

How to Deal With Those Who Have Difficulties

by R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of accepting Christ and the importance of coming to Him as we are, despite our difficulties and fears.

Topics: "Transformation in Christ", "Overcoming Difficulties"

Description

R.A. Torrey addresses the challenges faced by individuals dealing with difficulties in their lives, emphasizing the necessity of accepting Christ to receive a new heart and spirit. He reassures that one does not need to improve themselves before coming to Jesus, as He welcomes sinners and offers them transformation. Torrey encourages believers to trust in God's power to sustain them through trials and to let go of their past sins, highlighting that true freedom and strength come from Christ. He also emphasizes the importance of forgiveness and the willingness to surrender to God, assuring that those who seek Him will find Him.

Transcript

"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."

"What does God here promise to give?" "A new heart." "Are you willing that He should give you a new heart in place of that hard and wicked heart that you have?"

Another passage which is helpful in much the same

way is 2_Corinthians 5:17:

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

"Yes," you can say to the one in trouble, "your heart is too hard and wicked. What you need is to be made all over new; there is a way to be made all over, to get a new heart and to be a new man. Let me show you what that way is." Then let him read the passage. When he has read it, ask him, "What does the one who accepts Christ become?" "A new creature." "What becomes of the old things?" "They are passed away." "Do you want to be a new creature, and have old things pass away?" "Yes." "What then is all that you have to do?" "Accept Christ." "Will you do it?"

III. "I MUST BECOME BETTER BEFORE I BECOME A CHRISTIAN."

This is a very real difficulty with many people. They sincerely believe that they cannot come to Christ just as they are in their sins, that they must do something to make themselves better before they can come to Him. You can show them that they are utterly mistaken in this by having them read Matthew 9:12-13:

"But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they

that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

When they have read it, if they do not see the point for themselves, you can ask, "To what does Jesus compare Himself in this verse?" "To a physician." "Who is it needs a physician, well people {61} or sick people?" "Sick people."

"Ought a person who is sick to wait until he gets well before he gets the doctor?" "No, of course not." "Ought a person who is spiritually sick to wait until he is better before he comes to Jesus?"

"No." "Who is it Jesus invites to come to Himself, good people or bad people?" "Bad people." "Is then the fact that you are not good a reason for waiting or a reason for coming to Jesus at once?"

Luke 15:18-24 also fits the case exactly. Show the inquirer that we have in this story a picture of God's relation to the sinner, that God wishes us to understand that He would have the sinner come in all his rags, and that He will give him a hearty welcome, a robe, a ring and a feast if he comes just as he is.

Luke 18:10-14 also applies. You can say, "Here are two men who came to God. One came on the ground

that he was a sinner, the other came on the ground that he was righteous. Which of the two did God accept?" "The one who came on the ground that he was a sinner." "Well, God would have you come just the same way."

IV. "I CANNOT HOLD OUT," OR "I AM AFRAID I SHALL FAIL IF I TRY").

1. GENERAL TREATMENT. First see if the inquirer is in dead earnest, and if there is not some other difficulty lying back of this. Many a man gives this as a difficulty, when perhaps it is not the real one.

There is perhaps no better verse in the Bible for this difficulty than Jude 24:

"Now unto him that is ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

Its application is so plain as to need no comment.

Another useful passage is 1_Peter 1:5:

"Who are KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

When the inquirer has read it, ask him by whose power it is that we are kept. Then you can say,

"It is not then a question of our strength at all, but of God's strength. Do you think that God is able to keep you?" {62}

Other passages which are helpful along the same line are:

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that HE IS ABLE TO KEEP that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2_Timothy 1:12.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."
Isaiah 41:10.

"For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."
Isaiah 41:13.

A passage which will help by showing the absolute security of Christ's sheep, is John 10:28-29:

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

In many cases a good passage to use is Hebrews 7:25:

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

2. SPECIAL CASES.

(1) THOSE AFRAID OF SOME TEMPTATION THAT WILL PROVE TOO STRONG.

The best passage to use in such a case is

1_Corinthians 10;13:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

(2) THOSE WHO DWELL UPON THEIR OWN WEAKNESS.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2_Corinthians 12:9-10.

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."
Isaiah 40:29-31.

One evening a lady called me to a man whom she was trying to lead to Christ and asked me if I could help him. I said to him, "What is your

difficulty?" He replied, "I have no strength."

"Ah," I said, "I have a message that exactly fits your case," and read Isaiah {63} 40:29, "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." "You say you have no strength, that is, no might; now this verse tells us that to those who have no might, that is to people just like you, God increaseth strength." The Holy Spirit took the word of comfort home to his heart at once, and he put his trust in Jesus Christ then and there.

V. "I CANNOT GIVE UP MY EVIL WAYS."

1. YOU MUST OR PERISH. In order to prove this statement, use:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Galatians 6:7-8.

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with

fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Revelation 21:8.

Drive this thought home. Show the inquirer no quarter, but keep ringing the changes on the thought, "You must give up your evil ways or perish." Emphasize it by Scripture. When the inquirer sees and realizes this, then you can pass on to the next thought.

2. YOU CAN IN THE STRENGTH OF JESUS CHRIST. To

prove this, have the inquirer read Philippians 4:13 and John 8:36:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

3. SHOW THE RISEN CHRIST WITH ALL POWER IN HEAVEN

AND ON EARTH. It is in the power of the risen Christ, and through union with Him, that we are enabled to give up our evil ways, so the one who has this difficulty should have the fact that Christ is risen made clear to him. The following passages will serve well for this purpose.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I

delivered unto you first of all that which I {64}
also received, how that Christ died for our sins
according to the Scriptures; and that he was
buried, and that he rose again the third day
according to the Scriptures." 1_Corinthians
15:1-4.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All
power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
Matthew 28:18.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the
uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he
ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Hebrews 7:25.

4. SHOW HOW TO GET VICTORY OVER SIN. There is
perhaps nothing in the Bible that makes the way of
victory over sin more plain and simple than Romans
6:12-14:

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,
that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of
unrighteousness unto sin: but YIELD YOURSELVES
UNTO GOD, as those that are alive from the dead,
and your members as instruments of righteousness
unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over
you: for ye are not under the law, but under
grace."

You can say to the inquirer, "In this verse we are

told how to get victory over sin: we are told what not to do, and what to do. What is it we are told not to do?" "Not to let sin reign in our mortal body; not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." "What are we told to do?" "To yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead; and to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." "Now do you believe that through union with the risen Christ your Savior, you are alive from the dead? Will you yield or present yourself unto God as one alive from the dead? Will you now and here present your members as instruments of righteousness unto God?" After the inquirer has been led to do this, show him that whatever we yield to God, God accepts, and that he can now TRUST God for victory over sin, and have deliverance from his evil ways.

VI. "I HAVE TRIED BEFORE AND FAILED."

Those who have tried to be Christians and have failed in the attempt, very naturally hesitate about trying again, and such a case needs to be dealt with, with great care, wisdom and thoroughness.

1. The first thing to do is to say to such a one, "I CAN SHOW YOU HOW TO TRY AND NOT FAIL." Then point him to 2_Corinthians 9:8:
"And God is able to make all grace abound toward

you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." {65} When the person has read the verse, to be sure that he gets its meaning you can say, "This verse tells us that God is able to make all grace abound toward us, that we, 'always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.' It is clear then, that there is a way to try and not fail."

2. FIND OUT THE CAUSE OF FAILURE. In finding out the cause of failure, there are seven points to be looked into:

(1) DID YOU PUT ALL YOUR TRUST FOR PARDON IN THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST?

This is a very frequent cause of failure in the attempt to be a Christian, the person has never been led to see clearly the ground of his salvation, and to trust wholly in the finished work of Christ for pardon. Isaiah 53:6 is a useful passage at this point:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

(2) DID YOU SURRENDER ABSOLUTELY TO GOD?

Many are led to make a profession of faith in Christ without having been led to absolute surrender and the Christian life thus begun, is

very likely to prove a failure. The passage to use at this point is Acts 5:32:

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

(3) DID YOU CONFESS CHRIST OPENLY BEFORE MEN?

This is one of the most frequent causes of failure. I have talked with very many who have said that they have tried to be Christians and failed, and a very large proportion of them I have found failed at this very point, the lack of a constant, open confession of Christ. Good passages to use at this point are Matthew 10:32-33 and Romans 10:10:

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." {66}

(4) DID YOU STUDY THE WORD OF GOD DAILY?

Here is another frequent cause of failure, neglect of the Bible. Very few of those who have really begun the Christian life, and who have made a practice of daily study of the Word, fail in their

attempt to be Christians. Good passages to use at this point are 1_Peter 2:2 and Psalms 119:11:

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee."

(5) DID YOU LOOK EACH DAY TO GOD ALONE, AND NOT TO SELF AT ALL, FOR STRENGTH AND VICTORY?

To emphasize this question, use:

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Isaiah 40:29.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2_Corinthians 12:9.

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

1_Peter 5:5.

(6) DID YOU PRAY CONSTANTLY?

Use at this point:

"Pray without ceasing." 1_Thessalonians 5:17.

"He giveth power to the faint; and, to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the

youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Isaiah 40:29-31.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16.

(7) DID YOU GO TO WORK FOR CHRIST?

Here use Matthew 25:14-29.

VII. "THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS TOO HARD."

1. If a person states this as his difficulty, first show him that THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS NOT HARD. In Matthew 11:30 Christ tells us His yoke is easy: {67}

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Proverbs 3:17 shows us that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness,

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

1_John 5:3, that God's commandments are not grievous:

1_Peter 1:8 pictures the Christian life as a life of joy unspeakable and full of glory:

"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."

In using the latter passage you might say, "We have a picture of the Christian life in 1_Peter 1:8, let us see if it is a hard life." Have the inquirer read the verse, and then ask, "What kind of a life according to this passage, is the Christian life?" "A life of joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Do you think that is hard?"

2. Show him that THE WAY OF SIN AS HARD. Show the inquirer that it is not the Christian life, but the life without Christ that is the hard life. For this purpose use the last half of Proverbs 13:15, and Isaiah 57:21:

"But the way of transgressors is hard."

"There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

VIII. "THERE IS TOO MUCH TO GIVE UP."

This is often the difficulty even when not stated.

1. First show the inquirer that NO MATTER HOW MUCH THERE MAY BE TO GIVE UP, IT IS BETTER TO GIVE UP ANYTHING THAN TO LOSE ONE'S SOUL. For this purpose use Mark 8:36:

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

2. Show the inquirer that THE ONLY THINGS WE HAVE TO GIVE UP ARE THE THINGS WHICH WILL HARM US. This is made clear by Psalm 84:11: {68} "For the Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace

and glory; NO GOOD THING WILL HE WITHHOLD from them that walk uprightly."

When the inquirer has read the verse, ask him, "What does this verse tell us that God will not withhold from us?" "Any good thing." "The things then that God asks you to give up, are what kind of things?" "Evil things." "Then all God asks you to give up are the things which are harmful to you. Do you wish to keep them?"

I have found Romans 8:32 very effective, for it emphasizes the thought that if God loved us enough to give His Son to die for us on the Cross, He will freely give us all things:

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

I once had a long conversation with a young woman who was having a great struggle about accepting Christ. She was very fond of the world and certain forms of amusement, which she felt she would have to give up if she became a Christian. Finally I said to her, "Do you think God loves you?" "Yes, I know He does." "How much does God love you?" "Enough to give His Son to die for me," she replied. "Do you think if God loved you enough to give His Son to die for you, He will ask you to give up anything that is for your good to keep?"

"No, certainly He will not." "Do you wish to keep anything not for your good to keep?" "No." "Then do you not think you had better accept Jesus Christ right here and now?" "Yes," and she did.

Another verse which is useful as showing the inquirer that the things which he has to give up are the things which are passing away, is 1_John 2:15-17:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And THE WORLD PASSETH AWAY, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

3. Show the inquirer that WHAT WE GIVE UP IS NOTHING TO WHAT WE GET. For this purpose use Philippians 3:7-8:

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." {69} You can call the inquirer's attention to the fact that it was Paul who spoke these words, that perhaps no

one ever gave up more for Christ than he did, and yet he here tells us that what he gave up was to what he got only as the refuse of the street.

IX. "I CANNOT BE A CHRISTIAN IN MY BUSINESS," (or "It will hurt my business," or "I will lose my position.")

This is a very real difficulty with many, and must be met honestly and squarely.

1. It is well to bear in mind that even when a man really thinks this is true, it is not always so.

Many people have an idea that it is impossible to be a Christian in any line of business except Christian work. They must be shown that this is a mistake. When a man makes this excuse, it is often well to ask him what his business is, and why he cannot be a Christian in it. Sometimes you will find that it is a business in which there are many Christians, and you can tell him that there are many Christians in the same business.

2. But oftentimes it is true that the man with whom you are dealing is in a business in which it is impossible to be a Christian. For example, the man may be a bartender or a theatrical manager or something of that sort. In that case say to the man, "You had better lose your business (or position) than to lose your soul." To drive this statement home, use Mark 8:36:

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Do not pass on to the next point until the man sees this and realizes it. Make the man feel that he had better lose every dollar that he has in the world than to lose his soul. When the man sees {70} this, and is ready to give up his business at any cost, you can use Matthew 6:33:

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

This verse will show him that if he puts God and His kingdom first, all needful things will be supplied to him. It is better to starve than to reject Christ, but no man who accepts Christ will be left to starve.

Another very useful passage is Mark 10:29-30:

"And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

X. "I WILL LOSE MY FRIENDS."

Many a person who contemplates beginning the Christian life has none but ungodly companions, and he sees very clearly that if he becomes a Christian he will lose these friends, the only ones that he has; so this difficulty is a very real one.

1. First show the inquirer that he is better off without these friends, for they are enemies of God. Use for this purpose James 4:4:

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Before giving it to the inquirer to read, say, "Yes, it may be that you will lose your friends, but if your friends are godless, you are better off without them. See what God's Word says about it." Then show him the passage. If this verse does not prove sufficiently effective, follow it up with Proverbs 13:20:

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Follow this up with Psalm 1:1-2:

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

{71} But his delight is in the law of the Lord;

and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Call the inquirer's attention to the fact that God has promised an especial blessing to those who turn their backs upon godless friendships in order to obey Him.

2. Having made this first point clear, you can say, "You may lose your godless friends, but you will get better friends," and turn him to 1_John 1:3:

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

When they have read it you can say, "If you do lose your godless friends by coming to Christ, what two new friends do you get?" "The Father and His Son Jesus Christ." "Which would you rather have for friends, your godless worldly companions, or God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ?" All this may be followed up again by Mark 10:29-30.

XI. "I AM AFRAID OF RIDICULE."

1. Show the awful peril in being governed by the fear of man. Use Proverbs 29:25:

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

You might explain that this snare which catches him who is afraid of ridicule and rejects Christ,

often results in the eternal ruin of the soul.

Next use Mark 8:28:

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

2. Show that it is a glorious privilege to be ridiculed for Christ. Use for this purpose Matthew 5:11-12:

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." {72}

XII. "I WILL BE PERSECUTED IF I BECOME A CHRISTIAN."

Never tell any one that he will not be persecuted.

On the contrary say, "Yes, I presume you will be persecuted, for God tells us in His Word, that all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." To prove it show him 2_Timothy 3:12:

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

But then tell him that it is a great privilege to be persecuted for Christ's sake, and brings an

abundant reward. Have him read Matthew 5:10-12, and drive home the thought that we ought to rejoice at the privilege of being persecuted rather than to shrink from being a Christian on that account.

Then show him the result of suffering with Christ.

Turn to 2_Timothy 2:12:

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us."

Use Romans 8:18 to show him how shall are the sufferings of this present time in comparison with the glory that we shall obtain through them:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Compare 2_Corinthians 4:17.)

Acts 5:40-41 is useful as showing how the early church regarded persecution, rejoicing in it rather than shrinking from it:

"And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

Another passage which is also useful in such a case is 1_Peter 2:20-21:

"For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."

XIII. "I HAVE NO FEELING."

This is a very common difficulty. There are many who wish to come to Christ, but do not think they can come because they have {73} not the proper feeling. The first thing to do in such a case, is to find out what feeling the inquirer thinks it is necessary to have in order to become a Christian.

1. "THE JOY AND PEACE THAT CHRISTIANS TELL ABOUT."

The feeling that many inquirers are waiting for is the joy and peace that Christians speak of. Of course the thing to do in such a case, is to show the inquirer that this joy and peace is the result of coming to Christ, and that we cannot expect the result before we come. The first passage to use to show this is Galatians 5:22:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."

This shows that joy and peace are the fruit of the Spirit, and we cannot expect to have the fruit of the Spirit until we have received the Spirit, and

we cannot receive the Spirit until we have accepted Christ. This is brought out very clearly in Ephesians 1:13:

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, AFTER THAT YE BELIEVED, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

Emphasize the point that it is AFTER we believe that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Use also Acts 5:32:

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given TO THEM THAT OBEY HIM."

This will show that the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey Christ, and we cannot expect to receive the Holy Spirit until we have obeyed God by putting our trust in Jesus Christ and confessing Him openly before the world. A verse which will be useful in this connection as showing that it is after we confess Christ that He confesses us before the Father, is Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

And so we have no right to expect the sealing of the Holy Spirit until we have confessed Christ

before men.

It is after we have believed that we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1_Peter 1:8:

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"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."

Our duty is believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth, leaving the matter of feeling to God; Romans 10:10:

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

2. "SORROW FOR SIN." The feeling that many are waiting for, is a feeling of sorrow for sin. If you find this to be the case with any individual with whom you are dealing, proceed as follows:

(1) Use the passages already given to produce conviction of sin. (See Chapter Six, Section I.)

(2) Show that it is not sorrow for sin, but turning away from sin and accepting Christ that God demands. For this purpose use the following passages:

"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."

Isaiah 55:7.

"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.

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Acts 16:31.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38.

XIV. "I HAVE BEEN SEEKING CHRIST BUT CANNOT FIND HIM."

1. It is well oftentimes to say to one who raises this difficulty, "I can tell you just when you will find Christ." This will probably awaken surprise, but insist, "Yes, I can tell you just when you will find Christ. If you will turn to Jeremiah 29:13, you will find the exact time when you will find Christ." Then let him read:

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, WHEN YE SHALL SEARCH FOR ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART."

"Now this verse tells the time when you will find Christ, when is it?" "When ye shall search for me with all your heart." "The fact is, up to this time, you have not been seeking for Him with all your heart. Are you ready to let go of everything

else and seek Him today with all your heart?"

This passage has been used in a {75} great many cases to lead out one who has been seeking Christ for years, into a real acceptance of Him.

2. It is well sometimes to say to one who raises this difficulty, "Then you are seeking Christ?"

Well, did you know that Christ also is seeking you?" Then turn to Luke 19:10 (or Luke 15:3-10) and read. "Now you say you are seeking Christ, and Christ says He is seeking you, how long ought it to take for you to find one another? Will you just come to Christ and trust Him here and now?"

3. Sometimes the best thing to do is to say, "Well, if you are earnestly seeking Christ, let me show you how to find Him." Then deal with the inquirer in the way described in Chapter Five.

XV. "CHRISTIANS ARE SO INCONSISTENT."

This is one of the most common difficulties that we meet. Probably the best passage to use is Romans 14:12:

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

When a person raises this difficulty, you can say, "So you are troubled about the sins of Christians; let me show you from God's own Word what He says about that." Then have him read the passage. When he has read the passage, ask, "Who does God say

you will have to give an account of?" "Myself."

"Not of inconsistent Christians then?" "No." "Are you ready to give an account of yourself to God?"

The mere reading of this verse without comment, has led many who have been dwelling upon the inconsistency of others, to see themselves lost and undone before God, and to turn and accept Christ right there.

Another useful passage is Romans 2:1-5. Hand it to the inquirer and ask him to read it carefully.

When he has read it, ask him if this passage does not describe him, if he is not judging others for doing the very things he does himself. Then ask him what God says about those who judge others for what they are doing themselves. Ask him further what God says in the third verse that such a person will not escape. Ask him what the fourth verse tells him that he is really doing; and then ask him what the fifth verse tells him he is treasuring up for himself.

In many cases Matthew 7:1-5 will be found useful.

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XVI. "THERE IS SOME ONE I CANNOT FORGIVE."

This is often the difficulty even when it is not stated. I have frequently found that when people told me they could not accept Christ and did not know why, the real difficulty was here, there was

some one who had wronged them, or who they thought had wronged them, and they would not forgive him.

1. The first thing to do with such a one is to say, "YOU MUST FORGIVE OR PERISH." To prove this, use Matthew 6:15: {@Ed.cmt}

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Follow this up with Matthew 18:21-35:

2. Say to the person, "THE WRONG THEY HAVE DONE YOU IS NOTHING TO THE WRONG YOU HAVE DONE JESUS CHRIST." Here use Ephesians 4:32:

"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

You might also use Matthew 18:23-35.

3. Next show the inquirer that he can forgive the other in Christ's strength. Use for this purpose Philippians 4:13 and Galatians 5:22-23:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

XVII. "A PROFESSED CHRISTIAN HAS DONE ME A GREAT WRONG."

1. First you can reply by saying, "THAT IS NO

REASON WHY YOU SHOULD WRONG CHRIST! HAS HE WRONGED

YOU?" Use Jeremiah 2:5:

"Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found IN ME, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?"

Ask the inquirer if he has found any evil in Christ, that that is what God is asking Him. One night I turned to an aged man and asked him if he was a Christian. He replied no, that he was a backslider. I asked him why he had backslidden, and he said Christian people had treated him badly. I opened my Bible and read Jeremiah 2:5 to him, and asked him, "Did you find any iniquity in God; did God not treat you well?" With a good deal of feeling, the man admitted that God had not treated him badly. I held him right to this point of God's treatment of him and not man's, and his treatment of God. It is well to follow this passage up with Isaiah 53:5 as bringing out very vividly just what Christ's treatment of us has been.

2. In the next place you can say to the one who raises this difficulty, "THE FACT THAT A PROFESSED CHRISTIAN HAS DONE YOU A GREAT INJURY IS NO REASON WHY YOU SHOULD DO YOURSELF A GREATER INJURY BY REFUSING CHRIST AND LOSING ETERNAL LIFE AND BEING

LOST FOREVER." Then you can say, "Let me show you what injury you are doing yourself by rejecting Christ." Use for this purpose John 3:36, and 2_Thessalonians 1:7-9:

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

XVIII. "I HAVE DONE A GREAT WRONG AND WILL HAVE TO MAKE IT RIGHT AND CANNOT."

1. TELL THE INQUIRER TO TAKE CHRIST FIRST, AND LEAVE THE MATTER OF SETTLING THE WRONG WITH HIM, that he cannot settle the matter as it ought to be settled until he has first taken Christ. Make it very plain that the only thing God requires of a sinner is to accept Christ, and all other questions must be left until that point has been settled. Use John 3:36 for this purpose, and Acts 10:43.

2. Show him further that IF THERE IS ANY WRONG TO BE MADE RIGHT, CHRIST WILL GIVE HIM STRENGTH TO MAKE IT RIGHT, and use for this purpose Philippians 4:13.

XIX. "I HAVE SINNED AWAY THE DAY OF GRACE."

This is a very serious difficulty. It often arises from a poor state of health and a morbid condition of mind, but I have never found a case that would not yield to prayerful and judicious treatment.

The best passage to use, and one that generally proves sufficient, is John 6:37, the last clause:

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"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

It is oftentimes necessary to read it over and over and over again, sometimes for days and days.

Hold the inquirer to the one thought that God says He is ready to receive any one who will come, urging him to come now.

Another useful passage is Romans 10:13:

"For WHOSOEVER shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Dwell upon the "whosoever."

The case of Manasseh as recorded in 2_Chronicles 33:1-13 is useful as showing the extent to which one can go and yet how God will receive them to Himself, if they only humble themselves before him.

Luke 23:39-43 is oftentimes useful as showing how one was saved even the hour of death.

XX. "IT IS TOO LATE."

This difficulty is very much like the preceding one, and the same passage, John 6:37, is also useful in this case. Oftentimes, however, Deuteronomy 4:30-31 will prove more helpful:

"When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, **EVEN IN THE LATTER DAYS**, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them."

In using the passage, emphasize the thought, "even in the latter days."

Still another passage is 2_Peter 3:9:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, **NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH**, but that all should come to repentance."

It shows that God is not willing that any should perish, and that the reason why He delays His judgment is that men may be brought to repentance.

Luke 23:39-43 is useful as showing that one was saved even as late as his dying hour, and

Revelation 22:17 tells us that **WHOSOEVER WILL** may take of the water of life freely. {79}

XXI. "I HAVE COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN."

1. The first thing to do in this case is to **SHOW**

JUST WHAT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS. For this purpose use Matthew 12:31-32, noting the context.

This passage taken in its context makes it plain that the unpardonable sin is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost consists in deliberately attributing to the devil, the work which is known to have been wrought by the Holy Spirit. Having shown just what the unpardonable sin is, ask the inquirer, "Have you done this? Have you deliberately attributed the work which you knew to be done by the Holy Spirit to the devil?" In almost every case, if not in every case, it will be found that the inquirer has not done this.

2. Having shown what the unpardonable sin is, and that the inquirer has not committed it, USE JOHN 6:37 as in the preceding case. Even if the inquirer thinks that he has committed the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, use John 6:37. Ask the inquirer what Jesus Christ says about those who come to Him, and then ask him if he will come to Christ right now. If he says, "I have committed the unpardonable sin," reply that it does not say, "Him that has not committed the unpardonable sin that comes to me I will in no wise cast out," but, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," and put the question

again, "Will you come?" to every new excuse that arises, simply repeat the promise, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," and repeat the question, "Will you come?"

If he raises some new difficulty as probably he will, simply say, "Jesus says, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out,' will you come?"

Repeat and repeat and repeat, over and over again, until this promise is fairly burned into the heart praying all the time for the Holy Spirit to carry it home.

A man was once sent to me who was in the depths of despair. He had attempted suicide some five times.

He felt that he had sinned away the day of grace, and committed the unpardonable sin, and that the devil had entered into him as he did into Judas

Iscaiot. Day after day I dealt with him, always using John 6:37. To every excuse and difficulty he

would bring up I would simply say, "Jesus says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast

out.'" I met him at last one day for a final conflict. I said to him, "Do you believe what

Jesus says?" He replied, "Yes, I believe everything in the {80} Bible." "Well," I said,

"did not Jesus say, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out'?" "Yes," he replied. I said,

"Will you come?" He replied, "I have committed the

unpardonable sin." I said, "Jesus did not say, 'If any man has not committed the unpardonable sin, and comes to me I will in no wise cast him out'; He said, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out'; will you come?"

He said, "I am possessed of the devil." I replied, "Jesus did not say, 'If a man is not possessed of the devil and comes to me I will in no wise cast him out'; He said, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'; will you come?"

He said, "The devil has actually entered into me."

I replied, "Jesus did not say, 'If the devil has not entered into a man and he comes to me I will in no wise cast him out'; He said, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out'; will you come?"

He said, "My heart is too hard to come." I replied, "Jesus did not say, 'If a man's heart is not too hard and he comes to me, I will in no wise cast him out'; He said, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out'; Will you come?"

He said, "I don't feel like coming." I replied, "Jesus did not say, 'If any man feels like coming, and comes to me, I will in no wise cast him out'; He said, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out'; will you come?"

He said, "I don't know that I can come in the

right way." I replied, "Jesus did not say, 'If any man cometh unto me in the right way, I will in no wise cast him out'; He said, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out'; will you come?"

He said, "I do not know that I want to come." I replied, "Jesus did not say, 'He that wants to come, and comes to me I will in no wise cast out'; He said, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out'; will you come?"

He said, "I don't know that I know how to come." I replied, "Jesus did not say, 'He that knows how to come, and comes to me I will in no wise cast out'; He said, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out'; will you come? Will you get down here now and come just the best you know how?"

Hesitatingly the man knelt down. I asked him to follow me in prayer. I prayed about as follows:

"Lord Jesus, thou hast said 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out'; now the best I know how, I just come." The man repeated the words after me. I said, "What has Jesus done? Never mind what you feel, but what does Jesus say He has done? 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' What has Jesus done, what does He say He has done?" He replied, "He has received me." I said, "Are you willing to stand there on the naked Word of God?" He replied, "I am." "Now," I said,

"you are going to your room. I have no doubt that the devil will give you an awful fight, but will you stand right there on the word of Jesus, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out'?" He replied, "I will." He went to his room. The devil did come and assail him, and try to get him to look at his own heart, his own feelings, and his doubts, but he kept looking to the promise of Jesus, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out"; he believed that naked promise, he came out of his struggle a victor. This was eight or nine years ago. Today he is one of the most useful men in America.

XXII. HEBREWS 6:4-6.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY TO RENEW THEM AGAIN UNTO REPENTANCE; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

Very many men and women are in deep distress of soul over this passage. They fear that it describes them, and that there is no hope of their salvation. The way to deal with such a person is to explain to him the exact meaning of the

passage.

1. Show him first of all, that it is addressed to Hebrew Christians who were in danger of APOSTATIZING, RENOUNCING CHRIST and going back to Judaism. Then ask him if this describes his case.

Of course he will say that it does not.

Furthermore show him that it does not describe a person who has merely fallen in sin, but one who has FALLEN AWAY, that is apostatized, and deliberately renounced Christ. Ask him if this describes his case. In most cases, of course, it will be found that it does not.

2. In the next place show him that the difficulty is not that God is not willing to receive such a one back, but that it is impossible "to renew them again unto repentance." That is, that their hearts are utterly hardened, and they have no desire to come to Christ. Then show him that this does not describe his case, the {82} very fact of his being in anxiety and burden of heart proving that it does not.

3. Sometimes all of this fails, if so, simply go over the fourth verse, and ask him if that has really been his experience, if he has actually been made a partaker of the Holy Ghost.

4. Show him by the case of Peter that one who has been a follower of Christ may fall into deep sin,

and yet be restored and become more useful than ever. Use for this purpose, Luke 22:31,34; Mark 14:66-72, John 21:15-19.

5. Finally use John 6:37, as described above.

XXIII. HEBREWS 10:26-27.

"For IF WE SIN WILLFULLY AFTER THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, THERE REMAINETH NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SINS, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

Many are troubled by this passage just as others are troubled by Hebrews 6:4-6. I have met many in deepest anguish because they thought that this described their experience. The way to deal with such a one is to show him exactly the meaning of the verse. Explain to him that the word

"willfully" means deliberately, and of stubborn choice. It is the same word that is translated "willingly" in 1_Peter 5:2. It does not describe a man who in weakness falls into sin, but a man who, with his whole heart, rejects obedience to God and the service of Christ, and throws himself with all his soul into sin. Ask him if this describes his case. Finally use John 6:37.

XXIV. "GOD SEEMS TO ME UNJUST AND CRUEL."

1. The shortest way of dealing with many who say this, is to take them at once to Romans 9:20:

"Nay but, O man, WHO ART THOU THAT REPLIEST AGAINST GOD? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

Apply the verse directly to the inquirer's case.

Ask him if he realizes who God is, and who he himself is, and say, "You are replying against God. You are accusing God of sin. Now this is God's message to you, 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?'" This verse has been used of the Holy Spirit to break down {83} in repentance and tears many a man who has complained against God.

This may be followed up by Romans 11:33:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! HOW UNSEARCHABLE are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Show the inquirer that the reason God seems to him to be unjust and cruel is because such is the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, and so unsearchable are His judgments, that he cannot find them out.

This can be followed up still further by Isaiah

55:8-9:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your

thoughts."

Another excellent passage to use is Job 40:2:

"Shall he that CONTENDETH WITH THE ALMIGHTY instruct him? HE THAT REPROVETH GOD, let him answer it."

When the complainer has read the verse, ask him if he wishes to contend with the Almighty. Show him further that he is reprovng God, and God says he must answer for it; ask him if he is ready to answer for it.

2. IF THE INQUIRER IS COMPLAINING OF GOD'S CRUELTY BECAUSE OF SOME SORROW OR ANGUISH IN HIS OWN LIFE,

it is well to use Hebrews 12:5-7, 10-12:

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

"For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it

yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees."

One should deal very tenderly with a case like this, yet at the same time faithfully. Show the inquirer that the sorrows and disappointments {84} and afflictions that he has suffered are God's loving dealings with him, to bring him into a life of holiness and higher joy, that God does not willingly afflict.

One can follow the above passage with Isaiah 63:9:

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

In order to lead the sorrow-stricken soul to see that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, use Romans 8:18:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Another useful passage is 2_Corinthians 4:17-18:

"For our light affliction, which is BUT FOR A MOMENT, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the

things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

3. Sometimes it is well to say in such a case, "You would not think that God was unjust and cruel if you only realized the depth of your own sin against Him," and use Matthew 22:37-38 to show him the greatness of his sin, in the way described in Chapter Six. No man {85} after he has been led by the Word of God and His Spirit to see himself as God sees him, will any longer have any difficulty with God's way of salvation, but will be only too glad to find that a sin-bearer has been provided for him.

XXVI. "THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS IN THE BIBLE THAT I CANNOT UNDERSTAND."

1. The first step in such a case is to show the objector why he cannot understand. A good passage to use for this purpose is 1_Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

It can be used in this way: when the man has said, "There are so many things in the Bible that I cannot understand," reply, "Yes, that is just what

the Bible says." Then show the man the passage, and say to him, "This verse tells you just why you cannot understand what is in the Bible, because 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness UNTO HIM,' and I suppose that many of them appear like foolishness to you." "Yes." "This verse tells you why it is, 'because they are spiritually discerned.' The truth is, you are spiritually blind. If you will turn from sin and accept Christ, you will get spiritual sight, and then many things which you cannot understand now will become as plain as day."

Isaiah 55:8-9 can also be used:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

You can say to the one with whom you are dealing, "This tells why you cannot understand God's truth. Why is it?" "Because His thoughts are higher than my thoughts."

Daniel 12:10 is also useful:

"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and NONE OF THE WICKED SHALL UNDERSTAND; but the wise shall

understand." {86} Before the man reads it, you can say to him, "I can show you a passage in the Bible that tells you just exactly why you cannot understand, and also how you can understand." When he has read it, ask him who it is that does not understand. "The wicked." "And who shall understand?" "The wise."

A passage which can also be used to good effect is 2_Peter 3:16-18:

"As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the terror of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."

1_Corinthians 13:11-12 and Romans 11:33 can also be used.

2. The second step is to show how to understand.

John 7:17 makes this as plain as day:

"IF ANY MAN WILL DO HIS WILL, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Follow this up with Psalm 119:18 and James 1:5:

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous

things out of thy law."

"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."

XXVII. "I CANNOT BELIEVE."

We will take up skeptics more at length in Chapter Eleven. At this point we take up the matter merely as an honest difficulty that some find in the way of accepting Christ.

1. When one states this as a difficulty, it is often well to ask him what he cannot believe. A man once said to Mr. Moody, "I cannot believe." Mr. Moody said, "Whom can't you believe?" He replied, "I cannot believe." "Whom can't you believe, can't you believe God?" "Yes," the man replied, "I can believe God, but I cannot believe myself." Mr. Moody said, "I don't want you to believe yourself, I want you to believe God."

Oftentimes the difficulty is with some doctrine that has nothing directly to do with salvation; for example, a man will say, "I cannot believe the account of creation given in the first chapter of Genesis, and I cannot {87} believe the story about Jonah and the whale." Now of course a man ought to believe the Bible account of creation given in the first chapter of Genesis, and he ought to believe the story about Jonah, but these

are not questions to discuss with an unsaved man.

When a man states some such difficulty as this, the best thing to do is to say, "Can you believe in Jesus Christ?" "Yes, I can believe in Jesus Christ." "But will you believe in him, will you accept Him as your Savior, your sin-bearer, and your Lord and Master?" Show the man that it does not say, believe this doctrine or that doctrine and thou shalt be saved, or this incident or that incident in the Bible, but "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." For this purpose use Acts 16:31 and John 3:16:

"And they said, BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH IN HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life."

After the man has really believed on Christ and been saved, and grown somewhat in Christian knowledge, he will be in a position to take up secondary questions. Many a well-meaning worker makes a great mistake in discussing secondary questions with an unsaved man, when he is in no position to understand them at all, but should be held to the vital point of the acceptance of Jesus Christ as a Savior and Lord and Master.

2. In many cases, perhaps in most cases, when one

says, "I cannot believe," the real difficulty that lies back of their inability to believe, is unwillingness to forsake sin, and it is well to say to such a person, "Is your unbelief the real difficulty, is there not some sin in your life that you are unwilling to give up?" I was once called to deal with a man, and was told that he was a skeptic, and needed help along that line. I said to him, "Are you a skeptic?" He replied, "Yes." I asked him what made him a skeptic, and he said because he could not see where Cain got his wife. I said to him, "Is that your real difficulty?" "Yes." I replied, "Then if I remove that difficulty, and show you where Cain got his wife, will you become a Christian?" He said, "Oh, no, I cannot promise that." "But," I said, "you said that was your difficulty, the thing that kept you from accepting Christ; now if I remove that difficulty, {88} and you are honest, of course you will accept Christ." The man laughed and saw that he was cornered. "Now," I said, "let me ask you a question; is not the real difficulty some sin in your life?" The man broke down and confessed that it was, and he told me what the sin was, and professed to give it up and accept Christ then and there. When you are convinced that the real difficulty in the case is sin, a good passage

to use is John 5:44:

"How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only."

Say to the man before he reads it, "Yes, I suppose you cannot believe, but Jesus Christ tells us just why it is that men cannot believe," and then have him read the passage. Then you can say to him, "The reason why you cannot believe according to this verse, is because you are seeking the honor that comes from man and not the honor that comes from God alone. Is this not so?" Be courteous, but do not let the inquirer dodge that point.

"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."

This will show the man that he not only needs to forsake his way, but his thoughts as well, and that if he will, and return to the Lord, He will have mercy upon him and abundantly pardon.

3. Finally in dealing with this difficulty, it is well to show a man how to believe. You can say to him after you have dealt with him along the lines already mentioned, "I can show you how to believe." Then give him John 7:17:

"If any man WILL DO HIS WILL, he shall know of the

doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Ask him if he will be willing to do the will of God, if he will surrender his will to God. Then show him James 1:5-7:

"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 any thing of the Lord." {89}

Follow this up with John 20:31:

"But THESE ARE WRITTEN, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Then give him the Gospel of John to study prayerfully. We will go into this more at length in Chapter Eleven.

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