

FIRST STEPS IN FAITH

by R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey's guide for new believers explaining the foundations of the Christian life, including receiving Christ as Savior and Lord, and the importance of unconditional surrender and obedience.

6 Chapters

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00 - First Steps in Faith

First Steps in faith by R.A. Torrey In this brief 5 chapter work by R.A. Torrey, he presents us with a few thoughts about beginning the Christian life.

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01 - Beginning Right

Beginning Right

by

R. A. Torrey

(1856-1928)

There is nothing more important in the Christian life than beginning right. If we begin right, we can go on right. If we begin wrong, the whole life that follows is likely to be wrong. If anyone who reads these pages has begun wrong, it is a very simple matter to begin over again and begin right. What the right beginning in the Christian life is we are told in John 1:12, "To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." The right way to begin the Christian life is by receiving Jesus Christ. To anyone who receives Him, He at once gives power to become a child of God. If the reader of this book should be the wickedest man on earth and should at this moment receive Jesus Christ, that very instant he would become a child of God. God says so in the most unqualified way in the verse quoted above. No one can become a child of God in any other way. No man, no matter how carefully he has been reared, no matter how well he has been sheltered from the vices and evils of this world, is a child of God until he receives Jesus Christ. We are "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26), and in no other way.

What does it mean to receive Jesus Christ? It means to take Christ to be to yourself all that God offers Him to be to everybody. Jesus Christ is God's gift. "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16). Some accept this wondrous gift of God. Everyone who does accept this gift becomes a child of God. Many others refuse this wondrous gift of God, and everyone who refuses this gift of God perishes. He is condemned already. "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (John 3:18).

What does God offer His Son to be to us?

1. First of all, God offers Jesus to us to be our sin-bearer. We have all sinned. There is not a man or woman or a boy or a girl who has not sinned (Romans 3:22-23). "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives" (1 John 1:8, 1 John 1:10). Now, we must each of us bear our own sin or some one else must bear it in our place. If we were to bear our own sins, it would mean we must be banished forever from the presence of God, for God is holy. "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). But God Himself has provided another to bear our sins in our place, so that we should not need to bear them ourselves. This sin-bearer is God's own Son, Jesus Christ: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might

become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). When Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary He redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse in our stead (Galatians 3:13). To receive Christ, then, is to believe this testimony of God about His Son, to believe that Jesus Christ did bear our sins in His own body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24), and to trust God to forgive all our sins because Jesus Christ has borne them in our place. "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Our own good works, past, present, or future, have nothing to do with the forgiveness of our sins. Our sins are forgiven, not because of any good works that we do; they are forgiven because of the atoning work of Christ on the cross of Calvary in our place. If we rest in this atoning work we shall do good works, but our good works will be the outcome of our being saved and the outcome of our believing on Christ as our sin-bearer. Our good works will not be the ground of our salvation, but the result of our salvation, and the proof of it. We must be very careful not to mix in our good works at all as the ground of salvation. We are forgiven, not because of Christ's death and our good works, but solely and entirely because of Christ's death. To see this clearly is the right beginning of the true Christian life.

2. God offers Jesus to us as our deliverer from the power of sin. Jesus not only died, He rose again. Today He is a living Savior. He has all power in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). He has power to keep the weakest sinner from falling (Jude 1:24). He is able to save not only completely, but "completely," all that come to the Father through Him ("Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." -Hebrews 7:25) "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). To receive Jesus is to believe this that God tells us in His Word about Him, to believe that He did rise from the dead, to believe that He does now live, to believe that He has power to keep us from falling, to believe that He has power to keep us from the power of sin day by day, and just trust Him to do it. This is the secret of daily victory over sin. If we try to fight sin in our own strength, we are bound to fail. If we just look up to the risen Christ to keep us every day and every hour, He will keep us. Through the crucified Christ we get deliverance from the guilt of sin, our sins are all blotted out, we are free from all condemnation; but it is through the risen Christ that we get daily victory over the power of sin. Some receive Christ as a sin-bearer and thus find pardon, but do not get beyond that, and so their life is one of daily failure. Others receive Him as their risen Savior also, and thus enter into an experience of victory over sin. To begin right we must take Him not only as our sin-bearer, and thus find pardon; but we must also take Him as our risen Savior, our Deliverer from the power of sin, our Keeper, and thus find daily victory over sin.

3. But God offers Jesus to us, not only as our sin-bearer and our Deliverer from the power of sin, but also as our Lord and King. We read in Acts 2:36, "Let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Lord means Divine Master, and Christ means anointed King. To receive Jesus is to take Him as our Divine Master, as the One to whom we yield the absolute confidence of our intellects, the One whose word we believe absolutely, the One whom we will believe, though many of the wisest of men may question or deny the truth of His teachings; and as our King to whom we gladly yield the absolute control of our lives, so that the question from this time on is never going to be, What would I like to do or what do others tell me to do, or what do others do? but "What would my King Jesus have me do?" A right beginning involves an unconditional surrender to the Lordship and Kingship of Jesus. The failure

to realize that Jesus is Lord and King, as well as Savior, has led to many a false start in the Christian life. We begin with Him as our Savior, as our sin-bearer and our Deliverer from the power of sin, but we must not end with Him merely as Savior; we must know Him as Lord and King. There is nothing more important in a right beginning of the Christian life than an unconditional surrender, both of the thoughts and the conduct, to Jesus. Say from your heart and say it again and again, "All for Jesus." Many fail because they shrink back from this entire surrender. They wish to serve Jesus with half their heart, and part of themselves, and part of their possessions. To hold back anything from Jesus means a wretched life of stumbling and failure. The life of entire surrender is a joyous life all along the way. If you have never done it before, go alone with God today; get down on your knees, and say, "All for Jesus," and mean it. Say it very earnestly; say it from the bottom of your heart. Stay on your knees until you realize what it means and what you are doing. It is a wondrous step forward when one really takes it. If you have taken it already, take it again, take it often. It always has fresh meaning and brings fresh blessedness. In this absolute surrender is found the key to the truth. Doubts rapidly disappear for one who surrenders all (John 7:17). In this absolute surrender is found the secret of power in prayer (1 John 3:22). In this absolute surrender is found the supreme condition of receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32).

Taking Christ as your Lord and King involves obedience to His will, so far as you know it, in each smallest detail of life. There are those who tell us that they have taken Christ as their Lord and King who at the same time are disobeying Him daily in business, in domestic life, in social life, and in personal conduct. Such persons are deceiving themselves. You have not taken Jesus as your Lord and King if you are not striving to obey Him in everything each day. He Himself says, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). To sum it all up, the right way to begin the Christian life is to accept Jesus Christ as your sin-bearer and to trust God to forgive your sins because Jesus Christ died in your place; to accept Him as your risen Savior who ever lives to make intercession for you, and who has all power to keep you, and to trust Him to keep you from day to day; and to accept Him as your Lord and King to whom you surrender the absolute control of your thoughts and of your life. This is the right beginning, the only right beginning of the Christian life. If you have made this beginning, all that follows will be comparatively easy. If you have not made this beginning, make it now.

02 - How to be Inexpressibly Happy

How to be Inexpressibly Happy by REUBEN ARCHER TORREY—1856-1928 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: — 1 Peter 1:8

I have here a beautiful text, a text that you all know, but I wonder how many of you have ever pondered it enough to take in all its wonderful wealth of meaning. A young woman in England many years ago always wore a golden locket that she would not allow anyone to open or look into, and everyone thought there must be some romance connected with that locket and that in that locket must be the picture of the one she loved. The young woman died at an early age, and after her death the locket was opened, everyone wondering whose face he would find within. And in the locket was found simply a little slip of paper with these words written upon it, "Though I have not seen Him, I love." Her Lord Jesus was the only lover she knew and the only lover she longed for, and she had gone to be with Him, the one object of her whole heart's devotion, the unseen but beloved Savior. But it is to the last part of the verse that I wish to call your particular attention tonight, "Even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy." This text informs us (and many of us do not need to be informed of it, for we know it by blessed experience) that one who really believes on Jesus Christ, our unseen, but ever living Lord and Savior, rejoices with "inexpressible and glorious joy." The Greek word translated "joy" is a very strong word, describing extreme joy or jubilant joy. The word "inexpressible" declares that this jubilant joy is of such a character that we cannot, by any possibility, explain it adequately to others. Everyone who really believes on the Lord Jesus does rejoice with an jubilant joy that is beyond all description. And those who do truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are the only ones who rejoice this way. Others may have a certain amount of joy, a certain measure of gladness, but the only people who really know "inexpressible and glorious joy" are those who really believe on Jesus Christ. Who is there among us who does not wish to be happy? Happiness is the one thing all men are seeking. One man seeks it in one way, and another man seeks it in another way, but all men are in pursuit of it. Even the man who is "happy only when he is miserable" is seeking happiness in this strange way of cultivating a delightful melancholy by always looking on the dark side of things. One man seeks money because he thinks that money will make a man happy. Another man seeks worldly pleasure because he thinks that worldly pleasure will make a man happy. Still another seeks learning, the knowledge of science, or philosophy, or history, or literature, because he thinks that learning brings the true joy; but they are all in pursuit of the one thing, happiness. The vast majority of men who seek happiness do not find it. You may say what you please, but for the majority of men this is an unhappy world. I go down into the houses of the poor, I do not find many happy people there. I go into the homes of the rich, I do not find many happy people even there. Study the faces of the people you meet on the street, at places of entertainment, or anywhere else, how many really radiant faces do you see? When you do see one it is so exceptional that you note it at once. But there is a way, and a very simple way, a very sure way, and a way that is open to all, not only to

find happiness, but to be unspeakably happy. Our text tells us what that way is. Listen, "Even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy." This statement of Peter's is true. How do I know it is true? In the first place, I know it is true because the Word of God says so. Whatever this book says is true. In the second place, I know it is true because I have put the matter to the test of personal experience, and found it true. A good many people say, "I do not believe the Bible." Well, I do. I believe the Bible for a good many sufficient reasons; but there is this one reason why I believe the Bible that I wish to mention tonight: I believe the Bible because I have personally tested scores and scores of its most astonishing and apparently most incredible statements and found every one of them true in my own experience. Don't you think that if I knew a man who made very many statements that I could test for myself, some of them apparently incredible, and I tested these statements one after another through a long period of years, and found every one of them true, and never one single statement failed, don't you think that I would believe that man after a while? Well, that is just my experience with the Bible, and I believe it. I would be a fool if I did not. The statement of the text is one of those that I have tested, and I have found it true.

I was not always happy. Indeed, I was once unspeakably miserable. I had sought happiness very earnestly. I had sought happiness in amusement and sin, and found, not joy, but wretchedness. In my pursuit of happiness I had tried study, the study of languages, science, philosophy and literature, but I did not find happiness in these things. At last I turned to Jesus Christ and believed on Him, and I found not merely happiness, but something better, joy, "inexpressible and glorious joy." Whatever heaven may be or may not be, I know that on this earth he who really believes on Jesus Christ, who puts himself in Christ's hands, to be led, and taught, and guided, and strengthened, puts himself in the hands of Jesus Christ for Jesus Christ to do all He will with him, I know that such a person finds "inexpressible and glorious joy."

Why Those Who Believe in Jesus Christ Have Inexpressible and Glorious Joy

First of all, those who believe on Jesus Christ have "inexpressible and glorious joy" because they know that their sins are all forgiven. It is a wonderful thing to know that your sins are all forgiven, to know that there is not one single, slightest cloud between you and God, to know that no matter how many, or how great your sins may have been, that they are all blotted out; to know that God has put them all behind His back, where no one can ever get at them; to know that God has sunk all your sins in the depths of the sea, from which they can never be raised; that they are all gone. A little boy once asked his mother, "Mother, where are our sins after they are blotted out?" His mother replied, "My boy, where are those figures that you erased from your paper yesterday?" He answered, "I rubbed them out." Then she asked, "Where are they now?" he replied, "They are nowhere." "Well," she said, "that is just the same with your sins when God has blotted them out. They are nowhere. They have ceased to be."

Oh, friends, what a joy it is to know that there is not one single tiny cloud between you and the Holy God whom we call Father and who rules this universe. Suppose that you had offended the laws of the nation and had been sent to prison on a life sentence, and a pardon were brought to you, do you not think you would be happy? But that is nothing compared with the joy of knowing that your every sin is blotted out. Some years ago Governor Stuart of Pennsylvania determined to pardon one of the prisoners in the Pennsylvania State prison, so he sent for Mr. Moody and said to

him, "I have determined to pardon one of the prisoners in our state's prison, and I want you to go and take the pardon to him. You can preach to the prisoners if you want to while you are doing it." So Mr. Moody went, carrying the pardon with him, and before he began to preach he said, "I have a pardon for one of you men that the Governor has sent by me." He did not intend to tell who it was who was pardoned until the sermon was over, but as he looked around on his audience and saw how anxious they all were, how eager they were, how a very agony of suspense was in their faces, Mr. Moody thought, "This will never do, I can't keep these men in this suspense," so he said, "I will tell you now who the man is," and he read his name from the pardon. Do you not think that, that was a glad moment for that one man out of those hundreds of prisoners, a glad moment for the one man who had the Governor's pardon, and who could walk out of prison a free man? Yes, but that is nothing to knowing that the eternal God has eternally pardoned your sins. Every true Christian knows that, he knows that every one of his sins is forgiven. How does he know it? Because the Bible says so in many places. For example, it says in Acts 13:39, "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." so we know it because God says so. But no one but the believer in Jesus Christ knows that his sins are all forgiven. If anyone who is not a believer in Jesus Christ says, "I know my sins are all forgiven," he says what is not true; for he does not know it, and cannot know it, for it is not a fact; but a Christian knows it because the Word of God says so. The Christian knows his sins are all forgiven for another reason, that is, because the Holy Spirit bears witness in his own heart to the fact. One day, when the Apostle Peter was preaching to Cornelius, the Roman officer, and to his household, he said, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43), and everyone in his audience believed it. The Spirit of God descended right then and there and filled their hearts with the knowledge of sins forgiven, and they "began to magnify God" with jubilant hearts and jubilant voices. I tell you that was a joyful meeting. A king, a great king, once wrote one of the greatest songs that ever was written. That song has lasted through the ages. It has been sung and is still being sung by thousands. It has been sung by millions, and though it was written many centuries ago, it is just as sweet today as the day the king wrote it. The man who wrote this song was a great king, the greatest king of his day, he was also one of the greatest generals of his day, one of the greatest generals of any day. He had great armies, the all-conquering armies of the day. He had a magnificent palace. I do not suppose that any other earthly king was ever so beloved as he was. His song was about joy and about happiness. He does not say in that song, "How happy is the man who is a great king," or, "How happy is the man who is a great general." What does he say? "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered" (Psalms 32:1, translated literally from the Hebrew): "There is no happiness like the joy of knowing your sins are all forgiven." Oh, what a joy thrills the heart when a man knows that his sins are fully, freely, and forever forgiven. That is one reason why he who believes on Jesus Christ is inexpressibly happy, and you can have that inexpressible happiness today. I do not care how black your life may have been in the past; I do not care how far you may have wandered from God; I do not care how old you may have grown in sin; if you take Jesus Christ today for your Savior and your Lord, and believe on Him, your every sin will be blotted out, and it will be your privilege to know it. In the second place, those who believe on Jesus Christ rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because they are free from the most grinding and crushing of all forms of slavery, the slavery of sin. There is many a slave in this audience tonight. Some of you are slaves of strong drink. Some of you men and some of you

women are slaves of drink. You know you are slaves of drink. Some of you are slaves of drugs. Some of you are slaves of an uncontrollable temper. Some of you are slaves of acts of impurity or impurity of thought. Some of you are slaves of other sins. The grossest, vilest, most degrading slavery in the universe is the slavery of sin. Yes, many of you here tonight are slaves. But the Lord Jesus says in John 8:31-32, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He says again in the thirty-sixth verse, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." There is not a slave in this building tonight who cannot have his chains snapped in a moment, yes, in a moment, by the mighty Son of God, if only he will believe on Jesus and trust Him to do it. How many a man and how many a woman I have known who once were slaves of sin in its most degrading and hopeless forms, who now are free.

One of the dearest and most honored and most useful friends I ever had was Sam Hadley of New York City. Sam Hadley was once hopelessly enslaved by sin. Strong drink had utterly mastered him and undermined his character. He had committed 138 forgeries, and was being sought for by the police. One night, after having spent the night before in a New York jail with the "shakes," in a mission meeting a few blocks away from the jail he cried to Jesus to save him, and Jesus saved him right then and there; and I have often heard him say that never from that night had he ever had the slightest desire for that which had enslaved him more than anything else, intoxicating drink. My, what a happy man he became! All who knew him testified that he had "inexpressible and glorious joy." I wish you could have looked in Sam Hadley's face and seen the joy in that redeemed and radiant countenance. But we do not need to call Sam Hadley back from heaven to testify, for there are hundreds of people right here in this building tonight who once were complete slaves, who now are God's free men and free women, and who could testify to the fact. That is one reason why we are inexpressibly happy, because we are free. How the Southern Blacks rejoiced when they came to understand they were set free. They shouted and sang, "Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!" Why? Because once they were slaves, but now were free. No wonder, then, that we rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because we know that we are free, and free forever. In the third place, those who believe on Jesus Christ rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy," because they are delivered from all fear. There is nothing that darkens the human heart more and robs it of all joy and fills it with gloom than fear in some of its many forms.

Those who truly believe on Jesus Christ are saved from all fear. They are delivered from all fear of misfortune; they are delivered from all fear of man; they are delivered from all fear of death; they are delivered from all fear of eternity. Do you know, friends, that to a true believer in Jesus Christ "eternity" is one of the sweetest words in the English language? Oh, how it makes our hearts swell, that word, "eternity." But "eternity" is not a sweet word to the unsaved. Write these words, "Where will you spend eternity?" on a card and hand it to a man who is not a Christian, and they will make him mad; write these same words, "Where will you spend eternity?" on a card and hand it to a Christian, and they will make him glad. Why is it? Simply because a true believer on Jesus Christ is not afraid of but delights in thoughts of eternity. Why, to him who believes on Jesus Christ eternity is glory. In the fourth place, he who believes on Jesus Christ rejoices with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because he knows he will live forever. Is not that something to rejoice over? Is it not wonderful? We read in 1 John 2:17, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. We all know that it is true that "the world passes away."

We certainly ought to know it by this time; but it is equally true that "he who does the will of God lives forever."

Sometimes as we ride along our beautiful roads we see the stately mansions of our multimillionaires, and one will think, "It must be very pleasant to live there." Well, I suppose it must be, but think a moment. How long will these people live there? Perhaps the father of the household may live there ten years, possibly twenty years. Then where does he live? Some of the children may live there twenty, thirty, possibly, forty years, then what? The grave. I tell you it is not worth much after all. But the Christian looks on, and on, and on, to a life that has no end, to a life that is eternal. Glory! In the fifth place, those who truly believe on Jesus Christ rejoice greatly with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because they know they are children of God. It is a great thing to know that you are a child of God. How does the Christian know it? He knows it because God says so in John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" A child of God, think of it! Sometimes as I have traveled around the world someone would point out to me some man, and say, "That man is the son of such and such a man, naming some king. Would you not like to be the son of a great king? Just look at that young man. He is the son of a king." In one country many years ago, when the king business was better than it is today, I was taken up and introduced to the son of one of the reigning monarchs of Europe, and the man who introduced me whispered to me, "He is the son of So-and-So" (naming the king). Well, what of it? He was a fine man in himself, but what if he was the son of a king? I am a son of God, and that is far greater, and every believer in Jesus Christ in this building tonight is a child of God, the child of "the King of kings." And any one of you here tonight, if you are not already a child of God, can become one in an instant by receiving the Lord Jesus. In the sixth place, and very closely connected with the last, true believers in Jesus Christ rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Is that not wonderful? We are so familiar with it we do not stop to take in the meaning of it. One of England's dukes lay dying. He called his brother to him, the one who would succeed to the title, and said, "Brother, in a few hours now you will be a duke and—and I will be a king." He was already a child of the King and in a few hours he himself would be a king. I, too, will be a king in a few days. You may say, "It may be many years." Well, many years are only a few days on the scale of eternity. And, if you really are a believer in Christ Jesus, if you have a real living faith in Him, you, too, will be a king in a few days.

There was never a royal pageant sweeping through the streets of London at any coronation comparable in glory to the glory that awaits you and me just over yonder. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:4). We may be poor today. That does not matter. This life will be over in a moment and the other life begun, and that life is eternal. In the seventh place, those who truly believe on Jesus Christ, those who throw their hearts wide open to Him, is those who surrender absolutely to Him, rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" because God gives them the Holy Spirit, and there is no other joy in the present life like the joy of the Holy Spirit. One Monday morning, in Chicago, my front doorbell rang. I kept Monday in those days for my rest day, and had a notice above the doorbell, "Mr. Torrey does not see anyone on Monday." The maid went to the door, and there stood a poor woman. The maid said, "Mr. Torrey does not see anyone on Monday. Did you not see the notice over the doorbell?" She said, "I knew that, but I have got to see him and you just go and tell him a member of his

church must see him." So the maid brought her into the reception room. She was a washerwoman. The maid showed the washerwoman a seat and came upstairs and said to me, "There is a woman downstairs who is a member of your church and says she has got to see you." So down I went. As I entered the room she arose and hurried toward me, and said, "Mr. Torrey, I knew you did not see anybody on Monday, but I had to see you. Last night after I went to bed I was filled with the Holy Spirit right there in my bed, and I was so happy I could not sleep all night, and this morning I had to come and tell somebody. I could not afford to give up a day's work to come around and tell you about it, but I knew I must tell somebody and I did not know anybody I would so like to tell as you. I know you won't be angry." Indeed, I was not angry. I was glad she had come, and rejoiced with her, that old washerwoman filled with the Holy Spirit and so full of joy that, poor as she was, she had to give up a day's work to go and tell somebody she loved all about it.

Before I came to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ I was one of the bluest men who ever lived. I would sit down by the hour and brood. I have never known what the blues mean since the day I really became a Christian, absolutely surrendered to God. I have had troubles. I have had losses. There have been times in my life when I have lost pretty much everything the world holds dear. I know what it is to have a wife and four children, and to lose everything of a financial kind I had in the world, and not know from meal to meal where the next meal was coming from. I was absolutely without resources, living from hand to mouth—from God's hand to my mouth. I have known what it is to be with a wife and child in a foreign country where they spoke a strange language, and for some reason or other supplies did not come, and I did not know anyone in the city well enough to turn to for help; but I did not worry. I knew it was all in God's hands, that it would all come out right somehow, and of course it did come out right. The first time I ever visited London, thirty-nine years ago last September, I was planning to spend two weeks in England, and then start for America. I expected to find money waiting for me I when I reached London, and I reached London with a wife and child, and not a letter and no money. But I said, "The letter and the money will come tomorrow or the next day." My wife made some purchases, taking it for granted we would have money when the purchases came home; but the money did not come. Day after day passed, and the dresses came home and it was about time for the landlady to come with her board bill. It came to be the very last day before our boat started, and not a penny in sight. I went down to the bank. I did not know a soul in London. There were three or four million people there then—a stranger amid three or four millions of people, money absolutely gone, three thousand miles from friends. I did not worry. I knew the money would come. I did not know how it would come, for the source I expected to receive it from seemed utterly cut off; but yet I was happy. Why? Because I was a child of God; I had the promises of the Bible; I knew they were absolutely certain. I never lost an hour's sleep. I never worried. I just trusted. It seemed as though I would have to be fed somewhat as Elijah was, but I knew I would be fed. I knew my wife and child would be provided for. The money came, and I sailed on the steamer I expected to sail on, with every penny due paid, and money in my pocket. Friends, a Christian is happy at all times and under all circumstances. We rejoice with "inexpressible and glorious joy" every one of the twenty-four hours of the day that we are awake, and sometimes in our sleep. You, too, can have that joy.

II. How to Get This Inexpressible and Glorious Joy

Now arises the question, "What must anyone here tonight who does not have this inexpressible and glorious joy do to get it?" I have really answered that question several times in what I have

already said, but to be sure that we all really understand it, let me answer it again, or rather let my text answer it, "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy." The text tells us that the way to obtain this "inexpressible and glorious joy," the way to be inexpressibly happy at all times and under all circumstances, is just by believing on the unseen Christ Jesus. What does it mean to believe on Jesus Christ? There is no mystery at all about that. It simply means to put confidence in Jesus Christ to be what He claims to be and what He offers Himself to be to us, to put confidence in Him as the One who died in our place, the One who bore our sins in His own body on the cross, and to trust God to forgive us all our sins because Jesus Christ died in our place; to put confidence in Him as the One who was raised from the dead and who now has "all power in heaven and on earth," and therefore is able to keep us day by day, and give us victory over sin, and to trust this risen Christ to give us victory over sin day by day; and to put confidence in Him as our absolute Lord and Master, and therefore to surrender our thoughts and wills and lives entirely to His control, believing everything He says, even though every scholar on earth denies it, obeying everything He commands, whatever it may cost; and to put confidence in Him as our Divine Lord, and confess Him as Lord before the world, and worship and adore Him. It is wonderful the joy that comes to him who thus believes on Jesus Christ. But one must really believe on Jesus Christ to have this joy.

Merely being a member of a church is not enough. Merely being baptized is not enough. Merely reading your Bible is not enough. Merely praying is not enough. Merely going to church is not enough. Merely going to the Lord's table and partaking of the Lord's Supper is not enough. But if you are a real believer on Jesus Christ, if you have put all your trust in the Lord Jesus as your atoning Savior and your risen Savior, and your risen Lord and Master, and surrendered your thoughts and life to Him utterly as your Lord and Master, and are confessing Him as such before the world, if you have thrown your heart's door wide open for the Lord Jesus to come in, and live, and rule, and reign there, you will have "inexpressible and glorious joy" at all times and under all circumstances.

All anyone has to do, then, to be inexpressibly happy at all times and under all circumstances, is to believe on Jesus Christ. It does not make any difference what his circumstances may be: he may be rich or he may be poor; he may be highly educated, or he may be ignorant; he may be in good health or he may be a hopeless invalid; he may have been a moral, clean, upright man, or he may have been the vilest of sinners, it matters not. Everyone who believes on the unseen but living Christ will find "inexpressible and glorious joy." I can bring scores, hundreds, thousands of witnesses to prove that. You cannot bring a single witness on the other side. Col. Robert Ingersoll delighted to say, "It doesn't make one happy to be a Christian." How did he know? He never tried it. You can search the earth through and you cannot find me one single man or woman who was ever an out-and-out believer in Jesus Christ, a real wholehearted believer in Jesus Christ, one who had surrendered all to Jesus Christ; I say you cannot find me even one such man or woman who will deny that Jesus Christ gives "inexpressible and glorious joy" to those who thus believe on Him. Here, then, is the way the case stands: Every single competent witness, that is, every witness who has ever tried it, testifies that believing in Jesus Christ does bring "inexpressible and glorious joy," and these witnesses number thousands, tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands, people from every rank of society and culture, and not one witness on the other side. Is it demonstrated or

not? It certainly is.

I take it that I am speaking tonight to reasonable men and women. You desire "inexpressible and glorious joy." I have told you how to get it. There can be no doubt about it. The evidence is overwhelmingly convincing. There is, then, but one rational thing for you to do, believe on Jesus Christ tonight. Will you do it?

Once a man who was utterly miserable came to me. He was a rarely gifted man, a brilliant scholar, but utterly miserable. If ever I saw a man in hell he was the man. He had attempted suicide at least four times. He had been so near succeeding in his attempts that on two occasions it had been necessary to pump out of him the poison he had taken and thus bring him back to life. I urged him to believe on Jesus Christ. He replied, "I cannot, I have sinned away the Day of Grace." Day after day I talked with the man and always I had but one message, and that was, "Come to Jesus Christ. Believe on Jesus Christ." At last, one day the man did come to Jesus Christ. He found "inexpressible and glorious joy." Sometimes I have seen that man when his face was radiant. Out of hell into heaven by just believing on Jesus Christ! Will you take that same step now?

03 - The Day of Goden Opportunity

The Day of Golden Opportunity by REUBEN ARCHER TORREY—1856-1928 "The Holy Spirit says, Today" — Hebrews 3:7 THE DAY OF GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY is today. Golden opportunities, opportunities of priceless worth, are open to every one of us today. But "tomorrow" has no sure promise for any one of us. "The Holy Spirit says, Today," and Conscience also cries, "Today," and the voice of Reason and the voice of History and the voice of Experience unite in one loud chorus and shout, "Today." Only the voices of indifference and laziness and folly murmur, "Tomorrow." The Holy Spirit is ever calling, "Today." Men in their folly are forever saying, "Tomorrow." When the frightful plague of frogs came on Pharaoh of old and on his people, Pharaoh, in his terror, sent for Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD" (Exodus 8:8). Moses replied, "I leave to you the honor of setting the time for me to pray for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile." One would naturally suppose Pharaoh would have answered, "At once," but Pharaoh, like many another king, played the fool and answered, "Tomorrow" (Exodus 8:9-10). Men show a similar folly and often a greater folly in these days. When urged to forsake sin with its miseries and degradation and perils and turn to Christ with the joy and peace, and elevation of our character and tranquility that He gives, they answer, "Yes, I think I will." "When?" "Oh, tomorrow." But "the Holy Spirit says, Today." A poor wretch came into my office one day. He had been drinking, and drinking had brought misery into his heart and ruin into his life. I asked, "Will you quit drinking and turn to Jesus Christ?" "Oh," he exclaimed, "there is nothing else that I can do, I will." "Will you do it now?" He hung his head, and murmured, "Not now, tomorrow." But "the Holy Spirit says, Today." Tomorrow is the devil's day and the fool's day. Today is God's day, and the wise man's day.

I wish to give you tonight some conclusive and unanswerable reasons why every man and woman in this auditorium who makes any pretensions to intelligence and common sense should not only accept the Lord Jesus as his Lord and Savior, but should accept Him here before he leaves this building tonight, if he has not already done it. What I want to get is action, immediate action, intelligent and wise action. And the only action that is intelligent and wise for anyone who has not already accepted Jesus Christ is to accept Him right here tonight. Resolutions to do the right thing and the wise thing at some indefinite time in the future are of no value whatever. God's time is now. "The Holy Spirit says, Today."

Because the Lord Jesus Brings Peace to the Tormenting Conscience The first reason why every man and woman in this auditorium who has not already accepted Jesus Christ should not only accept Him but accept Him now is because the Lord Jesus brings peace to the tormenting conscience as soon as He is accepted, and the really wise man will not only desire that peace but desire it just as soon as he can get it. Wherever there is sin there will be an accusing conscience. And we "all have sinned." If any man has sinned and his conscience does not accuse him and torment him he has sunk very low, very low. There are, of course, different degrees of torment of

conscience and different kinds of torment of conscience. With some the pain is sharp and piercing, with some it is dull and grinding, but there is pain, there is unrest, there is no peace in the heart where sin has entered until that sin has been forgiven. But Jesus Christ gives peace to the most agonized conscience. Men and women have come to me in all degrees of misery over the memory of some sin they have committed, and I have pointed them to the Lord Jesus, and everyone who has really gone to Him has found rest. I could not tell how many men and women have come to me who were driven to the very verge of hopeless despair by the accusations of their conscience and were contemplating self-destruction in the hope of thus getting away from their mental agony. But I led them to Jesus Christ, and now they have rest and the peace of God that passes all understanding. A young man came to me one Sunday morning in Chicago in awful agony. He had sinned grievously and was reaping the harvest. He was contemplating all sorts of sinful actions to escape the inevitable consequences of his sin. I pointed him to the Son of God and the young man accepted Him. Afterward he brought to me his companion in sin. She was fully determined to commit a very wicked and desperate action that was likely to land her in prison or in the cemetery. I pleaded with her and pointed her to the real cure, to the Savior. When she left me she was still undecided as to what she would do. She afterward decided and decided right. One night a long time afterward, as I was going down the back stairs of the Moody Church to the inquiry room, a young, happy-faced woman stopped me and said, "I want to thank you for what you did for me, and for my husband and for my child." I did not recognize her for a moment, and she said, "I am the young woman who came to you," and she explained the circumstances. It was the woman who had contemplated the destruction of her child, and her own destruction for time and for eternity. But she had found peace in Jesus Christ. Men and women with tormenting consciences, and with uneasy, restless hearts, there is rest for you in Jesus Christ. If you are wise you will not only find it, but you will find it now. "The Holy Spirit says, Today." You need not spend even one more day or one more hour in the agony of your accusing, tormenting conscience.

Because Jesus Christ Brings Inexpressible and Glorious Joy to Those Who Accept Him The second reason why every man and woman who have not already accepted Jesus Christ should not only accept Him but accept Him now is because Jesus Christ brings inexpressible and glorious joy, a joy to which the joy of this world is as nothing in comparison, to all as soon as they really accept and confess Him. Any really wise man will not only desire this joy but desire it at once. I for one not only wish the best I can get, but I wish it as quickly as I can get it. The joy that is in Jesus Christ is the very best joy one can get. There is not a particle of doubt about that. Ask anyone who has ever tried the world and has then really tried Jesus Christ. You cannot find one single man or woman who has really tried the joy that there is in Christ, anyone who has really put his trust in Him as his personal Savior and unreservedly surrendered to Him as his Lord and Master, who will not tell you that the world has no joy for a moment comparable with that joy which is found in Jesus Christ. No matter how rare their opportunities may have been for enjoying the world, they will tell you without the slightest hesitation that the joy that one finds in Christ is incomparably greater and finer and more satisfying than any joy the world can give. There are millions of witnesses to this fact, and their testimony is absolutely unanimous.

I know the joy that comes from wealth, I know the joy that comes from the theater, I know the joy that comes from the dance, from the card table, and the joy that comes from the race track, and the joy that comes from the wine supper, and so on down to the end of the catalog of this world's

joys. I know also the joy that comes from literature and from art, the joy that comes from music, from science, from philosophy and from travel. I know practically every joy that this world has to give, but I say to you that the joy of all these put together is nothing to the inexpressible and glorious joy that comes from a genuine acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior, and a wholehearted surrender to Him as our Lord, and a constant and open confession of Him before the world, and from receiving the Holy Spirit whom He gives to those who do thus accept Him and fully surrender to Him and confess Him. Men and women, if you wish the highest, deepest, purest, and most abounding joy, immeasurably the most satisfying joy that is to be known, not only in the life which is to come, but in the life which now is, not only come to Jesus Christ but come now. "The Holy Spirit says, Today."

Because Jesus Christ Brings Deliverance from the Power of Sin The third reason why every man and woman in this auditorium who has not already accepted Jesus Christ should not only accept Him but accept Him tonight is because Jesus Christ brings deliverance from the power of sin, and any wise man or woman not only wishes deliverance from the power of sin but wishes it as soon as he or she can get it. There is no other form of slavery known to man so degrading and so wretched as the slavery of sin. Better far be the poor black slave of the most brutal slave driver the South ever knew than to be the slave of rum, or the slave of lust, or the slave of bad temper, or the slave of drugs, or the slave of an impure imagination, or the slave of greed for gold, or the slave of any other form of sin. Poor old Uncle Tom, groaning in his cabin after the cruel blows of the brutal master, is not so pitiable an object as the wretch, poor or rich, who is under the whip of appetite or of lust or of drugs or of any other sin. But there is freedom right at hand, right now. Jesus Christ sets men free from sin in all its forms. He sets free men who have been slaves for years. He sets them free in a moment. Any sinner can find deliverance in Christ from any sin, can find it now. What Jesus said when He was here on earth is just as true today. "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). But, thank God, it is also as true today as when He said it that, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). Any man or woman who has a spark of intelligence left will not only wish deliverance from sin and its awful bondage, but wish it at once.

What would you have thought of any old time black slave of a vile and cruel master who had been offered freedom and answered, "Yes, I wish liberty. My bondage has been awful. But I don't want the freedom just yet. I will wait until next year. I will wait until next month. I will wait until next week. I will wait until tomorrow." You would exclaim, "What a fool!" But he would not be so colossal a fool as you are when you say, "Yes, I do wish deliverance from the power of sin," and then add, "but not tonight-tomorrow." Oh, men, listen, "The Holy Spirit says, Today."

Because Jesus Christ Brings Beauty of Character The fourth reason why every man and woman who has not already accepted Jesus Christ should not only accept Him but accept Him tonight is because Jesus Christ brings beauty of character, and every wise man and woman will not only desire beauty of character, but desire it just as soon as they can get it. I sometimes notice advertisements in the papers that read, "The Secret of Beauty." I can tell you the secret of beauty, men and women, the secret of permanent, indestructible beauty. It is Jesus Christ in the heart. He not only beautifies the face, He beautifies the soul. He makes over the soul that trusts in Him into His own glorious likeness. I have seen some of the foulest men and women I ever knew made over into the fairest, and it was Jesus Christ who did it.

Sam Hadley of the Water Street Mission, New York, was the friend of all men who were down and out. He was always on the lookout for an opportunity to help some man who was about as bad as they make them onto his feet, and to lead him to Christ and to thus get the man saved. A man said to Mr. Hadley one day, "I have a friend whom I wish you would take an interest in." Sam Hadley asked, "Who is he?" "He is Bowery Ike." "Well," said Hadley, "what is he, anyhow?" The man replied, "He is a crook. He makes his living by stealing and picking pockets and all that sort of thing. Presently he is on Blackwell's Island, serving a term there. You can find him more easily now than usual." Sam Hadley went over to Blackwell's Island and looked up Bowery Ike, and found him; for he could not get away, he was behind bars. Bowery Ike had no use for Sam Hadley, except that when he got out he came around to Sam to get a little money to get a new suit of clothes. But he was soon off to the Island again. Every time he would come out of confinement he would go around to see Hadley, but as soon as he got on his feet again he would go back to his crooked work.

Sam Hadley followed Bowery Ike for seven long years, and one day at the end of the seventh year Bowery Ike was thoroughly sick and tired of sin, and this time not only came to Sam Hadley, but came to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ opened His arms and took Bowery Ike in. After Bowery Ike had been saved about a year, Sam wrote me, saying, "Mr. Torrey, I have a man who wants to study at your school. They used to call him Bowery Ike. His right name is Ira Snyder. We believe in him. He has been a tough customer. He has been a hard case. But he is saved and we believe God wants to use him. Will you take him?" "Dear Sam," I replied, "I will take anybody you recommend." He wrote back, "I recommend him." Then I wrote, "Send him on." And Bowery Ike (Ira Snyder) came. Listen, men, though that man had been a crook from his boyhood, for he commenced picking pockets when a little lad; though he had been a crook nearly all his life, he became one of the most beautiful Christians I have ever met in all my life. And I say I have known thieves who have come to Christ, burglars who have come to Christ, train robbers and bank robbers who have come to Christ; I have known harlots, and murderers and people guilty of every kind of crime I ever heard of, who have come to Christ and have become some of the loveliest Christians I have ever known. Yes, some of the men and women who were once down in the deepest depths of sin. But to come back to Ira Snyder, Bowery Ike. He came on to Chicago. He stayed with us about a year, a little over a year. One night he said to me, "I want to walk home with you and have a little talk with you." On the way to my home he said, "I made a little visit down in New York a few weeks ago. I think they need me in New York. I have loved it in Chicago, I would like to stay on, but I believe they need me in New York. I have written Mr. Hadley that I am ready to go back to New York and help in the work." A few days after this Ira Snyder was taken down with influenza, a slight attack, not a very serious case, but he went to bed with it. They did not think he was very ill. But as I was leaving the dining table one night the maid told me that Mr. Hunter, who was one of my assistants there at that time, as he is now here, wished to see me. I met Mr. Hunter and he said, "Mr. Torrey, Ira Snyder is dead." I said, "What, John? You don't mean Ira Snyder?" We had another man at the Institute at the same time whose name was much the same, and who was very ill at that time, too, and I thought Mr. Hunter must mean him. "You don't mean Ira Snyder?" I said. "You must mean So-and-So," naming the other man. "No," Mr. Hunter said. "Mr. Torrey, Ira Snyder is dead. He died very suddenly." I asked, "Where is he, John?" "He is over at the undertaker's. They have prepared him for his burial and have placed him in his coffin. They are going to have the services tomorrow, and I thought I should come to tell you tonight." "That

was right, John," I replied, "let us go over." We went to the undertaker's, which was not far away, and walked into the parlors. And there in a beautiful coffin lay Ira Snyder. When I looked down into that face, one of the noblest faces I have ever looked into in my life, I will tell you what I did, I could not help it, I broke down, and, leaning over, I kissed Ira Snyder's beautiful face as he lay there in his coffin. Yes, friends, Bowery Ike had been a crook before he became a Christian, but by the power of Jesus Christ in his heart he became one of the loveliest Christians I ever knew in my life. I don't think my heart ever ached over anybody outside my own family as it did over Ira Snyder, who was formerly a pickpocket, a burglar, and everything that was bad, but who in his lost and ruined condition came to Jesus, and the heart of Jesus was big enough to take him in, and Jesus came into his heart and transformed him into His own likeness. The Lord Jesus is doing that sort of thing every day. And the Lord Jesus is also taking others who are not so foul, who, indeed, the world thinks good, and He is making them immeasurably better. It is Jesus and Jesus only who makes truly lovely characters. Yes, men and women, do you not wish to be good? Not only good in the eyes of man, but good in the eyes of God? You may be. It is Jesus' work to make you so. Let Him begin it at once. Let Him begin it now, "The Holy Spirit says, Today." What do you say? "Tomorrow?" No, not if you have a particle of sense left, and I believe you have. You will say, "Tonight. Right now."

Because Jesus Christ Fills Our Lives with Highest Usefulness The fifth reason why every man and woman who has not already accepted Jesus Christ should not only accept Him but accept Him now is because Jesus Christ fills our lives with highest usefulness; and every wise man and every wise woman desires not only to be useful but desires to begin being useful as soon as possible. The Christian life is the only really useful life. We look at the life of many a one who is not a Christian, and say, "There is a useful life"; but God looks at it and looks through it, looks at it in all its directions, and writes this verdict on it, "Useless." Whether you and I see it or not, the man or woman who is not with Christ is against Him (Matthew 12:30), and the man who is against Jesus Christ is against God and against humanity. His life is useless and worse than useless. But the life that is fully surrendered to Jesus Christ becomes at once a useful life. It may be the mere wreck of a life, but it becomes at once a useful life. A friend of mine found one of the most hopeless wrecks of womanhood in New York City and brought her to Jesus Christ. I think this poor creature lived less than two years after her conversion and many months of that time were spent on a sick bed. But that woman was used to the eternal salvation of more than a hundred persons while she lay there dying, and the story of the transformed life of "the Bluebird of Mulberry Bend" has gone around the world and saved thousands.

Come to Christ. Really come to Him. He will make you useful. Come at once, that your usefulness may begin at once. I am glad I came to the Lord Jesus when I did, but oh! if only I had come sooner. How many precious years were wasted! How many golden opportunities were lost, opportunities that will never return! Come, men and women. Come now. "The Holy Spirit says, Today."

Because the Sooner We Come to Christ, the Fuller and Richer Will Be Our Eternity The sixth reason why every man and woman in this auditorium who has not already accepted Jesus Christ should not only accept Him but accept Him tonight is because the sooner we come to Christ, the fuller and richer will be our eternity. The eternity of each one of us will be just what we make it in the life that now is. You are constructing your eternity every day. Every day of true service for

Christ makes our reward so much the greater and our eternity so much the fuller and richer. Come to Christ next Sunday and you will be behind for all eternity by as much as you might have accomplished this week. You may cry in coming years, "Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight," but Time will not turn backward in its flight. Time cannot turn backward. Time is flying by every moment and never returns. Today is hurrying by us at express speed. Tomorrow will soon follow. And as I turn around and peer after Yesterday and Today as they plunge into the unfathomable depths of the Past, I cry, "Yesterday, where are you?" Out from the fathomless abyss of bygone days comes the answer, "Gone forever." And I hear the Holy Spirit crying, "Today! Today! Today!" "The Holy Spirit says, Today."

Because If We Do Not Come to Jesus Christ Today We May Never Come At All

I will give you one more reason why every man and woman who has not already accepted Jesus Christ should not only accept Him but accept Him at once, and that is because if we do not come to Jesus Christ today we may never come at all. That is not at all a remote possibility. Thousands and tens of thousands have been as near to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as you are this moment and have said, "Not tonight," and now they have passed without Christ into that world in which there is no hope for repentance, no matter how "diligently with tears" they may seek it, into that world in which there is no opportunity to change their mind or their eternal destiny. A man came into one of our tents one night in Chicago. It was the first time he had ever been in a meeting of that kind in his life. The words of Mr. Schiverea, who spoke that night, made a deep impression on him, and after the meeting was over he lingered with a friend and talked personally with Mr. Schiverea. His friend accepted Christ and he was on the very verge of accepting Him. Mr. Schiverea said to him, "Will you accept Jesus Christ right now?" "No," the man said, "this is the first time in my life that I was ever in a meeting of this kind. I cannot decide tonight, but I promise you that I will come back Sunday night and accept Christ." It was Friday night and there was to be no meeting on Saturday. Mr. Schiverea replied that he did not question at all the honesty of the man's intention or the sincerity of his promise to return Sunday night and settle it; but added, "We have no guarantee whatever that you will live until Sunday night." "Oh," the man said, with a laugh, "you don't suppose that God is going to cut me off after the first meeting of this kind that I ever attended in my life and not give me another opportunity?" Mr. Schiverea replied, "I do not know. But I do know you are taking a great risk in waiting until Sunday night. I greatly fear that if you do not accept Jesus Christ now you will never accept Him and be lost forever." "No," the man said, "I give you my word that I will be back here Sunday night and accept Christ." Mr. Schiverea continued to plead with him, but the man would not yield. He went out of the tent with his friend. They got into a carriage and turned toward home. And as they drove up the street they passed a saloon. The man said to his friend, "Let's stop and have one more drink and then we will both stop drinking permanently." "No," said his friend, "I have settled it already. I have accepted Christ and I will never take another drink." "Well," said the other, "I'm going to have one more drink, anyhow. You drive up the street and then come back for me and I will be waiting for you outside." He entered the saloon. His friend drove up the street, and after a few minutes returned to pick up the man. He was nowhere to be seen. The friend went into the saloon to look for him. He was not there. The friend went into the street again and looked up and down it for the man, but he was nowhere in sight. Passing a high board fence, he heard a groan, and passing swiftly around behind it, he discovered his friend lying behind it stabbed, with an awful gash in his body,

unconscious and dying. He was taken to the Presbyterian Hospital and lived until Monday morning, but never regained consciousness and passed into eternity unsaved, lost forever. Why? Because when "the Holy Spirit said, Today," the man said, "Tomorrow." So he passed unprepared into the presence of God, and so will some of you if you do not listen to the Holy Spirit now as He says, "Today."

One night when I was preaching in Bradford, England, a man and his wife sat side by side in the meeting and were deeply moved, but they made no decision. As they walked away from the meeting the wife said to her husband, "Would it not have been nice if you and I both had accepted Christ?" He answered, "Yes, it would." They reached home and retired. About two o'clock the following morning his wife awakened him and said, "I feel so strange." In a few minutes from that time she had passed into eternity. After he had laid his wife's body away in the cemetery, he came back to the meeting and told us this story and accepted Christ, but he came alone. Oh, men and women, listen! Do you not hear the Holy Spirit crying, "Today"?

There are so many things besides death that may make this the last opportunity you will ever have and make a refusal now final and fatal. Loss of opportunity may come. The Holy Spirit is here in power now. It is a great opportunity, the Day of Golden Opportunity. A like opportunity may never come again. It never will come again for some of you. "The Holy Spirit says, Today." A hardened heart may seal your doom. When a human heart is moved on by the Spirit of God, as some of your hearts are, and the heart continues to resist the Holy Spirit, it is likely to become very soon hardened and hopeless.

One night in our church in Chicago, after the meeting in which many had accepted Christ, I remained talking with a young man. He was under deep conviction, within one step of a decision. I urged on him an immediate acceptance and confession of Christ. "No," he said, "I cannot do it tonight. But I will give you my word of honor that I will come back tomorrow night and do it." I told him I did not question his word or his intention; but I said, "I have no guarantee whatever that you will keep your word. I have a feeling in my heart that if you do not settle it tonight you will never come back." "Why," he replied, "my mother is here every night. We live within a block of this place. I give you my word of honor I will come tomorrow night and settle it." Again I said, "I do question your word, but the Spirit of God is working mightily with you tonight, and if you go out of here resisting the Spirit of God, I believe your heart will be so hardened that your eternal destiny will be sealed and you will never come back." "No," he said, "I cannot accept tonight, but I will come tomorrow night and settle it." He walked away. I watched him with a heavy heart as he passed out of the door. I said to myself, "He will never come back," and he never did. Quite a while later I asked his mother about him and she told me he had never come back into the church from that night.

Men and women, listen! You cannot trifle with God, and you cannot trifle with your own souls, and you cannot trifle with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not only saying in our text, but He is saying in your hearts, "Today! Accept Christ right now." Will you listen to the mighty, gracious Spirit of God? Will you do as He bids you? Will you listen right now and harden not your heart, but accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, surrender to Him as your Lord and Master, and begin to confess to Him as such before the world, and be saved, and get right here and now the wonderful blessings that He gives and that He alone can give?

04 - The Most Important Question

The Most Important Question

By R. A. Torrey

(1856-1928) "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Matthew 27:22

If I should put to this audience tonight the question, What is the most important question of the day, I presume I would get a great variety of answers. Some of you would say that the disarmament question or the Four Power Treaty question was the most important question of the day. Some would say that the labor question was the most important question of the day. And still others would say that the Prohibition question was the most important question of the day, and so on. But all these answers would be wrong. There is another question of vastly more importance than any one of these, a question of the right decision on which immeasurably more depends than on the decision of any of these questions. That question is this, "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?"

It is not a new question. Pontius Pilate asked it nearly nineteen hundred years ago, and answered it wrong, and his earthly life went out in darkness, and his eternity was endless torment. Thousands on thousands have asked it since. A right decision to that question hangs everything that is really worth having for time and for eternity for each one of us. If you do the right thing with Jesus, the Christ of God, you will get everything that is really worth having for time as well as for eternity, whether a right decision is given on these various other questions or not. If you do the wrong thing with Jesus, the Christ of God, you will lose everything that is worth having for time as well as for eternity, even though all these other questions are answered correctly.

I. What We Will Get if We Do the Right Thing with Jesus Christ Let us look at some of the things that we will get if we do the right thing with Jesus Christ.

1. In the first place, if you do the right thing with Jesus you will get the forgiveness of all your sins. Peter says in Acts 10:43, "All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." Now this statement is as plain as day, and in it God's inspired apostle declares that "everyone who believes in" Jesus Christ "receives forgiveness of [his] sins." If the vilest sinner on earth would come in here tonight and would put his trust in Jesus Christ, the moment he did it all his sins would be forgiven, blotted out. The forgiveness of our sins depends solely on what we do with Jesus Christ. It does not depend on our prayers or on our penances or on our good works. If you do the right thing with Jesus Christ you get forgiveness of all your sins, whatever else you may do or not do. If you do the wrong thing with Jesus Christ you will not get forgiveness of sins, whatever else you may do or not do. The same truth is put in a different way in John 3:18, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

What an unspeakable blessing the forgiveness of all your sins is. Wealth, honors, pleasures, are not so eagerly to be desired as the forgiveness of our sins. All of them together are not to be compared with the forgiveness of our sins. Forgiveness of sin brings joy anywhere it comes, whether it be into the palace or into the prison cell. King David had wealth, honor, power, pleasures, and privileges without number, but he was not happy. Indeed, he was perfectly miserable. His own description of his condition is found in the Thirty-second Psalm, the third and fourth verses; "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer." Then he found forgiveness of sin and in his joy he shouted, "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit" (Psalms 32:1-2).

Down in a wretched cell in Sing Sing Prison there was a man under a fifteen- year sentence for manslaughter. He was, of course, a very unhappy man. But there in his cell he got hold of a Bible and read it, and through the Bible the Holy Spirit showed him the Lord Jesus as his Savior who died in his place, and he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. It was in the middle of the night when he finally found the Savior through meditating on what he had read in the Word of God, and though it was in the middle of the night and in a prison cell, such joy came into his soul that he began to shout. The guard came along and rapped on his door and told him to keep still. "I can't keep still," he shouted back, "my sins are forgiven." Yes, there is a more wonderful joy in knowing that our sins are all forgiven than there is in anything that this world has to give. And we get this forgiveness of sin by simply believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. In the second place, you will get peace of conscience by doing the right thing with Jesus Christ. It is a blessed thing to have a conscience that does not accuse you, a conscience that has found perfect peace. It is an awful thing to have a conscience that accuses. It is the greatest misery on earth. It drives many men and many women to suicide. Oh, in what agony of mind men and women have come to me from different ranks of society because of an accusing conscience. And there are many who never unburden their hearts to others who are in misery from the same cause. There are men and women here tonight who spend days and nights of misery because of an accusing conscience. You try to drown the voice of conscience in many ways, but you fail utterly. You try to drown the voice of conscience in pleasure and indulgence. You try to drown the voice of conscience in business. You try to drown the voice of conscience in drink and in drugs, and in other ways; but you do not succeed. You never will succeed.

One who perhaps knows as much about the life of the movie colony in Hollywood as anyone else told a friend of mine a few weeks ago of two of the leading stars in the movie world, two women whose names are constantly in the daily papers and who are admired and envied by thousands, that they were the hopeless slaves of drugs, and all over this land people who are counted gifted, and on whom others look in envy, are trying to silence the voice of conscience by drugs. But no one ever yet found real peace in that way, and no one ever will. Jesus Christ alone can give the guilty conscience peace. In Romans 5:1, God put it through the Apostle Paul in this way, "Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Do the right thing with Jesus Christ and you will get true peace of conscience, deep, abiding peace, perfect peace. As Isaiah puts it, "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you" (Isaiah 26:3). But do the wrong thing with Jesus Christ, and you cannot

find peace of conscience in this world or in the next, no matter what else you may do to get peace.

I was dealing once in my office with a woman who told me that she had been in a perfect hell for fourteen years because of an accusing conscience. I pointed her to Jesus Christ. I showed her from God's Word how all her sins had been laid on Jesus Christ. She believed it. She took God's Word for it, put her trust in Him as her atoning Savior. After fourteen years of agony, of hell on earth, she went out from my office that day with a radiant countenance, for she had found peace of conscience in the only way in which peace of conscience can ever be found by anybody, through her Lord Jesus Christ. And that joy continues until this day.

3. In the third place, you will get deliverance from the power of sin by doing the right thing with Jesus Christ. It is a dreadful thing to be in the power of sin. There is no other slavery so binding, so degrading, and so crushing as the slavery of sin. We all know what a dreadful thing it is to be in the power of some sins. We all know, for example, what an awful thing it is to be in the power of strong drink. We know what an awful thing it is to be in the power of morphine, or cocaine, or some other kind of drug. Many of us know through stories, distressing and agonizing, that have been poured into our ears, what an awful thing it is to be in the power of lust. How many men have come to me in despair this past year and told the story of their dreadful slavery. It is an awful thing to be in the power of sin of any kind.

There is, however, a way to get free. There is a way by which any man or woman who is the slave of any sin of any kind can get instantaneous and complete deliverance from the power of that sin. There is, however, only one way. That way is by doing the right thing with Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul was once in the power of sin. He was once helplessly and hopelessly enslaved. With all the power of an unusually strong will he tried to break away from the power of sin, but the more he tried to break away, the more completely he seemed to be in sin's grip forever, until at last, in utter despair, he cried, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24). And then he found Christ and took Him as his Deliverer from the power of sin, and he found perfect freedom and cried again, "Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!" You cannot get out of sin's power unless you do the right thing with Jesus Christ. You may get free from some bad habits. You may, for example, give up drinking without the help of Christ, though very few do; but whether you do or do not, you will not get out of sin's grip, you will simply turn from one sin to another. Christ alone can save you from sin's power. I could stand here by the hour and tell you of men and women I have personally known, men and women as completely enslaved by sin in one form or another as any man or woman who ever walked the earth, whom the Lord Jesus Christ has set free when they did the right thing with Him.

4. In the fourth place, you will get great joy by doing the right thing with Jesus Christ. The Apostle Peter says "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy," by doing the right thing with Jesus Christ. You cannot get inexpressible and glorious joy in any other Way. You know happy people, of course, who are not Christians, but you do not know anyone who is not a Christian who has "inexpressible and glorious joy." You do not know anyone who is not a Christian who has the deep, constant, satisfying, and overflowing joy, that those men and women have who are not merely nominal Christians but real Christians, those men and women who have fully accepted Christ as their personal Savior and are really trusting God for the forgiveness of all their

sins because they fully believe God's testimony concerning Jesus Christ having borne every one of their sins when He died on the cross, thus fully settling their sins forever, and who have without reservation surrendered the entire control of their thoughts and lives to Jesus Christ, and who are confessing Jesus Christ as their Lord before the world every reasonable opportunity they get, and who are watching for every opportunity to lead others to Christ, and who are serving Jesus Christ with all their strength every day. Do the right thing with Jesus Christ and you get this wonderful joy. Reject Jesus Christ and you lose it. How foolish men and women are! There are many men in this audience tonight who are rejecting Christ because they think they will lose joy if they take Christ. Are you blind, men? Do you not see that those who have taken Christ really are happier than you are? Do you not see that many Christians are happier in poverty than skeptics and worldly people are in wealth? Are you deaf, women? Have you not heard many whose word you must believe, and from all ranks of society, testify that they have found a joy since they took Christ that they never dreamed of in the world?

I do not think that many of you could tell me much that I do not know about this world's joys. I have tasted pretty much all of them, but I never knew "inexpressible and glorious joy," until I took Jesus Christ. I do now. My every day is full of joy. I have perplexities, I have annoyances, I have experiences that could easily prove exasperating. I have burdens of many kinds, I have what may appear to be great losses, I have things said to me and written to me, and said and printed about me, that would cut to the quick if I did not know the Lord Jesus; but, through it all, every day is inexpressibly happy. Not so long ago I had more things come to me that might have caused grief and anxiety and worry and heartache and deep sorrow than in almost any other week of my life, but it was a radiantly happy week. Why? Simply because of what Jesus Christ is to me, and what He is to me, just because I have done the right thing with Him.

5. In the fifth place, if you do the right thing with Jesus Christ you will get eternal life. Eternal Life! What a wonderful phrase that is, eternal life. Life that never ends! Life that knows no death! Life of unutterable beauty and dignity and honor and glory and rapture! Life that is endless in its duration and perfect in its quality! Life like the life of God Himself. Eternal life! What has the world to put in comparison with that? What is the wealth of a millionaire compared with eternal life? I would rather be a penniless pauper all my days, living in destitution and hunger and rags and cold, and have eternal life, than to roll in wealth all my days and have all that wealth can buy, and not have eternal life. I have no envy of the rich. No, I know their lives and hearts too well. I have often a greater pity for them than for the poor, for often they are more to be pitied than the poor. The life of the average millionaire is a sad, sad life.

What is the wisdom of the world's greatest scientist or philosopher compared with eternal life? What are the honors of a great general or a mighty ruler of men compared with eternal life? What are the pleasures of the most devoted seeker of pleasure compared with eternal life? Put all the world has, absolutely everything the world can give, into one pan of the scales. Put eternal life into the other scale. See the world's side go up. It is lighter than the smallest dust in the balance in comparison with eternal life. Eternal life! Oh, who can fathom all the depth of meaning that there is in these two wondrous words? And you get it by simply doing the right thing with Jesus Christ. Do the right thing with Jesus Christ and you get eternal life. Do the wrong thing with Jesus Christ and you lose eternal life. Listen to God's own Word about that, John 3:36, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Listen to God's Word again, "This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11-12). Are you going to do the right thing with Jesus Christ now and get eternal life, or are you going to do the wrong thing with Jesus Christ and forever lose eternal life?

6. But there is something better even than eternal life that you get by doing the right thing with Jesus Christ. By doing the right thing with Jesus Christ you become a child of God, an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ. We read in God's own Word, in John 1:12, "To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." And in Romans 8:17 we read, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ." Just think of that a moment, a child of God, and an heir of God, and a joint heir (or fellow heir) with Jesus Christ. We have heard these words very often but have we ever stopped to weigh their meaning and to take in their wondrous meaning? A child of God! Think of it! God the Infinite One, God the Creator of all things, God to whom the whole race of men and the whole company of angels is as nothing, less than a speck of dust is in comparison to the whole earth; God in comparison with whom the greatest of philosophers, the mightiest of monarchs, and the purest of saints is less than the most ignorant idiot is in comparison with the greatest philosopher--and we to become His children and His heirs! Heirs of all this Infinite God is and all this Infinite God has. It staggers the mind to try to think of it. That is what is open to each one of us. That is what is open to you and open to me by just doing the right thing with Jesus Christ.

One day, years ago, I met the son and heir of one of the richest men in the whole world, and he invited me to dinner. As I sat and talked with him it seemed to me as if it might be in some respects a fine thing to be the son and heir of the richest millionaire on earth. But that is nothing, just nothing at all, to being a child of God, an heir of God and fellow heir with Jesus Christ. That is what is open to us, to each one of us; but it can be obtained in only one way, and that is by doing the right thing with Jesus Christ. Do the right thing with Jesus Christ and in a moment you become a child of God, an heir of God and fellow heir with Jesus Christ. Listen to God's own statement about it again, "To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). Do the wrong thing with Jesus Christ and you lose forever your chance of becoming a child of God, an heir of God and fellow heir with Jesus Christ. Oh, what a loss that is! The loss of untold wealth, the loss of earth's greatest honors, the loss of dearest friends, is nothing in comparison with the loss of becoming a child of God, an heir of God and fellow heir with Jesus Christ. That is the awful cost of doing the wrong thing with Jesus Christ. We see, then, something of what we gain by doing the right thing with Jesus Christ, and something of what we lose by doing the wrong thing with Jesus Christ. By doing the right thing with Jesus Christ we gain forgiveness of all our sins. By doing the right thing with Jesus Christ we gain peace of conscience. By doing the right thing with Jesus Christ we gain deliverance from sin's power. By doing the right thing with Jesus Christ we gain joy inexpressible and glorious. By doing the right thing with Jesus Christ we gain eternal life. By doing the right thing with Jesus Christ we become children of God, heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Jesus Christ. Is it not evident, then, that the most important question of this day and of all days is, "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" But what will you do with Him? Will you do the right thing with Him, or will you do the wrong thing with Him? Will you do the right thing and gain all, or will you do the wrong thing and lose all? I put the question to each individual reader. What will you do with Jesus? It does not

matter whether you are a church member or not, I put the question to you, What will you do with Jesus? I put the question to the most worldly man or woman here as well as to the most religious, "What will you do with Jesus who is called Christ?" I put the question to the one who is most sunken in sin, for there is hope for you of getting all these things if you do the right thing with Jesus Christ, just as much as there is for the most moral and upright and highly respected man or woman here. "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" I ask each one of you, Will you do the right thing with Jesus Christ, or will you do the wrong thing with Jesus Christ?

7. But there is something better than anything I have mentioned yet that depends entirely on what you do with Jesus Christ. If you do the right thing with Jesus Christ, then some day you will become just like Him. Listen to what God says, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:1-2). "What," someone will say, "can I become like Jesus Christ?" Yes, even you can become just like Jesus Christ. Think of it! You and I, with all our present failings, with all our shortcomings, meannesses and pettinesses, some of which we do not see but others see very clearly, for they stick out all over us and generally they stick out most conspicuously on those of us who have the best opinion of ourselves--even we can become just like Him, be like Him in every perfection and glory of His matchless, faultless, glorious, Divine character. Yes, and we can be like Him in the glory of His outward appearance too; for it is written in the Word of God, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (Php 3:20-21). And how can we become just like Him? By doing the right thing with Jesus Christ.

II. What Is the Right Thing to Do with Jesus Christ?

1. First of all, the right thing to do with Jesus Christ is to receive Him, to receive Him as your Savior. This is evident from the verse that we have quoted already a number of times, John 1:12, "To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." He died for your sins. "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Will you accept Him as your sin-bearer? Will you say, "Oh, God, I believe what Your Word says about Jesus Christ. I believe He bore my sins in His own body on the cross. I believe every one of my sins was laid on Him and settled fully and forever when He died on the cross in my place. And I now take Him as my sin-bearer. Forgive all my sins for Jesus Christ's sake"?

Take Him not only as your Savior from the guilt of sin but also as your Savior from the power of sin. He not only died to make atonement for your sins, He also rose again, and He lives today to set you free from the power of sin and to make intercession for you (Hebrews 7:25). Will you take Him now as your Deliverer from the power of sin? Will you come to this risen and mighty Lord Jesus with all your weakness and sins and trust Him to set you free? That is the right thing to do with Jesus Christ: Just take Him as your Savior, your crucified Savior, from the guilt of sin and your risen Savior from the power of sin.

2. The next right thing to do with Jesus is to let Him into your heart. He says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Jesus is standing at the door of every heart. He is knocking at the door of every heart. Will you open the door and let Him in? Who will? Who will say, "Lord Jesus, come in; come in and reign"?

3. The next right thing to do with Jesus is to enthrone Him in your heart. He is the Christ, God's anointed King, because God has made Him so. As Peter said on the day of Pentecost, "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Will you enthrone Him as King in your heart? Will you say honestly to Him, "Lord Jesus, take the throne of my heart and live and reign there supreme"? Who will do it?

4. Once more, the right thing to do with Jesus Christ is to confess Him before the world as your Lord and Master. He Himself says in Matthew 10:32-33, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."

05 - The Fool's Creed

THE FOOL'S CREED By R. A. Torrey "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Psalms 14:1. OUR subject to-night is The Fool's Creed. Every intelligent man has a creed. You hear men in our days inveighing against creeds, but every man who thinks has a creed. A man's creed is what a man believes, and every man who thinks at all must believe something. The only man who believes nothing is the man whose mind is a perfect blank the utter idiot. If any man says, "I believe nothing," he is either mistaken or deliberately lying. If he believes what he says to be true, when he says "I believe nothing," then he must at least believe that he believes nothing, and in that case he is, of course, mistaken when he says that he believes nothing. But if he is not mistaken when he says "I believe nothing," then it cannot be that he believes that he believes nothing, and in saying "I believe nothing," he is saying what he does not believe; in plain English, he is lying. To think is to believe, and the only man of whom it can be truly said he does not believe any thing is the idiot. Our subject, however, to-night is not creeds in general, but a specific creed, The Fool's Creed. You will find a brief and plain statement of The Fool's Creed in Psalms 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The fool's creed has at least the merit of brevity, you can put it in two words, "no God." There is a great cry in our day for short creeds. The fool's creed ought to satisfy this demand. He has reduced his creed to two short words, to five letters, "no God." Why is the one who says in his heart "no God" a fool, or rather, why is he not merely a fool but "the fool," the fool of fools, the one consummate fool?

I. THE MAN WHO SAYS THERE IS NO GOD IS A FOOL, BECAUSE THERE IS A GOD.

The first reason why the man who says there is no God is a fool is because there is a God. The proofs of the existence of a God, of an intelligent and beneficent Creator and Governor of the physical and moral universe are manifold and conclusive.

1. First of all, the observed facts of the physical universe point conclusively to the existence of an intelligent and beneficent creator and governor of that universe. There are four kingdoms in the universe as modern science investigates and knows it: (1) the inorganic kingdom, i.e., the non-living world with its mechanical and chemical forces; (2) the vegetable kingdom; (3) the animal kingdom; (4) man. The inorganic kingdom is the least wonderful of all, yet how wonderful even it is in its vastness, in its conformity to law, in its structure and its operations, in the mechanical and chemical forces, ever working out such beneficent results. But when we come to the vegetable kingdom we take a great step upward into a kingdom whose unveiled mysteries fill the soul with increasing admiration and astonishment the more we explore them. The laws of nutrition, of growth and reproduction, how marvellous they are. Even the smallest of the plants, the plants that can be seen only with the aid of the microscope present models of symmetry, proportion and beauty that man can only try to imitate but cannot succeed in imitating. When we come to the animal kingdom we see superadded to the wonders of nutrition, growth and reproduction the still greater wonders of sensation and instinct. But take the last step upward to man, and we have superadded to these wonders the wonders of man's intellectual, moral and spiritual powers. Now

all these things must be accounted for. We live in a wonderful world. The more we study it the more wonderful it appears, until it leads us on and out into the infinite, and until we see new meaning in the words of Psalms 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork," and in the words of Paul in Romans 1:20, "For the invisible things of Him (i.e., God) since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived from the things that are made, even His everlasting power and Divinity; that they may be without excuse." More and more as our knowledge enlarges do we find that everything has its use, even down to the house fly, or the infusoria in the brook. Everything performs its functions according to law, from the sun one million two hundred and eighty-three thousand times as large as the earth and moving through space with incredible rapidity, down to the microscopic cilia of some simple form of life that sway lazily to and fro. Even the seeming monstrosities of nature are in accordance with law. It takes no profound knowledge of nature to see manifold adaptations to intelligent purpose. Take for example, the eye, the most marvellous camera obscura that was ever constructed, with its wonderful chemical and mechanical and sensory arrangement for vision, protection, and voluntary and involuntary use. Take the bird, with its hollow bones, its light feathers rendered waterproof by oil secretions. A scientific acquaintance with nature enlarges our view. The telescope can find no spaces so vast that order and law cease, nor can the microscope discover particles so small that they lack in symmetry, beauty and adaptation to their end. We live in a universe of law, beauty and utility. Now comes the question, how did this universe come to be as it is to-day. There are four possible suppositions about it :

(1) First, that it was always as it is now.

(2) Second, that it came to be as it is by chance, that the atoms that constitute the universe, in their eternal dance, have at last assumed their present associations and relations.

(3) Third, that there existed from all eternity certain material atoms containing in themselves the power of uniting and acting upon one another and developing into the present condition of the universe.

(4) Fourth, that the universe is the work of God.

This covers all the possible suppositions. Which is the true one? The first we know to be false. We know that the universe was not always as it is. The second is easily seen to be false. There is a chance that the atoms that constitute the universe in their eternal dance might assume the present associations and relations displayed in such marvellous orderliness, obedience to law, perfection of construction, and adaptation to intelligent ends. I say there may be a chance that that is true, but while there is one chance that it might be so, there is an infinite number of chances against it. The bringing in of infinite ages in which it might happen does not help the theory, for while there might be one chance of our living in that particular age in which it did happen, there would be an infinite number of chances against it. Now the man who chooses to believe that in favour of which there is one chance, and against which there are an infinite number of chances can be justly characterized as in our text, "a fool." What would you call a man who believed that Webster's dictionary was not the intelligent product of a reasonable being, or a number of reasonable beings, but that the letters that constitute it were thrown down by chance and happened to fall into the shape we find them in the dictionary? There is only one word in the English language by which you would dream of characterizing such a man, you would call him a fool. But the theory that

Webster's dictionary came to be in that way would not be a fractional part so foolish as the theory that the atoms that constitute this universe in their eternal dance at last assumed their present associations and relations displayed in such marvellous orderliness, obedience to law, and perfection of construction, and adaptation to intelligent ends, as we now find in the physical universe. The third theory, viz., that there existed from all eternity certain material atoms containing in themselves the power of uniting and acting upon one another and developing into the present condition of the universe, is untenable :

First, because if the atoms had existed from all eternity with the inherent power of combining into the present universe, they would have combined into it ages ago.

Second, because, while we have abundant experience of the construction of works exhibiting design by intelligent agents, we have absolutely no experience of unintelligent atoms having power of combining themselves into works exhibiting the marks of intelligence. Suppose one should attempt to throw a thousand dice and have them all turn up sixes, and succeed, what would you say? Every intelligent man would say the dice were loaded. But who loaded the dice of the universe? It is evident the third theory will not hold.

We have only the fourth theory remaining, viz., that the universe is the work of an intelligent and beneficent Creator. There is a God. The theory of evolution does not in the least affect the argument. If the theory of evolution were true it would only show the wonderful method by which this intelligent and beneficent Creator worked out His plans.

2. Not only do the observed facts of the physical universe point conclusively to the existence of God, the facts of history point to the same thing. The hand of an intelligent, beneficent, just governor of the destinies of men is clearly seen in history, not only in Bible history but in all secular history as well. Anyone who carefully studies history will see that throughout the whole history of the race, as Coleridge puts it, "one increasing purpose runs." We see that above the human actors, kings, generals, statesmen, and commoners trying to carry out their own ambitions and purposes, there has been the guiding hand of One who has made even the wrath of men to praise Him, and who has worked out good from the lowest ambitions and vilest passions of men. Cities, kings, dynasties, and empires fall, but history marches right on to the goal that God has set for it the kingdom of God on earth.

3. The Bible as it lies before us proves that there is a God. Here is a book altogether unique to be accounted for. It must have an author. It is entirely different from any book, or all books, men have written it differs from them in its fulfilled prophecies, it differs from them in its indestructibility and invulnerability against all assaults ; it differs from them in the purity and loftiness and comprehensiveness of its teachings; it differs from them in its power to save men and nations; it differs from them in its inexhaustible depths of wisdom and truth. This book, to anyone who will study it deeply and thoroughly and candidly, is manifestly not man's book. Whose book then is it? The more I study this book the more overwhelmingly convinced I am that there must be a God back of it.

4. Individual experience proves that there is a God.

(1) Individual experience regarding answered prayer proves this. If I should go to a hole in the wall and order beefsteak rare, and beefsteak rare should be passed out, and then order mutton chops

and mutton chops should be passed out, and some other time should order turkey and cranberry sauce, and turkey and cranberry sauce should be passed out, and if this should go on day after day, and what I ordered was passed out, I should certainly soon conclude that there was some intelligent person there attending to my orders, even though I saw no one. This is my exact experience with God. There have been many things that I have needed, that I have gone to God alone about and have told him of the need, and no human being knew of the need, and He has supplied the need, supplied it oftentimes in such a way that the connection between the prayer and the thing obtained was of such a character that it was clear that the prayer brought the gift. There have been times in my life when I have risked everything that men hold dear upon there being a God who answered prayer on the conditions laid down in the Bible. I have staked my health and that of my family, my temporal needs, my reputation, everything that men hold dear for time and eternity, on God's answering prayer on the conditions laid down in the Bible, and I have won. For sixty years George Mueller housed and fed orphans by the thousand and secured the supplies for the work entirely by prayer. No one was ever told of the need, no one but God, and not one penny of debt was ever incurred; and money and supplies came, oftentimes came only at the last moment, sometimes came when it would seem impossible that they should come on time, but there was never a day nor a meal in which God failed to answer prayer.

(2) Individual experience in regard to salvation proves that there is a God. Lost men, men utterly lost, men with,, whom every human effort to save has failed, have at last cast themselves upon God, the God of the Bible, the God who could only be approached through Jesus Christ, God in Christ, and have found salvation, such a salvation as God alone could work. They have been recreated, made new creatures, they have been raised from the dead.

The man who in anything proceeds upon the supposition that there is a God, just such a God as the Bible pictures, will always find this supposition works well in practice. To sum up thus far, the observed facts of the physical universe, the facts of history, the absolutely unique and undeniable character of the Bible, and individual experience all prove to a demonstration that there is a God. Therefore, he that says "no God" is a fool.

II. THE MAN WHO SAYS THERE IS NO GOD IS A FOOL BECAUSE NOT ONLY IS THERE A GOD, BUT IT IS WELL THAT THERE IS.

In the second place, the man who says in his heart that there is no God is a fool, not only because there is a God but also because it is well that there is a God.

Please notice that it is "in his heart" that the fool says, "no God" ; i.e., he denies the existence of God because he does not wish to believe that there is a God. For a man to wish that there were no God shows him to be a fool because there not only is a God, but it is well that there is, and to wish that there were not is a mark of consummate folly. If there is a God, a God such as the Bible describes, the present life and the future life is full of brightness and hope to anyone who will take the right attitude toward that God; but if there is no God, then the sun has gone out of the heavens and a darkness that can be felt broods over the universe. If there is no God we know nothing of what is in store for us, the present apparent harmony and orderliness of the universe may cease any moment, and all plunge into chaos. If there is no God history has no guiding hand and no certain destiny. If there is no God, reason and thought, conscience and right, purity and love have no certain and eternal basis. If there is no God we have no security for a moment that blind fate

that rules all may not seize, and rend and crush us and plunge us into dark, unutterable, eternal misery. This is a true picture of our position in the universe if there is no God. What intelligent man would wish to live in a universe without a God? Surely it is the fool, the fool of fools, the consummate fool of the ages, who says in his heart, "no God." There are many who do not say with their lips, "no God," but who say it in their "heart." They are not theoretical atheists, but they are practical atheists. Anyone who does not surrender his will to God is a practical atheist. Anyone in this building to-night who has not surrendered to God is practically saying in his heart, "there is no God," and is, therefore, a fool.

To sum up there is a God. Thank God that there is. There is just such a God as the Bible reveals. There is then but one right thing, but one wise thing for any man here to-night to do, that is surrender to His will. The only path of wisdom in the face of the proven facts, is to give ourselves in utter obedience to Him, and to accept as our mediator Him whom God has set forth to be the mediator between us and Him self, accept Him whom He has provided to be a sin-bearer, as our sin-bearer, accept Him whom He has exalted to be both Lord and King, as our Lord and King to-night. Who will do it? Who will do it now?

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