith is not a mere intellectual conviction. We know it cannot be, for the devil has that faith, and so have many wicked men; their intellects assent to the truth, and that is what often troubles them so much. Faith consists, then, in giving God our confidence, in voluntarily yielding ourselves up to him, confiding in him, trusting in him, casting ourselves upon him, voluntarily receiving his truth, and committing ourselves to him. It is thus that the term faith is used in the Bible; the very term that is rendered commit, is also rendered faith. "Let them commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." And again, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men;" in these, and divers other instances, the word here rendered faith, is rendered commit. Now, unbelief is the direct opposite of this; it is the withholding of confidence where there is sufficient evidence, and where there is sufficient light in the intellect; and this withholding of confidence is represented as unbelief of the heart--not merely of the intellect, but of the heart. Unbelief implies, that the intellect perceives the truth. That which constitutes saving faith is the heart trusting in God, committing itself to the truth, yielding itself up to receive the truth; while unbelief is the opposite of all this--that the heart does not commit itself to God, and does not yield itself up to receive the truth. Now, we often see this state of mind manifested in relation to this world. You see persons withholding their confidence where there is the strongest evidence of the truth of that which they are called upon to believe. Look at that jury box; the prisoner has been tried, and the judge has summed up the evidence, and put the plain truth before the jury, but some of them will not yield to it, will not give their confidence. Now, this state of mind in religion is unbelief. Now, we see multitudes of men on every side whose minds are made up concerning the truth of the Bible; they believe it is true; assent to it intellectually, and they call this faith: they say they believe--their opinions are settled. They can argue in defence of their principles, and they say they have faith in them. You call upon them to believe, and they say they do believe; while the fact is, when men will not commit themselves to the truth, they do not believe to the saving of their souls. Intellectual belief is nothing without confidence. The Bible says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." Having explained the nature of unbelief, I pass, in the next place, to consider--

III. IN WHAT SENSE UNBELIEF MAKES GOD A LIAR. It is said in the text, "he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar." Withholding of confidence, is a practical denial that God is worthy of confidence. Now, there is nothing more unreasonable in the universe, than unbelief. God has so constituted men, that, by a necessary law of their minds, they affirm that he will not lie. Nobody ever believed that God would lie; everybody knows better, every intelligent being in earth, hell, or heaven, knows that God will not lie; and yet, wherever an individual withholds confidence in God, it is a practical denial of his trustworthiness, a practical denial of what reason and conscience affirm must be true. This is one of the most provoking forms of sin of which a moral agent can be guilty. There is nothing more provoking, even to the greatest liars themselves, than to have their veracity called in question. What an infinitely awful sin it must be to make God a liar!! But it is also injurious to yourselves, and ruinous to society. Why, who does not know that if a wife should withhold confidence from her husband, she would ruin herself and her husband too? And so, if a husband withholds confidence in his wife, he ruins his own happiness and that of his wife too. Suppose that confidence is withheld, without good reason, by a husband from his wife, how it ruins her happiness, what a trial it is for her to endure! Suppose that the husband reproaches the wife with having committed some wrong, and withholds his confidence; and, suppose the children lose confidence in her, how can she manage to govern them? What wrong is done to the family! Probably the family would be ruined. Destroy confidence in a government, and, unless it be very strong, and thus enabled to keep the people in awe, that government will very soon be ruined. So with business transactions. The world has to live by confidence in each other. There is no community whatever that is not ruined, if unbelief, want of confidence, comes to be the law of action. Withholding confidence when there is no reason, is the greatest crime a man can commit against society, or the family. Everybody must admit this. You often find persons tremblingly, quiveringly, alive to their own reputation for veracity, who withhold confidence from God. Some people, who call themselves Christians, too, fail to realise the truth of God so as to confide fully in him. God has said " all things shall work together for good to them that love God," but a great many persons have no belief in this! They don't rest in God's words, and they are always in trouble, distress, and tribulation, because of their unbelief. Now, if you should see a man standing on a mountain of granite in the greatest trouble and anguish, lest the rock should not be strong enough to hold him, why, you would say the man is deranged, his conduct would be, in a high degree, ridiculous. Now, the people of God are infinitely more ridiculous, when they withhold confidence in God, than the man on a mountain of granite, fearing it might fall. God's promises are infinitely more able to support them than mountains of granite! The strongest rocks in creation are but mere air when compared with the stupendous strength and stability of the promises of Jehovah! Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of the Lord shall stand fast for ever. Again: it is the most blasphemous of all forms of sin. Let any man publicly accuse God of lying, and the law of the land would lay hands on him. He would be indicted for blasphemy. Suppose a man should go through the streets of London, proclaiming aloud that God was a liar, you would very soon find him in Newgate, and he would deserve to be there. If any man should go through the streets, proclaiming that God was a liar, everybody would say it was the most revolting species of blasphemy; they would stop their ears and run, in order to get away from him. Nobody would dare to walk in the same street with him, lest a thunderbolt should descend and destroy him, or the earth open, and swallow him up. Now, many a man, if his conduct were put into words, and he should speak them, would be indicted for blasphemy. Again: let me say, unbelief accuses God of perjury. God has sworn the greatest oath that he could think of, in confirmation of his truth. "Because he could swear by no greater, he aware by himself." He confirmed his promise "by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie." Now, mark! Unbelief accuses God of lying under an oath!--of lying under the greatest oath that God could take! Suppose a man should, in words, accuse God of perjury--that he had not only lied, but sworn to a lie! We have now to advert, in the next place, to--

IV. SOME OF ITS MANIFESTATIONS AND RESULTS. First, a want of rest to the soul. Now, when the soul does not rest on the promises of God--does not believe that " all things shall work together for good to them that love God"--the soul has no rest in Christ, does not embrace Christ, does not rest in his faithfulness and in his promises. Now, my hearers, let me put one question to you--Are you guilty of unbelief? If so, you are the very persons that are charged with making God a liar! Again: another manifestation of unbelief is want of peace. There is always peace and joy in believing. Now, the want of peace is an evidence of unbelief. The fact is, that where there is real faith, although there may be much to disturb and distress the mind, there is deep peace and joy in God, in the midst of it all; but where persons have not peace, real joy, and great satisfaction in God, in his truth, and in his promises, you may know that there is unbelief there. From the very nature of the case, there must be. The mind cannot be reposing in the promises of God, if it has not peace and joy. Again: when persons have not power in prayer--when they have no faith in prayer, to prevail with God. In the Bible, we are told that those who have faith, have power with God, and can prevail with God, and

receive the spirit of their petitions. Now, let me ask you, my hearers, if you have this confidence, this faith which makes you mighty in prayer; or, do you want this power in prayer? If the latter, then you are guilty of unbelief. Now, one of two things must be true, if these things are wanting in your soul,-- if you have no confidence in the promises, no peace of mind, and no power in prayer,--either the Bible is not true, or you do not believe the Bible; because the Bible affirms that these things are true of them that believe.

But I remark again; those who live in bondage to any form of sin are in a state of unbelief. "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Now, when men live under any form of worldliness, they are under the condemnation of the law. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." Now, if you are living in bondage to sin because of unbelief, you are living in a state of condemnation; your own conscience condemns you because of your unbelief. Again: another evidence of unbelief is, the manifestation of a servile spirit in reference to religion--the spirit of a servant, as distinguished from the spirit of a son. By servant, I mean slave; one who serves his master from fear, not love. Now, a great many persons profess to serve God, but they do not serve him with the spirit of sons, although they profess to be the children of God; they look upon religion as something which must not be neglected; they perform their religious duties, not from any love to religion, but as the least of two evils; and thus they drag out a painful existence. Christianity, to them, is not a peace-giving religion; it is not their life in which they have supreme delight, loving it for its own sake. It is to them something which they must attend to, something which they must not neglect, but which they would be very glad to neglect if they dared. They go to meeting, and read their Bibles, and pray, not because their hearts are filled with love to God, love to the Bible, love to their closets--not because they love to have communion with God. No! Their religious duties are regarded as a task, which they must not omit to perform. Now remember, that in every instance where persons take this view of religion, and religious dudes, there is unbelief in the heart. Such persons go through a form of prayer, not from love to God, but because they think it is their duty to pray. Who does not see that to approach God from such motives is not prayer, but only an indication of a mere servile spirit, an evident manifestation of unbelief. They don't come to God to get anything. They don't expect to receive anything from God. The Bible has promised them great things in answer to prayer, but they don't expect them. They pray, because it is their duty. They never run to God to make a request, as a child runs to its father for something which it wants, holding up its little hands with a smile on its face, expecting to get the favour for which it asks. They do nothing of this sort. They say their prayers, or perhaps read them; go through a form, and do what they call praying, and what for? Many persons pray, not because God has given them promises, not because they have something in their hearts that they want God to give, and because they expect to get it, but because it is their duty to make a prayer. Now, who does not see that this is a manifestation of unbelief; the evidence of a spirit directly opposite to the spirit of prayer, and everything that belongs to true religion. Now, if any of you, my hearers, have been religious because it was your duty,--have served God from a servile spirit, and not from spontaneous love; let me urge you, for once, to approach his throne to-night, and pray, expecting to receive that for which you seek. I say that now you are an unbeliever; you may call yourself what you please, but as certain as God is true--as certain as God is true, you have no faith!

I remark again: a spirit of worldly-mindedness is an evidence of unbelief. I mean that state in which the mind is given up to worldly pursuits and amusements, that minding earthly things of which the apostle speaks--living the mind up to them, giving the chief attention to them, and being chiefly influenced by worldly considerations. Now, mark! This is the very opposite of a state of faith, which, from its very nature, precludes this state of mind. If you find that your mind is worldly, that you are engrossed with worldly things, you may be sure that you have no faith. Can you pray with the world in your mind? Can you go to the sanctuary with business engrossing your thoughts? Can you receive God's truth into your mind, if it is given up to other influences? It is naturally impossible for you to serve God and the world! If you are worldly-minded, I say, it is an evidence of unbelief! And unbelief, remember, virtually charges God with being a liar; and the man who is an unbeliever has the hardihood to say, in conduct, though not in words, that God is a perjured being, that he lies under an oath! But let me say again: the spirit of cowardice is an evidence of unbelief. Those people who believe God are not afraid of anybody. Spiritual cowardice is always the result of unbelief. Confidence in God makes the righteous strong as lions. Now, if you are spiritual cowards; if you are afraid to talk to sinners about their souls; if you are afraid to hold up the light, it is because you do not believe. Again: neglect of the Bible is also a manifestation of unbelief. Nobody neglects the Bible who believes it. Again: neglect to use the promises of the Bible--not pleading them in order to receive their fulfilment--is a sure indication of unbelief. Again: a spirit of indifference in regard to the state of religion, blindness in regard to the state of sinners, no compassion for them, a want of interest in their conversion, are certain indications of unbelief; and I might point out hundreds of others. But let me

ask, who of us are guilty of unbelief? If I am guilty of unbelief, I am the very wretch that stands before you, and makes God a liar! If you are guilty of unbelief, you are the wretches who stand before God, and accuse him of being a liar! Horrible! Horrible! But is it not true? Does not everybody know, that if a man withholds confidence from God, it is because he regards God as unworthy of confidence; and if unworthy of confidence, it must be that he is not a true being, but a liar! I will now make a very few remarks, in the next place, on--.

V. THE RESULTS OF UNBELIEF. First, unbelief always produces a heartless religion. Therefore, whenever you find a man whose religion is not soul-satisfying--not a living principle in his soul; whenever you find, in your own experience, that religion is not peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; whenever you find, that your religion is not a spontaneous principle of love to God, you may conclude that the reason is because the heart is filled with unbelief. Again: if you lose your faith, your religion will be legal. When persons lose their faith, they do a great many things without regard to God at all. They cease to have an eye to God's will, pleasure, and glory; you cannot distinguish between them and the professedly ungodly. Oftentimes, what they call their religious duties, they perform not out of love to God, supreme regard to him, but to promote their own selfishness. Again: another consequence of unbelief is, that it renders salvation naturally impossible. Now, it should always be remembered that the conditions of salvation are not arbitrary; they are natural and necessary conditions. If anybody would go to heaven, he must be prepared for heaven. If an individual has not love to God in his heart, it is naturally impossible that he should be happy in heaven. What would there be in heaven to interest him? What would he do in heaven? To enjoy heaven, and be happy there, he must be a holy man, and this he can only be as he is made so by faith. Again: of course, disobedience of heart to God is always a result of unbelief; there is no heart-obedience to any government, any further than individuals have confidence in that government; the heart of man must confide in any system of government, in order to a hearty and true obedience to it. In respect to the governmental consequences: all unbelief entirely rejects the Mediator between God and man--it rejects the office, the authority, and atonement of Christ altogether. The penalty of the law is dead against those that are unbelievers--those who believe not are condemned already, because they have not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.

A few remarks must close what I have to say this morning. I remark, first, that the first sin in our world, when we resolve it into its true elements as a particular form of sin, was unbelief. Let us look at it. God had told man that he must not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, or by so doing he should die. The tempter told our first parents that they should not die, if they did eat of it; and tried to make them believe that God was selfish in the prohibition--that God gave them that injunction from a fear that by their eating of the fruit they should become like himself. Now, what did they do? Why, they dared to withdraw confidence in God. So completely did the insinuation of the tempter take hold of them, that it is said--"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and also gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Now, what was the particular form of sin? Why, it was first withdrawing, and then withholding, faith from God; they refused to confide in what God had said--they did not believe that he studied their good in the prohibition. They listened to the words of the tempter, and believed what he told them, that God was jealous of them; that he forbade them to eat of the tree lest they should become gods: and then they withdrew confidence in God, and suffered the consequences. Again: this is the root of sin in man--his withholding confidence in God. All the forms of iniquity in this world took their rise here, and we might, did time permit, trace them, by a philosophical method, to this source. Withholding confidence in God is one of the worst of evils--having no confidence in God's wisdom, benevolence, goodness, leaves the mind a blank. Why persons are drawn aside into vice is, because they have lost confidence in God and goodness. If a man yielded his heart to God, could he be carried away with every breath of temptation? No, indeed, he could not; but when he withdraws confidence, the mind is darkened, and error exercises its fall power in his soul. How remarkable was the effect of unbelief in Adam and Eve! As soon as they withdrew confidence in God, they thought they could hide themselves from him; so grossly did they fall into darkness by withholding confidence, that they thought they could hide themselves among the trees when the Lord God walked in the garden. Again: perfect faith would secure entire holiness. Suppose any man has perfect confidence in all that God says, could he sin? What! Have perfect confidence in God's love, God's goodness, God's universal presence, and consent to sin? No more than they do in heaven; for what is the reason they do not sin in heaven, but because they have such universal confidence in God? If a man had perfect confidence in God, could he sin? Never, never. Where there is any overt act of sin, there is unbelief. Again: there are a vast number of professors of religion, who are grossly guilty of unbelief. They have no peace and joy in God, no power in prayer, are worldly-minded, are "careful and troubled about many things," giving as full evidence of being in a state of unbelief as the world around them; their lives, words, and actions are

