

Which Shall We Believe, God or Man?

by R.A. Torrey

We should always believe God's Word over the opinions of men, as it is the source of truth and salvation.

Scripture: Romans 3:3

Topics: "Urgency of Salvation", "Faith in God"

Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the critical choice between believing God's Word or man's opinions, asserting that God's truth remains unshaken despite human disbelief. He argues that many people place their faith in the fallible words of men, including scientists and philosophers, while dismissing the eternal truths found in Scripture. Torrey highlights key differences between human beliefs and God's declarations, such as the existence of the devil, the reality of judgment, and the necessity of salvation through Jesus Christ. He urges listeners to recognize the urgency of accepting Christ now, as the opportunity for repentance may not come again. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to trust in God's Word above all else.

Transcript

"For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar."

Rom. 3:3,4.

WHAT I say to-night is going to save some of you and it is going to damn some of you. Some of you are going to heed the truth and repent. Some of you are going to harden your hearts against the truth and this will come up against you in the day of judgment. Our subject is, Which Shall We Believe, God or Man? You will find the text in Rom. 3 : 3, 4, "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid : yea, let God be true, but every man a liar."

I. GOD'S WORD BETTER THAN MAN'S WORD.

My main proposition to-night is that God's word is better than man's. We live in a day when men are disposed to put great faith in what men say, especially in what learned men say, but little or no faith in what God says. Let some great man of science announce some discovery and no matter how incredible it may appear, no matter how much there is about it that we cannot understand, we believe it at once. But let a man find something in the Word of God that is contrary to his notions, or that has something in it that he cannot understand, and he discards it at once. Tell men what the Bible says and they look wise and shrug

their shoulders and say, Yes, but I do not think so. I think this way. Tell them what some great scientist or some leading literary critic, or some brilliant but erratic preacher says, and they think that settles it. What foolishness, what consummate foolishness. The opinion of the greatest scientist that ever lived, or the greatest philosopher, or the most learned Hebrew or Greek scholar, or the most brilliant pulpit orator is of no value whatever against the word of the infinitely wise and eternally truthful God, of God who is never mistaken and cannot lie. The opinion of all men together is of no weight against the Word of God. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." The man who believes any man against God is a fool. The man who believes any company of men against God is a fool. The Bible is the Word of God. That can be proven by many unanswerable proofs. I have proven it from this platform. On the other hand, for eighteen centuries and more the opinions of scientists and philosophers have come and gone, to-day regarded as the final word of wisdom, and to-morrow regarded as sheerest folly. But the teachings of this book for all these centuries have stood fast amid all the wreckage of man's thinking. The experience of eighteen centuries proves that the man who banks on the Bible is wise. The man who throws the Bible overboard and turns to any other source of light and guidance always misses it in the long run. He always has for eighteen centuries, and he always will for all the centuries that are to come. The truly wise man is he who always believes this book against the opinion of any man, against any scientist, against any philosopher, against any literary scholar, against any council of theologians or any congress of philosophers and savants. If the Bible says one thing and any body of men, or any company of men say another, the truly wise man will say, "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

II. SOME POINTS ON WHICH MEN DIFFER FROM GOD.

1. Let us look at some points at which many men differ from God. First of all, a great many men, men who are considered wise, unusually wise, differ from God about the existence of a personal devil. A very large number of men in our day, including some prominent theologians, laugh at the idea of their being any such person as the Devil. One frequently hears men say, "There is no Devil but sin." Now that is what men say, very many men, but what does God say? Turn to Eph. 6:11, 12 and you will see what God says: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For our

wrestlings is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Turn to 1 Pet. 5:8 and you will see again what God has to say on this point. He says, "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." God says that there is a devil, a being of great cunning and great power, as well as great malignity, a being who is more than a match for you or me, and that he is plotting our destruction and all the time working to accomplish it. God is certainly right about this, and, if you believe there is no devil but your own sin you are a greatly deceived individual, and the very devil you think does not exist has deceived you, and he has done it in order to destroy you. An Indian in ambush is a particularly dangerous Indian and a devil who has persuaded people that he does not exist at all is a particularly dangerous devil. No other class of people fall so easily a prey to the devils subtlety as do the people who do not believe there is any devil. Show me a man or woman who does not believe there is a devil and I will

show you every time a man or woman whom the devil has blinded and on whom he is getting in his work. The Christian Scientists are among the leaders of those who deny the existence of a personal devil, and what other class of intelligent people are there on earth to-day who are so evidently blinded by the devil as they are. Many of the Christian Scientists are people of unusual intelligence in many matters, but when they come to talk about their peculiar theories their reasoning is the most absurd and preposterous and

ridiculous and ludicrous that was ever foisted upon a credulous and devil-blinded people.

2. Many men differ from God about a future judgment. Many and many in this day do not believe that there is to be a future judgment. Tell many men in our day that there is a time coming when they shall have to stand before the judgment bar of God with His holy and all-seeing eye piercing them through and through, and answer for all their deeds done in the body, and for all their words that they have spoken; tell them that for every idle word a man speaks he will have to give account thereof in the day of judgment, as the Lord Jesus Christ says they will (Matt. 12 : 36), and they will laugh at you in scorn. But what does God say? Turn to Acts 17:30, 31 and you will find what God says. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Turn to Rom. 14:12 and you will hear what God has to say on this subject, "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God." Turn to 2 Cor. 5:10 and you will hear again what God has to say, "For we must all

appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Turn once more to Matt. 12:36 and you will hear God's very plain utterance on this subject spoken by the lips of His own Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." God is right again. There is one thing absolutely sure about the future and that is that there is going to be a judgment day. How this present war will turn out I do not know and no other man knows. A few weeks ago we were told that it was absolutely sure that Germany would be conquered in three months, but now they are telling us that it will take three years, and the fact is we do not know that it will be conquered at all. It is not absolutely sure. It is not absolutely sure that there will ever be another summer or another election or another Christmas, but it is sure that there will be a judgment day. It is absolutely sure that you and I will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give account of the deeds done here in the body, and the words spoken here. It is absolutely sure that each one of us will give account of himself to God.

3. Many men differ from God about Hell. (1) There are many in our day who do not believe that there is any hell at all. There are many who say in the most positive way, "There is no hell." A lady once said to me, "Why, Mr. Torrey, you do not believe in hell?" It is not a question what I believe, but what God says. What does God say? He says in Matt. 5:29,30, which by the way is a part of the Sermon on the Mount which all men say they believe, even though they do not believe the rest of the Bible: "And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell." I have quoted these words of God from the Revised Version, for many foolishly say that hell while it is found in the Authorized Version has disappeared from the Revised Version. They evidently know as little about the Revised Version as they do about the Authorized. Again you will find what God says on this subject in Luke 12:4, 5, "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." Let me say in passing that the one who has power to cast into hell is not the devil. The devil has no power to cast into Hell nor in Hell, in Hell he himself is one of the prisoners. God is the One who has power to cast into hell and He is the One whom we should fear. Turn once more to Rev. 21:8 and you will see a very plain

statement of God about hell: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. "

(2) There are some again who believe there is a hell but they do not believe it is an everlasting hell. Many say, "You do not believe in everlasting punishment, do you?" Again I say it is not a question of what I believe, or what you believe, but of what God says. Read Matt. 25: 41, "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." As to how long that punishment lasts that is prepared for the devil and his angels, you will find it set forth in Rev. 20 : 10, which describes what will occur at the end of the millennium, after the beast and the false prophet have been in hell a thousand years: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet (remember they have already been there a thousand years); and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Listen again to what God says in Rev. 14:9-11, "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Listen once more to what God has to say on the subject of eternal hell in Rev. 20:15, "And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." Is your name written in the book of life? If it is not you will spend an endless eternity

in hell. I do not state that as my opinion, but as God's Word. Make it sure to-night that your name is in the book of life by accepting Jesus Christ.

4. Again men differ from God about a future probation. There are many men who say, and they are oftentimes men whom the world considers wise, and they say it with great positiveness, that if men do not repent of their sins and accept Christ now in this life they will have another chance to repent and turn to Christ after they are dead. I formerly believed and preached that myself, but what does God say? Turn to John 8:21 and you will find what God says. God tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ said unto the people that gathered around Him when He was here on earth, "I go away, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, ye cannot come." In other words, God says through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that if a man dies in his sin he cannot go where Jesus Christ does, that he has no other chance. Turn again to Heb. 9:27 and read what God says about a future probation: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this cometh judgment." Listen once more to what God has to say about a future probation. You will find it in 2 Cor. 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Note that carefully. The basis of judgment will be "the things done in the body," the things done in this present life, the things done before we shuffle off this mortal coil, the things done this side of the grave. When a man's life on earth is ended his eternal destiny is settled.

5. Men differ from God about the way of salvation. Many men say that if a man lives a good moral life he will be saved; he may be a Jew or a Mohammedan, or a Bhuddist, or a Christian, but if he is only sincere he will be saved. They say no man will be lost simply because he does not believe in Jesus Christ and confess Jesus Christ before the world. At the time of Col. Ingersoll's death a Chicago preacher who claimed to be a Christian said, "Heaven or any good country will welcome a man like Col. Ingersoll." Of

course, the infidels applauded when he said it, and I suppose that this professedly Christian preacher was glad to get the applause of the avowed enemies of Jesus Christ. But what does God say? Listen to John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the "Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Listen again to what God says in Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other (than Jesus Christ): for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Listen still again as God speaks in John 3:18, "He that believeth on Him (i.e., on Jesus Christ) is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." Listen still again to the voice of God as He speaks to us in John 3:36, "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." Listen still again as God speaks in Rom. 10: 9, 10, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Listen once again, and now God is speaking through the lips of His Son, Jesus Christ, Matt. 10:32,33), "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."

6. Many men differ from God about the conditions of entering the kingdom of God. Many men say that the way to get into the kingdom of God is by leading an upright life, by treating your wife well, and your children well, and being honest in business, and kind to the poor, and doing other good things. Others say the way to enter the kingdom of God is by being baptized and uniting with the church and partaking of the communion, and reading your Bible, and saying your prayers, and going to confession, etc. But what does God say? Listen, John 3:3, 5, "Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Listen again on the same point to the voice of God as He speaks in Tit. 3:5, 6, "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

7. Men differ from God about the best time to repent and accept Christ. Many men are saying that there will be some day a better time than to-night to repent of our sins and to turn to Christ. Many of you here to-night are saying that, or thinking it if you do not say it, or acting it if you do not think it. But what does God say? Listen. 2 Cor. 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." Listen again, Heb. 3:7, "The Holy Ghost saith to day." Listen still again (Prov. 27:1), "Boast not thyself of to-morrow ; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." And now listen once more (Prov. 29: 1), "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." When the Apostle Paul reasoning before Felix, the corrupt Roman governor, told him of righteousness and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, but he thought there would be a better time to repent than just then, and said, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." He thought some other time would be more convenient than that time, but he never found the more convenient time, and that is why he is in Hades now and why he will spend eternity in hell.

These are some of the things that men say and some of the things God says. Which will you believe? I say, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." But perhaps some one will say, "But I do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God." My friend, did it ever occur to you that your not believing that the Bible is the word of God does not alter the fact at all? At the time of the Boxer uprising in China some of the Boxers did not believe they could be killed by bullets, they thought that their incantations and their magic rites

made them invulnerable against bullets. They were very sincere in their belief. A Chinese officer asked them to prove their sincerity by drawing up in line and he would have his soldiers shoot at them. They consented. They drew up in line before the muzzles of the guns. They were very sincere. The Chinese soldiers blazed away and every Boxer dropped dead. Their doubt of the power of the bullets to kill them did not alter the fact. Your doubt that the Bible is God's Word does not alter the fact that it is. Suppose for a moment that the Bible turns out to be the Word of God, as all those who know it best and know God best say that it is. You must at least admit that it is possible that it is the Word of God. You must admit that the men and women who are really living nearest God and know God best believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Suppose they prove to be right, where will you be? Damned. And that is exactly what you will be if you go on doubting God's Word and rejecting God's Son, listening to the voice of man rather than the voice of God.

God says that there is a devil and that you need Christ's help against his cunning and power. God says that there is a future judgment and that we must all give account to God. God says that there is a hell, and that it is a place of torment where all who reject Christ will spend eternity. God says there is no future probation, that the issues of eternity are settled in the life that now is. God says there is but one way to be saved, i. e., by the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and surrender to Him as our Lord, and confession of Him before the world. God says that the only way to enter the kingdom is to be born again. God says that the best time to accept Christ and be saved is right now. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." "The Holy Ghost saith today." "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Who of you will turn from sin and unbelief and turn to Jesus Christ and accept Him as your Saviour and surrender to Him as your Lord and Master, and confess Him as such right now?

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