

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE ETERNAL TRUTH OF GOD.

A Sermon

DELIVERED BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“His truth endureth to all generations.”—Psalm c. 5.

It was very solemn work this morning to lay bare the sin of unbelief.* It was the burden of the Lord to him who had to speak, and it could have been but very small pleasure to those who had to listen; nevertheless, I trust it was something better than pleasure to many, for it drove their souls to pray to God for others, and sinners were moved, as we know already, to yield up their hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ. After meditating upon the heinousness of this sin—the sin of making God a liar—after even thinking of it, horror took hold upon my soul, and it seemed to me that we ought to have a supplementary sermon to-night in honour of the truth of God. As we have, as it were, cleansed the temple, and swept out the dreadful filthiness of giving the Lord the lie, it is now our part to offer a sweet savour offering, by declaring the faithfulness of the Lord. It is my earnest desire that each one of us may join in the devout exercise, and bear our witness that, as far as we have known the Lord, he has been a God of truth to us. We will also rehearse the scriptural testimony to this great and certain fact that God cannot lie, and meditate upon the evidence that in him and in all his actions faithfulness shines in the highest possible perfection. I desire in the courts of the Lord's house, and in the midst of his people, to extol him whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

We will consider only two points, though those will subdivide into many others; and the first is, that, according to the text, and according to fact, *God is true*; and, secondly, that *God is true in all generations*.

I. First, then, GOD IS TRUE. *He is true in his very nature*. There is no deceit, falsehood, or error in the essential nature of God. It could not be. We, from our very birth, have deceitful hearts, deceitful

above all things ; and in us the old serpent who deceived our first parents has fearfully perverted our judgment, and turned aside our souls from their integrity, so that often we put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, and frequently we believe a lie and reject the truth. But God is not a man that he should lie. His very name is "The Lord God, abundant in goodness and truth." This is a part of his holiness : the angels could not cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth," if God were not true. Admit for a single moment untruthfulness on the part of God, and you have at once destroyed the wholeness, or holiness, of his ever blessed and adorable character. What makes men untruthful ? Whatever it may be, it is clear that nothing of the kind can operate with God. When a man tells a lie it is often through fear—fear of the consequences of the truth ; but the eternal Jehovah cannot dread consequences : he is omnipotent, all things are in his hands. When a man utters a lie he frequently does so because he thinks there is no other way of accomplishing his end ; but the infinite wisdom of God is never short of resources : he knows how to accomplish his will and pleasure without adopting the mean devices and paltry schemes of poor pitiful man. Man sometimes promises what he cannot perform, and then he is false to his promise ; but that can never be the case with the Almighty, who has but to speak, and it is done ; to command, and it stands fast. Falsehood is the wickedness—I dare not call it the infirmity—the wickedness of little natures ; but as for the Great Supreme, you cannot conceive him acting in any manner that is otherwise than straightforward, upright, and truthful. A God of truth and righteousness is he essentially. He must be so.

The Lord our God is not only true *in* his nature, but *he is true to his nature*. We are not always true to ourselves. I have known a generous man who, in a pet, has acted very ungenerously. I have known a man universally admitted to be just and upright who, nevertheless, under pressure, has stooped to an action which he could not justify ; and we have read of persons exceedingly kind by nature who, nevertheless, have perpetrated cruel deeds in times of fear. They were not true to themselves. They did actions of which any candid person would say, "This is not like the man : we are astonished that he should do this. He seems to have stepped out of his ordinary path to do a something altogether foreign to his better nature." But the Lord is always true to himself. You never find him doing anything that is not godlike. Select the acts of his creation. If he makes an aphid to creep upon a rosebud, you will find traces of infinite wisdom in it : you shall submit the insect to the microscope and discern a wisdom in it as glorious as that which shines in yonder rolling stars. If in providence some minor event comes under your notice, in that event you shall find no deviation from the constant rule of right and love by which the Most High characterises all his doings. There are no emergencies with God in which he could be driven to act an untruth ; no pressures, no difficulties, no infirmities which could produce falsehood in him. "I am Jehovah : I change not," saith he. Find him where you will, he is what he was and what he ever shall be—the eternal and ever glorious I AM, over whom circumstances can have no kind of influence,—who, indeed, knows nothing of circumstances, for he fills

all places, and all times and all ages are present with him. As for the creatures, they are as nothing in his sight, and he is all in all. Ever true, ever true by nature, and true to his nature is the Lord our God, and adored be his thrice holy name. By Jesus Christ, we present to thee, O Jehovah, our adoring praise !

Let us further notice that *God is true in action*. He has been true to the first transaction of which we are aware, namely, *the making of the eternal covenant*. What God has done in the eternity which we call the past (but which to him is as the present), we do not fully know. We have no reason to believe that we know much of what God has done. There may be as many other worlds and sorts of beings existent as there are sands upon the sea shore, for aught we know ; and the Lord may have been occupied in ages past with ten thousand glorious plans, and economies, as yet unrevealed to man. We cannot tell what he doeth, or what he hath done. We are creatures of a day, and know nothing ; we are like insects that are born on a leaf, and die amid our fellows at the setting of the sun, but he lives on for ever. We talk of the “eternal hills,” but they are babes that were born yesterday, as far as he is concerned. “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” We say, “Roll on, thou ancient ocean !” but the ocean is not ancient ; it is a drop that fell yesterday from the tip of the Creator’s finger.

We cannot tell all that the Lord did in the past ; but we are told in Scripture that he made a covenant in the olden time with his Son, and with us who are believers in his Son ; and in that covenant the chief point was that he would give his Son to be a ransom for many,—that Jesus Christ should lay down his life for his sheep, and give himself for his church. That was the most astounding promise that was ever made. Indeed, all the promises made to men are couched in that. Did he keep it? Did he take the darling of his bosom, the pure and holy Christ, and send him down to earth to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh? Did he submit that his peer, his equal, the Son of the Highest, should wear the smock-frock of a peasant and live among the sons of men as a carpenter’s son? Did he fulfil that wondrous word, and allow that dear Son of his to be nailed to a cross—to die on that gibbet like a common felon? Did he permit him to slumber in the dust among the dead? He did. Let Bethlehem and Calvary say, “The Lord is true. He hath kept his covenant.

“True to his word, he gave his Son
To die for crimes which men have done.
Blest pledge ! he never will revoke
A single promise he has spoke.”

But it was a stipulation of that covenant on the Lord’s side that Jesus Christ should have a people who should be his reward for his sufferings. The Father gave to Christ a chosen people—his sheep, his bride. These were to be his. “He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.” Has the divine Father kept that part of his covenant? Beloved, he is keeping it every day. By the preaching of the gospel, and by other means in the hand of the Spirit, those for whom

Jesus died are being called out from among the mass of mankind. They are reconciled to God by the death of Jesus, and they are saved; and whenever these present themselves before the throne of God he looks upon them as forgiven, regards them as one with his beloved Son and members of the body of Christ, and therefore he accepts them in the Beloved. For Christ's sake he preserves them; for Christ's sake he sanctifies them; for Christ's sake he will by-and-by glorify them. The covenant of grace has many promises in it, but not one of them has failed. As on Christ's side the covenant was kept by his death, so on the Father's side the covenant has been kept by the salvation of those whom Jesus redeemed from among men when he gave himself a ransom for many. Oh, beloved, if it could be proved that the covenant of grace had failed, if there had been the smallest faltering in the fulfilment of this divine treaty, then might we speak with bated breath concerning the truthfulness of God, and the sinner would not be so guilty when he makes God a liar. But because in this grand covenant transaction God has not swerved by so much as one jot or tittle from his promise, let his name be blessed! Praise him, all ye saints in heaven! Praise him, ye saints on earth, for "his truth endureth to all generations."

God being thus true *in* his nature, and true *to* his nature, and true to his covenant, *he has been true to all his purposes*. Whatever God resolved to do he has done; whatever he decreed has come to pass. There has been no change in the purpose of God at any time. Straight forward he goeth, and none can hinder him. The opposition of men, and the opposition of devils, are as nothing; these can no more avail to change his plans than an infant's breath could alter the course of the sun. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it?" Who art thou that hopest to thwart the designs of God? What he resolves to do who shall dare to censure, much less to oppose? Who is he that shall say unto the Lord, "Thine arm is short; thou art not able to accomplish thy work"? Behold, his will is omnipotence, and he doeth as he pleases amongst the angels of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this lower world. From the time he planned the whole scheme of providence and grace nothing has ever made him alter so much as one single line of it. There it stands, and he is true to it, and true he will be, till, like a vesture, he shall fold up creation as an outworn mantle, which has answered its wearer's end.

This leads us to remark that *God is true to his promises*. There is not a promise which God has made, but what either he has kept it, or else, being dated for the future, he will keep it when the time appointed comes. Whatever he has said to the sons of men has been meant. How sadly common it is for men to make engagements in public while, under the rose, they never intend to do anything of the sort. How many promises are made to please the ear and cheat the heart. Blessed be the Lord, it is not so with him. I love that passage wherein it is written, "I have not spoken in secret, in the dark places of the earth. I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain." There are no mental reservations and Jesuitical equivocations with God; there is nothing in his secret purpose which will contradict the promise which he has given. When he says to the wicked, "Ye

shall surely die," he means it; but when he says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool," he means it. And when he says, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," it is not mere talk. It is reality. He means it. He is "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." There is truth in what he says, and he fulfils it. Oh, how many of us there are here who can tell of the pardoning mercy of God! We have been forgiven; we have been saved. We sought the Lord and he heard us: we cried unto him and he answered us. We came before him with no plea except the blood of Jesus, and he said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee." Blessed be his name, his promises are true. Now, child of God, I want you to note this upon the tablets of your heart. Be sure of it; for on your assurance of God's truthfulness very much depends. You cannot come to God and be accepted if you have any suspicion of the divine veracity, for "without faith it is impossible to please him." Do not play with God's promises. Do not say, "I hope they are true." You have no business to hope about it. They *are* true. Do not go with a promise on your lips and say, "Lord, I sometimes hope that this will be fulfilled." No, but say, "Lord, I know thou canst not lie: thou hast said it, and thou wilt do it. As the pitcher hangs on the nail, so do I hang upon thy truth." God deserves to be treated with unbounded confidence. Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away than one promise of our God shall fall to the ground.

"He will not his great self deny;
A God all truth can never lie;
As well might he his being quit
As break his oath or word forget."

Now, as he is thus true to his secret purposes and true to his promises, I may add that *he is true to all his published word*, which he has made known to us in holy Scripture. This book, having in it testimonies from God, is not a book for yesterday, nor shall it be merely a book for to-day, but for all time. It stands and must stand fast for ever. Did the law condemn sin? It condemns it still. Did the gospel provide pardon eighteen hundred years ago? It does so still. Is there a promise that believers shall be saved? They are saved still. Is there a declaration that unbelievers shall be damned? Damned they must be, for that word can never alter. Of every gracious declaration of the Most High we may sing,—

"Engraved as in eternal brass
The mighty promise shines,
Nor can the powers of darkness raze
Those everlasting lines."

Every word of God is true, and standeth fast like the pillars of heaven; neither can it ever be changed; rest ye sure of this.

Further, let me observe to you to-night that *God is true in every relation that he sustains*. Is he a King? The kingcraft of God is not like that of many princes, who think that their ambassadors ought to be sent abroad to tell lies for the good of their countrymen at home. No,

there are no deceits, and tricks and plots with the court of heaven. Nothing of what is called finesse and intrigue enter into the government of God. It is all straightforward with him, and so plain and clear that it baffles villainy, countermines the mining of deceit, and makes the diviners mad. O blessed King upon thy throne, thy courtiers are men of clean hands, who love the truth in their hearts : they dwell with thee, but as for liars and deceivers, thou hast said that they shall be cast into the lake of fire.

The Lord will be true as *a Judge*. When you and I come to be tried before him there will be no bribes taken ; there will be no suborning of witnesses, no twisting of the law. In righteousness shall he judge the world, and his people with equity, for he is just and true in all his ways, and will by no means clear the guilty. He will only clear those whom he has made righteous through the righteousness of his Son.

Blessed be his name, he is true as *a Father*. Many fathers are bad fathers—hard, forgetful, selfish ; we pity the children who have such parents. They are not fathers at all in the true sense. But God is a true father, pitying and compassionating, helping and loving and providing for his children.

And he is a true *friend*. There are friends in the world of a sad sort. Friends!—perhaps we have a score of them : friends while we have a shilling, but they leave us when our purse is empty, or we are under a cloud. “A friend in need is a friend indeed,” says our proverb, and such a friend is God ; for, oh, how he helps the helpless ! How the widow and the fatherless, and those that have no helper, look up to him ; and how in our despair, when we are sore pressed and crushed under a burden of trouble, we have turned to him, and he has helped us, truly helped us, for he is a practical friend.

But I should tire you if I went through all the relationships which God sustains to us : only I may sum up all by saying that he is true and thorough in them all. There is no pretence or mockery with him.

And I will close this head by saying that *God is true to every man, to every woman in the world*. When you get to the end of life you will find that everything that God said is true. You may have doubted it, but experience will prove it. You may call him a liar, as we proved that unbelievers did this morning, but you will find him true,—true to your cost if you die rejecting him, but assuredly true in all respects. Some dare to charge God with favouritism, and I do not know what they will not say. Such things have I heard said about the living God that I will not defile my lips by repeating them ; but, sinner, you will find him to be impartial. Your judgment before God will be so just that you yourself will agree in it. Though it sends you down to hell, you will be obliged by your speechless confusion to confess that God has kept his word with you, and has dealt out impartial justice. You will not at any time be able to turn round upon him and say, “This is not what was written in thy book : this is not what thy ministers told me : this is not what my conscience tells me should be.” Nay, nay, but as it is written so shall you find it. Do not risk the Lord’s driving you for ever from his presence, for if you die in unbelief he will do so. If you reject him, he will reject you ; and if you

despise his Son, he will despise you. If you will live and die impenitent and unbelieving, you shall be driven from his presence into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; and he has told you so. I sometimes pity persons who are brought up before the magistrates for breaking some of our new laws, which the magistrates themselves cannot administer, and which nobody can understand. The magistrate says, "It is clear you have broken a law," and the man replies, "I did not know it." I pity a man in that case. But you do know the law of the Lord. God's laws have been published, fastened up in your conscience, and printed in the book which is in all your houses; and so if you sin against his commands you sin against light and knowledge, and will be utterly without excuse when he calls you to his bar.

There I leave this great truth, having illustrated it in a considerable number of ways. *God is true.*

II. The second head was to be, that GOD IS TRUE IN ALL GENERATIONS. This fact breaks up into three heads, in the *past*, in the *present*, and in the *future*.

I should have to detain you here for a long time if I were to go into that first head at any length. God has been true in *the past*. The whole of history, sacred and profane, goes to prove that. Take the beginning of our race. God warned Adam and Eve that if they ate of the forbidden fruit they should surely die. He indicated to them therein a spiritual death, which signifies separation from God. In the day they ate thereof they did die—die as to all spiritual life, and Adam, instead of welcoming God, went to hide himself among the trees of the garden, and felt that he was naked. God then told him that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread, and that his wife should bring forth her children with bitter pangs. Has it not been so? Every man's labour and every woman's travail prove that God is true. But then the Lord came in with a voice of mercy, and he said, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," and Jesus came, the woman's promised seed; and he has bruised the head of Satan, and proclaimed to us salvation through the Man, the Mediator, who is also God over all, blessed for ever. The first promise has been kept.

Years rolled on, and God destroyed the world with a flood. You know the story. God said he would, and he did it. He told Noah to go into the ark, and he would save him. He went in, and he saved him. But when he came out, perhaps Noah was half afraid the world would be destroyed again; and, when a shower began to fall, he did not know but what the sluices of heaven had been pulled up again, and that once more the floods might come. Presently he saw in the skies, that wonderful sight which I think none of us can look upon without delight—a rainbow, a bow of many colours, not a blood-stained bow, but a bow of joy, many-coloured, like streamers of delight—a bow not turned downwards to shoot at us, but upwards, as if we might shoot our prayers up to God upon it—a bow without an arrow, to show that God has not come out to war with men. And what did God say? "I, behold even I, do set my bow in the cloud, for behold I make a covenant with the world that seed time and harvest, summer

and winter, cold and heat, shall never fail; and I will no more destroy the earth with a flood." Has he not kept it? Have you not felt winter's cold going through your bones? Did you not sweat with the heat of summer? Did he not say that he would give you the harvest time and the heat? He has kept his covenant. Every time you see the rainbow in heaven, nay, every time you walk upon the earth and find that it is not transformed into one dreary, dreadful, all-devouring sea, you may say to yourself, "God is true."

The world went on, and there came an Abraham into the world, and God said, "Get thee hence, from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, to a land that I will show thee. I will give it to thee and to thy seed after thee." Abraham believed God, and went into a land that he knew nothing of. He found it full of inhabitants, and he dwelt among them in tents, wandering up and down. It did not look likely that God would give him that land, nor to his seed after him, for he had no children, and he was more than a hundred years old, and his wife was well stricken in years. He had to wait long, but Isaac came at last, and made glad that household. Four hundred and fifty years went on, Abraham had been gathered to his fathers, and yet there was not an Israelite in all Canaan; not a foot of that land belonged to them except the cave of Machpelah, in which the dead patriarch still lay. But the time came for Israel to come up into the promised land, and they did come. God sent down Moses and told Pharaoh to let his people go, for the time was come, and they must go up to their own land. Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I will not obey his voice, neither will I let Israel go." But he had to change his note, and bow before the stammering man who spoke for God. God chastened and plagued Egypt till at last they let Israel go; and they did go, though the Red Sea rolled before them, and Pharaoh's host pursued them. They did go, for though the wilderness yielded them no meat, the heavens dropped with manna. They went through the great howling wilderness, and failed not for drought, for the rocks gushed with rivers. They did go till they came to Canaan, and there they were called to fight with Anakim and giants; but they threw down the battlements of their cities, and they smote the Canaanites with great slaughter, and took possession of the land, and dwelt therein, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, for the Lord had said it, and the Lord fulfilled it. He gave the land to them, and they possessed it in due time.

Thus, you see, I might keep on with history as long as you pleased, but it all goes to show that if God says it he does it. He said that Edom should become a desolation, and the traveller can hardly pass through Petra at this present day. He said that Tyre should become a place for the mending of nets; and it is so still in its desolateness. He said that Egypt should be the meanest of all the nations; and who that knows Egypt, where the stick is used on almost every man, does not know that no people yield so meanly to a despot's will as the Egyptian race? Everything has happened that the Lord has spoken up to this moment.

Now, instead of taking you back to ancient or modern history,

I would like to take you to the history of your mother or of your grandmother. I think of my dear old grandfather, and of what he used to say to me. If he were here to-night—I am glad he is not, because he is in heaven, and that is a much better place for him—but if he could come from heaven, and could talk as he used to do when he was here on earth, he would say, “Ah, my boy, I *did* find him a faithful God.” He had a large family and a very small income, but he loved his Lord, and he would not have given up his preaching of the gospel for anything, not even for an imperial crown. He has told me often how the Lord provided for him. He had a little farm to get his living upon it, and he had a cow which used to give milk for his many children, and one day when he came up to the cow it fell back with the staggers and died. Grandmother said, “James, how will God provide for the dear children now? What shall we do for milk?” “Mother,” said he, “God said he would provide, and I believe that he could send us fifty cows if he pleased.” It so happened that on that day a number of gentlemen were meeting in London, persons whom he did not know, were sitting as a committee for the distribution of money to poor ministers, and they had given it to all who had asked for it. My grandfather had never asked for any; he liked to earn his own money. He did not send in any petition or appeal. Well, after the gentlemen had distributed to all who had asked there was five pounds over, and they were considering what they should do with this balance. “Well,” said one, “there is a Mr. Spurgeon down at Stambourne, in Essex, a poor minister. He stands in need of five pounds.” “Oh,” said another, “don’t send him five pounds. I will put five to it. I know him. He is a worthy man.” “No,” said another, “don’t send him ten pounds. I will give another five pounds if somebody else will put a fourth five to it.” The next morning came a letter to grandfather with ninepence to pay! Grandmother did not like to pay out ninepence for a letter, but there was twenty pounds in it; and as my grandfather opened it he said, “Now, can’t you trust God about an old cow?” These things I tell you, and you smile, and well you may; but, oh, my soul laughs, and my face laughs on both sides, when I think how faithful God has been to me. I can tell you about my grandfather, but I will not tell you about myself, for that would be almost as long as the history I spoke of. From the day that I left my father’s house to this day, if there is no other man in the world that can speak of the faithfulness of God, I can; I must, I will, and none shall stop me of this glorying. He has never lied unto me, or failed me, or forsaken me, but has kept his word to the moment in every respect. Nay, I sometimes think he has gone beyond his word, and done for me exceeding abundantly above what I understood him to promise; he has exceeded my expectation, even when my expectation has been at full tide. If I were to invite the brethren round us, one by one, to get up, and were to say “Brother, has God kept his word to you in the past? Speak as you have found him,” they would all testify to the Lord’s truth. And, oh, it is not merely the brethren, but there is many an aged woman here; there is many a widow here; there is many a poor tried believer here; and as I look round I know the stories of some of you, and I know what you would say. It would

be, "Blessed be his holy name, not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord God hath promised."

There is the testimony of history, ancient and modern ; there is the testimony of the biographies of our sires ; and the testimony of our autobiographies as well. God is true, glory be to his name !

Now, brethren, I was to have said next, that *God is true still*. Not only was he true, but he is true : he is true to-night. He is true to-night. If you want to know that, go down many of our streets in London to-night. Go to the casual ward of the workhouse, if you like, and just pick out the vagrants—those that are in rags and poverty. What do you find ? In nine cases out of ten, how did they get there ? What brought them to poverty ? Drink and laziness. And what did God say ? "The drunkard and the sluggard shall come to poverty." God said they should, and they do. He says, "The sluggard shall clothe himself with rags." Every time I see a sluggard in rags, I say to myself, "God is true : he said it would come to that." He tells us that sin will bring sorrow ; and do you not see it everywhere ? Most of the misery in the world can be traced to some sin or other—some direct breach of the divine command. God is true.

On the other hand, look you to-night on many a happy face. If I were to question the man who owns that happy face—What makes you so happy ?—he would say, "Because my sins are forgiven me." "How came that about ?" "I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I had the promise that my sins should be forgiven me, and they have been." "You had a burden once, had you not ?" "Yes." "And you have got rid of it ?" "Did you go to Jesus Christ's cross with that burden ?" "Yes, and I got rid of it just as he said I should." "Did you do anything more than that ?" "No, I simply trusted Jesus. He said I should have peace, and I have got it." "Well, but how about your daily troubles ? Do you have any ?" "Oh, yes, I do." "I ask you that question because Jesus said, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation.' Do you find it so ?" "That I do," says one. But then he said, "In me ye shall have peace." Do you find it so, brethren ? How was it with you last week when you had all those troubles ? Did you enjoy peace even then ? Did you hear him say, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Ye believe in God : believe also in me" ? And did you believe in him and find at once that you could cast your burden upon God ? Oh, yes, the saints will testify unanimously that whenever they trust God it is well with their souls, and to-night, as well as in the past, we have a faithful God.

Have we here present to-night any friend in great distress ? You have forgotten it, I suppose, during the service, but now you recollect that the brunt of the storm will be upon you next Monday. Does this alarm you ? You are a child of God, and do you think that your Father will leave you in the time of need ? No, I will not ask you whether you think so, because it would be a crying shame if you did your Lord such an injustice. If we never doubt our God till we have a cause for it, it will be a long while first. "But it is a new trouble, sir." Yes, but he who was your God of old will help you through the new trial. Go to him again. "Ah, but I dread the loss of a very dear and precious one." Yes, but as his will is so should your will be.

God maketh all things work together for good. Do you not believe it? All things are moving according to the decree of goodness and wisdom, and you must not doubt it. Like Jacob, you sometimes say, "All these things are against me;" but they are not, they are all *for* you. God is ordering all for the best.

Now, last of all, *God will be true*. I do not know how far we have to go before we shall reach to our journey's end; but this I know, the whole of the road that we have to travel is paved with love and faithfulness, and we need not be afraid. We shall soon lie down upon our beds and fall asleep in death. I bless God for that. I said to a brother the other day, "So-and-so has gone home," and the brother replied, "Well, where should he go else?" Whither should a child go, when the day is over, but home? It is very sweet to think that the Lord's own children shall all go home by-and-by. He has promised that we shall be with him where he is, and we shall find it so; only, like the Queen of Sheba, we shall be astonished when we get there, and we shall say, "The half has not been told us." We shall leave these poor bodies behind in the grave for a while, but they will not be lost. They are old companions of ours on the journey of life, and, though the worms devour them, yet in our flesh we shall see God. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and, body and soul, one perfect man, shall "behold the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off." God has said so, and it will be so. We shall leave the church behind us, but God will take care of his church: we need not fret about that, he will not fail her nor forsake her. We shall leave the world behind us, and the world is very wicked, but it will not prevail against the truth, for the Lord has said the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church, nor shall they.

We need not be worrying about what will happen when Mr. So-and-so dies. People are always putting the question, "What will they do when their minister is gone?" Do? Trust in God as they did before. God is alive. Martin Luther once said to his friend, when he was fretting and worrying, "When will you leave off trying to govern the world?" And we may say the same to one another when we are anxious and fretful. God does not need any of us. We think ourselves mightily important, and we really are no more important to God's plans than the caterpillar in the kitchen garden is to a Napoleon when he is marching his armies across a continent. We are nothings and nobodies, except when God pleases to use us; and he can do better without us than with us sometimes, for we get in his way. Oh, brethren, matters are all right, for they are in God's hands. The everlasting God lives, and he will work his purposes, for he is the true God. The heathen will be converted to Christ, for the Lord has said, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "As I live," saith the Lord, "surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God." It shall be done, it must be done. Rest you sure of it. "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Antichrist on yonder seven hills must be thrown down: the crescent of Mahomet must wane: the gods of the heathen must be utterly abolished. *Must*, I say; for is it not written, "He must reign

till his enemies are made his footstool" ? There are croaking prophets about, foretelling horrors enough to make our hair stand on end. Vials are to be poured out, and stars are to fall, before we can turn round. I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet, and therefore I do not dare set up a theory of futurity, but this one thing I know, "The Lord reigneth," and the Lord will accomplish his purposes, and preserve his church in the world; truth shall never die, and Christ's throne shall never shake, for the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands.

Thus have we tried to declare the truthfulness of God. How short of the mighty theme have we fallen! These two words, and we have done. Since God is true, ye children of God, why do you mistrust him? Since God is true, ye sinners, why do you belie him by your unbelief? Echo answers, "Why?" And so we leave it. And unto Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be glory, for ever and ever! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm lxxxv.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—100 (Vers. IV.), 193, 1,009.

THE PILGRIM FATHERS (by John Brown, Pilgrim Publications, Pasadena, Texas, 1970, 352 pages, paperback, \$3.95).

This is actually a reprint of Brown's work, published in commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. It would be good for every American (assuming that he would read with an open mind) to read this account of the noble band so indelibly tied in with the origins of our nation. It is interesting to read quotations such as this: "For that the propagation of the gospel is a thing we do profess above all to be our aim in settling this plantation, we have been careful to make plentiful provision of godly ministers, by whose faithful preaching, godly conversation and exemplary life we trust not only those of our own nation will be built up in the knowledge of God, but also the Indians may in God's appointed time be reduced to the obedience of the gospel of Christ." Would that such a purpose would be characteristic of our nation as a whole today!

THE BAPTIST BULLETIN