

How to Deal With the Deluded

by R.A. Torrey

This sermon provides guidance on how to deal with various groups of people who are deluded, including Roman Catholics, Jews, Spiritualists, Christian Scientists, and followers of false prophets.

Scripture: John 3:3, Acts 13:39, Ephesians 1:7

Topics: "Assurance of Salvation", "Engaging the Deluded"

Description

R.A. Torrey addresses the challenge of engaging with those who are deluded in their faith, particularly focusing on Roman Catholics, Jews, Spiritualists, Christian Scientists, and followers of false prophets. He emphasizes the importance of guiding them to understand the assurance of salvation, the necessity of the new birth, and the singular role of Jesus Christ as the mediator. Torrey encourages believers to use Scripture effectively to reveal the truth and to awaken a sense of need for Christ without attacking their current beliefs. He concludes that many deluded individuals are seeking something deeper and can be led to a genuine faith in Christ through patience and the truth of the Gospel.

Transcript

I. ROMAN CATHOLICS.

1. Very few Roman Catholics have assurance of salvation, indeed very few understand that it is our privilege to know that we have forgiveness of sins and eternal life. A good way then to deal with a Roman Catholic is to ask him if he knows that his sins are forgiven. Very likely he will say that he does not, and that no one else knows it either. Then you can show him that it is the believer's privilege to know that he has

forgiveness of sins. For this purpose use Acts 13:39, "By him all that believe ARE JUSTIFIED," etc. and Ephesians 1:7:

"In whom WE HAVE redemption through his blood, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, according to the riches of his grace." Ephesians 1:7.

In a similar way, you can show him that it is our privilege to know that we have eternal life. For this purpose use 1_John 5:13. Oftentimes when he is brought to see that it is our privilege to know that we have forgiveness of sins and eternal life, he will desire to know it too, and will begin to see that we have something that he does not possess. There is one point at which we always have the advantage in dealing with a Roman Catholic, namely, there are a peace and a power in Christianity as we know it, that there is not in Christianity as he knows it, and he can be made to appreciate the difference.

2. Another good way to deal with a Roman Catholic is to show him the necessity of the new birth, and what the new birth is. When the one with whom you are dealing tells you that he is a Roman Catholic, it is well to ask him if he has been born again.

Very likely he will say that he does not know what that means {139} (though oftentimes Roman Catholics do talk about the new birth). Show him

John 3:3-5,7, and emphasize what Jesus says, that we must be born again. If he asks what the new birth is, show him the following passages:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2_Corinthians 5:17.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

2_Peter 1:4.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A NEW HEART ALSO WILL I GIVE YOU, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezekiel 36:25-27.

Many Roman Catholics understand the new birth to mean baptism, and oftentimes if you ask a Roman Catholic if he has been born again, he will say "Yes," and if you ask him when, he will tell you at his baptism. It will then be necessary to show him that baptism is not the new birth. For this purpose use 1_Corinthians 4:15:

"For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

Here Paul tells the believers in Corinth that in Christ Jesus he had begotten them through the Gospel. If the new birth meant baptism, he must have baptized them, but in 1_Corinthians 1;14 he declares he had not baptized them.

Or you can say, "No, baptism is not the new birth, for I can show you a person who we are told was baptized, and yet St. Peter told him he had not been born again." Then turn to Acts 8:13:

"Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."

When you have made it clear that Simon had been baptized, turn to Peter's statement in the 21st to the 23rd verses, to show that he had not been born again. It is well to go a step further and show the inquirer what the Biblical evidences of the new birth are. For this purpose use the following passages:

"If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." 1_John 2:29. {140}

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for

his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin,
because he is born of God. ...

"We know that we have passed from death unto life,
because we love the brethren. He that loveth not
his brother abideth in death. ...

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his
brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of
compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God
in him?" 1_John 3:9,14,17.

If the inquirer is sufficiently interested, he
will now want to know how to be born again. This
question is answered in:

"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." John 1:12.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of
incorruptible, BY THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth
and abideth forever." 1_Peter 1:23.

"Of his own will begat he us WITH THE WORD OF
TRUTH, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of
his creatures." James 1:18.

3. A third way of dealing with a Roman Catholic is
to use Acts 3:19.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your
sins may be blotted out, when the times of
refreshing shall come from the presence of the
Lord."

This shows the necessity of repentance and conversion in order that our sins may be blotted out. What repentance is will be shown by Isaiah 55:7 and Jonah 3:10:

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

In a similar way Acts 16:31 can be used to show that the way to be saved is by simply believing on the Lord Jesus Christ; then to show what it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ use John 1:12 and 2_Timothy 1:12.

4. Another good text to use in dealing with Roman Catholics, and one which comes right at the heart of their difficulties, is 1_Timothy 2:5:

"For there is one God, and ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, the man Christ Jesus." {141}

The Roman Catholic, if he is a true Roman Catholic, is always seeking some mediator besides Jesus Christ, and this verse declares expressly that there is but "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," and not the priests or

saints or the Virgin Mary or anyone else.

Sometimes it is well to follow this up with

1_Timothy 4:1-3, but it is not well as a rule to use this passage until one has made some headway.

It is also well to show the advantage of Bible study, for as a rule the Roman Catholic does not study the Bible at all, and in many cases is practically forbidden by the priest to study it.

For this purpose use John 5:39; 1_Peter 2:1-2; 2_Timothy 3:13-17; James 1:21-22; Psalm 1:1-2; Joshua 1:8; Mark 7:7-8,13; Matthew 22:29. These texts, except the one in 1_Peter 2:1-2 are all practically the same in the Douay or Roman Catholic Bible as they are in the several Protestant translations.

5. Still another way to deal with these people is to use the same method that you would with any sinner who does not realize his need of a Savior, and has no real concern about his salvation (see Chapters Six and Seven), that is to awaken a sense that he is a sinner and needs Christ. This as a rule is the best way if you can get the Roman Catholic to listen to you.

However, many people think there is no use talking with Roman Catholics, that they cannot be brought to Christ. This is a great mistake. Many of them are longing for something they do not find in the

Roman Catholic Church, and if you can show them from the Word of God how to find it, they come very easily, and make some of the best Christians. Always be sure of one thing, do not attack the Roman Catholic Church. This only awakens their prejudice and puts them in a bad position to be helped. Simply give them the truth, and the errors in time will take care of themselves. Not infrequently our attacks upon the Roman Catholic Church only expose our ignorance for oftentimes they do not believe just what we suppose they do. It is frequently desirable to use a Roman Catholic Bible in dealing with a Roman Catholic. Of course if one is going to do that, he should study up the texts beforehand in that version. Very many of the texts are for all practical purposes the same in the Roman Catholic version of the {142} Bible as our own. One of the chief differences is that they translate "repent," "do penance."

II. JEWS.

A great many Jews today are inquiring into the claims of Jesus the Nazarene, and are open to approach upon this subject. The best way to deal with a Jew is to show him that his own Bible points to Jesus Christ. Among the most useful passages for this purpose are: Isaiah 53, the entire chapter.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." Daniel 9;26.

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Zechariah 12:10.

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2.

If the Jew objects that these passages are different in his Hebrew Bible, do not allow yourself to be put off in this way, for they are not. He may say that Isaiah 53 does not refer to the Messiah. In that case ask him to whom it does refer. If he is a well-posted Jewish controversialist, very likely he will say, to suffering Israel. If he does say so, go through the chapter and show that it cannot refer to

suffering Israel, because the one who suffers is plainly suffering for the sins of another, Isaiah 53:4-5 and 8, and the other for whom he is suffering is God's people Israel, so of course the sufferer cannot himself be Israel.

The whole book of Hebrews is excellent to use with a Jew, especially the ninth and tenth chapters, and the seventh chapter, the 25th to the 28th verses.

The great difficulty in the way of the Jew coming out as a Christian, is the terrific persecution which he must endure if he does. Undoubtedly it costs a great deal today for a Jew to become a Christian, but if he brings up this question as he undoubtedly will, show him the passages already given under the head of those who are afraid of persecution, Chapter Seven, Section XII. {143}

There are a number of good tracts prepared especially for Jews which can be had from various missions to Jews in London, New York. Chicago, and other large centers of population.

III. SPIRITUALISTS.

Many people who call themselves Spiritualists claim to believe in the Bible. Such persons make a great deal of Samuel's appearing to Saul, 1_Samuel 28:11-20. It is not necessary to deny that Samuel really appeared to Saul, but to show the one with

whom you are dealing what the result was to Saul
of thus consulting one who had a familiar spirit.

A good passage to use in dealing with all

Spiritualists is 1_Chronicles 10:13-14:

"So Saul died for his transgression which he
committed against the Lord, even against the word
of the Lord, which he kept not, and also FOR
ASKING COUNSEL OF ONE THAT HAD A FAMILIAR SPIRIT,
to inquire of it; and inquired not of the Lord:
therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto
David the son of Jesse."

Another excellent passage is Isaiah 8:19-20:

"And when they shall say unto you, SEEK UNTO THEM
THAT HAVE FAMILIAR SPIRITS, and unto wizards that
peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek
unto their God? For the living to the dead? TO THE
LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY: if they speak not
according to this word, it is because THERE IS NO
LIGHT IN THEM."

1_John 4:1-3 is also a useful passage, as it
brings out how not all spirits are to be believed.

2_Thessalonians 2:9-12 is also useful. All these
passages can be followed up by:

"Regard not them that have familiar spirits,
neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them:

I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 19:31.

"And the soul that turneth after such as have

familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people." Leviticus 20:6.

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, OR A CONSULTER WITH FAMILIAR SPIRITS, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

"Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. {144} And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. ...

"And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, AND DEALT WITH FAMILIAR SPIRITS AND WIZARDS: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger." 2_Kings 21:1-2,6.

These passages all show how God regards consulting spiritualists and mediums.

IV. CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS.

Many people in our day are being led astray into Christian Science, and we need to be ready to help them. Most Christian Scientists claim to believe the Bible. Take them to 1_John 4:1-3:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that CONFESSETH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH is of God: and EVERY SPIRIT THAT CONFESSETH NOT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH IS NOT OF GOD: and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world."

This passage strikes at the very foundation of Christian Science. Christian Science denies as one of its fundamental postulates, the reality of matter, and the reality of the body, and of necessity the reality of the incarnation. Show them by this passage that the Bible declares that every spirit that confesses not Jesus Christ COME IN THE FLESH, is not of God, but is the spirit of antichrist. Christian Science also denies the doctrine of substitution. Of course many Christian Scientists are not aware of this fact, for it is the common practice in leading one into Christian

Science, not to let him see at once, all that is involved in it. Therefore take the one with whom you are dealing to such passages as the following:

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2_Corinthians 5:21.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, BEING MADE A CURSE FOR US: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Galatians 3:13.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." 1_Peter 2:24. {145}

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD is no remission." Hebrews 9:22.

In these passages the doctrine of substitution is clearly brought out.

The average Christian Scientist in defending his position, makes a great deal of the fact that the Christian Scientists have physical cures. Of this there can be no question. Many people are better physically because of Christian Science treatment, so it is neither necessary nor wise to deny the reality of all their cures. Admit the cure, and then show that the fact that one cures sickness

proves nothing for the truth of the position he holds, or for his acceptance before God, Use for this purpose the following passages:

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:22-23.

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is AFTER THE WORKING OF SATAN WITH ALL POWER AND SIGNS AND LYING WONDERS." 2_Thessalonians 2:8-9.

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." 2_Corinthians 11:14-15.

V. FOLLOWERS OF FALSE PROPHETS.

New false prophets are constantly rising, and it is impossible to mention them all by name, furthermore they oftentimes disappear as rapidly as they appear, but practically the same method of treatment will serve to help.

1. First show the deluded one Christ's own warning

that false Christs and false prophets would arise.

For this purpose use Mark 13:22-23:

"For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things."

Dwell upon the point that the fact that they heal the sick and perform other wonders is no proof at all that they are not false {146} prophets, that Christ distinctly foretold that the false Christs and the false prophets would do these things.

2. Then give them the following five rules by which they can escape every snare of the false prophet.

(1) The first rule is found in John 7;17, A WILL WHOLLY SURRENDERED TO GOD.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Make this point very clear, for many of these people claim to have wholly surrendered their wills to God, but question them unsparingly on this point, and oftentimes you will find that the will is not surrendered.

(2) The second rule is found in 2_Timothy 3:13-17.

This rule is _a careful study of the Word of God, and a thorough comparison of any one's claims to

be a prophet, or a Christ, or the Messenger of the Covenant, or John the Baptist, or anything of that sort, with the teachings of the Word of God._ The followers of false prophets generally make a hobby of some few verses in the Bible, and do not study the book as a whole.

(3) The third rule is found in James 1:5-7, PRAYER TO GOD FOR WISDOM.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."

Of course the prayer must be sincere, with a readiness to follow the leading of God. Many pray for guidance and still go on in delusion, but the prayer is not sincere. They ask for guidance, but do not utterly renounce their own wisdom and wait upon God for His wisdom. Very many have been led out of the error of following various false prophets when they in utter self-distrust have gone to God for light and guidance.

(4) The fourth rule is found in Matthew 23:8-10, CALL NO MAN MASTER.

"But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your

Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is {147} your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ."

Call no man Master, acknowledge no man as an absolute and final authority, accept the authority of no one, and nothing but Christ and the Bible, in matters of faith and religion. It is well to dwell upon this point, for this is the very point at which many are led astray, the swallowing of some man whole, with all his arrant pretensions.

The natural, selfish heart of man craves some man to do our thinking for us in matters of religion, and this makes men ready to swallow whole the teachings of some man. It is this that gives power to popery, priestcraft, Christian Science, Mormonism, and all similar delusions.

(5) The fifth rule is found in Proverbs 29:25, BE AFRAID OF NO MAN.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

Many a false prophet keeps his power over people through fear. While they do not more than half believe in him, they are afraid if they leave he will in some way bring sickness or some other curse upon them. Very likely the one with whom you

are dealing will be in this very position. Show them how clearly they are in a wrong position, the very fact that they are afraid of the man proving this. Show the deluded man that the Holy Spirit is "not a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." If the deluded person insists that the false prophet does his work in the name of Christ and succeeds, and therefore must be accepted of God, turn him to Matthew 7:22-23. This shows very clearly that one may even cast out devils in the name of the Lord, and yet be one whom He never knew.

It is well in dealing with those who are under the spell of a false prophet to be able to show them what the marks of a false prophet are. The first and most common of these is a greed for money. To show this, use Titus 1:10-11, and 2_Peter 2:3:

"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, FOR FILTHY LUCRE'S SAKE."

"And THROUGH COVETOUSNESS shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." {148}

Make it very clear if the pretended prophet is

trying to get money from the people (as usually he very clearly is), that that in itself is a mark that he is a false prophet. A second mark of the false prophet is vaunting one's self. To show the deluded one this, use Jude 16 and 1_Corinthians 13:4 RV:

"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and THEIR MOUTH SPEAKETH GREAT SWELLING WORDS, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

A third mark of the false prophet is the claim to an authority that Jesus Christ forbade any man ascribing to himself. To show this to some person who is in the snare of the false prophet use Matthew 23:8,12.

A fourth mark of a false prophet is a false application of Scripture either to himself, or to places with which he is connected. Thus, for example, the Mormons take passages which apply to Israel, and apply them to their own Zion. When any place under the false prophet's control is named for some Bible place, and Scriptural promises referring to the literal Bible place are applied to the place under the prophet's control, just show the one who is being deceived by this sort of

thing how utterly unwarranted such an application is.

Fifth, there is usually an untrue note somewhere in the doctrine taught by the false prophet. He may teach a good deal that is Biblical and true, but somewhere he betrays his Satanic origin. The points at which this false note of doctrine are most likely to be found are on the doctrine of future punishment, the matter of the use of meats, or upon legalism of some form -- the observation of the seventh day, the matter of tithes, or something of that sort. In the matter of future punishment, false prophets generally go off sooner or later into either annihilationism or restorationism or a combination of the two.

After all the most important thing to do in dealing with one who is under a delusion, is to bring forward the fundamental, saving truth of the Gospel, salvation through the atoning work and upon the single condition of faith in Jesus Christ. Oftentimes error, like typhoid fever, has to be left to take its course and work itself out.

I know many men today who are out in a clear Christian experience, who for a while were completely under the control {149} of some of our modern false prophets, even thinking that all who did not agree with them were utterly wrong,

and saying so in the most bitter terms; but in answer to prayer, and the study of the Word of God, God has led them out of the darkness into the light.

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