

R. A. Torrey



R. A. Torrey (1856-1928) was a Congregational evangelist, teacher, author, born in Hoboken, New Jersey. He was educated in Yale University and Divinity School. After a period of skepticism he trusted in Jesus Christ as Saviour. Soon after he pastored in Ohio and then in Minnesota. In 1889 Dwight L. Moody called Torrey to Chicago to become the superintendant of the school which became known as the Moody Bible Institute. He also served as pastor of the Chicago Avenue Church, now the Moody Memorial Church, for twelve years. Between 1902-1906 Torrey and Charles Alexander conducted a very fruitful evangelistic outreach in Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, India, China, Japan, Britain, Germany, Canada, and the USA. From 1912-1924 Torrey was dean of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles during which he pastored the Church of the Open Door. His remaining years involved holding Bible conferences, teaching at the Moody Bible Institute, and other endeavours. (Adapted from "The Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church, Elgin S. Moyer, Moody Press, 1982)

The Judgment Day

"God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead. Acts 17:30, 31

There are two events in the future which are absolutely certain. First of all, it is absolutely certain that Jesus Christ is coming again to receive His people unto himself, and to reward them according to their works; and in the second place, it is absolutely certain that Jesus Christ is coming again to judge the world. When I was on the ocean some months ago a man asked me one night, as we were walking the deck of the great steamer together, "What will be the outcome of this tendency towards great trusts and monopolies in business?" And I replied, "I do not know.," Men often come to me with the question, "What will be the outcome of these great combinations of laboring men to resist the encroachments of capital?" And again I reply, "I don't know."

But I will tell you what I do know, and it is infinitely more important. I know that some day the Lord Jesus Christ will come back again, and receive His waiting and faithful people unto himself, and I know that there is going to be a judgment day for the world, and that judgment day is the subject of our thought tonight.

There are five things about the judgment day that are set forth in our text: first, the certainty of it; secondly, the universality of it; thirdly, the basis of it; fourthly, the administrator of it; and, lastly, the issues of it.

1. First, the Certainty of it. -- It is absolutely certain that there is to be a judgment day. "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness." Men who are living in sin may laugh at it; they cannot laugh it away. In the days of Noah men laughed at Noah's predictions that there was to be a flood, but the flood came and swept them all away. In the days of Lot the men of Sodom laughed at the idea that God would rain fire and brimstone out of heaven, and destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain; but the fire and brimstone fell, and these cities were blotted out. In the days of Jeremiah the people of Jerusalem laughed at Jeremiah's predictions that Nebuchabazzar would come and lay Jerusalem in the dust and destroy their temple. But it all came to pass just as God said, and just as Jeremiah believed and predicted. In the days of Jesus Christ men laughed at Christ's prediction that the armies of Rome under Titus and Vespasian would lay Jerusalem's walls even with the ground, and that calamity would overtake that city such as the world had never seen; but historians outside the Bible tell us that it all came to pass just as Christ predicted, and that Jerusalem was overtaken with the most appalling siege in the world's history. All of God's predictions about judgment on individuals and nations in the past have come true to the very letter in spite of all the false hopes that were held out by false prophets.

If we are to judge the future by the past -and there is no other way to judge it- Gods predictions about the future with regard to judgment upon individuals and nations will come true to the very letter, in spite of false hopes held out by the false prophets; that is by the "liberal preachers" of the day. It is absolutely certain that there is to be a judgment day for the world.

God has given us a special guarantee of the judgment day, and that special guarantee is the resurrection of Christ from the dead. As we rest in the text, God will judge the world in righteousness by that man He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is an absolutely certain fact of history- It is not a theological fiction; it is not a poet's dream: it is an established fact of history. If I had time tonight to go into the evidence, I could prove to every fair-minded, thinking, man that, beyond question, Jesus Christ rose from the dead. When we were in the city of Sydney I was talking to the business men of Sydney and Members of both Houses of Parliament there for four hours, to prove to them that Christ did rise from the dead, and many an Agnostic, Deist, Unitarian, and Higher Critic had his views utterly shattered, and turned to the risen Christ.

There is no time, however, to-night to go into the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I simply want to say to you that the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it is impossible for any honest man to sit down and thoroughly sift the evidence, and come to any other conclusion than that Christ did rise from the dead.

Year's ago there were two eminent lawyers, one named Lyttleton and the other West. These two men were Deists; that is, they had faith in a supreme being, but did not believe in revelation, or in inspiration, or in the miraculous. One day they got to talking about their views, and finally one said to the other, "Well we cannot maintain our position until we disprove two things; first, the reputed conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and secondly, the reputed resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Said Lyttleton to West, "I will write a book to prove that Saul of Tarsus was never converted in the way which the Acts of the Apostles record." And said West to Lyttleton, "I will write a book to prove that Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead as the evangelists say." Well, they wrote their books, and when they met afterwards, West said to Lyttleton, "How have you got on?" "I have written my book," said Lyttleton, "but as I have studied the evidence from a legal standpoint, I have become convinced that Saul of Tarsus was converted in just the way the Acts of the Apostles say he was, and I have become a Christian. How have you got on?" "Well," said West, "I have sifted the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the legal standpoint, and I am satisfied that Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead just as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record, and I have written my book in defense of Christianity." And these two books can be seen in our libraries today. It is absolutely impossible for any man with a legal mind, and accustomed to sift evidence, to sit down and thoroughly investigate the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and come to any other conclusion than that Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead. Well, that resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is a guarantee that a judgment day is coming. When Jesus Christ came upon the earth, He claimed in John v. 22, 23, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him." He claimed that there was a judgment day coming and that He was to be the Judge. Men hated him for making the claim, and the other claims involved in it, the claim of Deity. They put Him to death for making this claim, but before they put Him to death He said, "My Father will set His seal to the claim for which you put Me to death." And when the third day came, the breath of God swept through the sleeping clay, and God, by the resurrection of Christ, set his seal to Christ's claims and said in accents that cannot be mistaken and that are a message to all ages, "There is a judgment day coming." The indisputable action of Jesus Christ in the past points with unerring finger to a certain judgment in the

future. If there is any man here tonight that flatters self that there is to be no judgment day; if there is any man here that fancies that he can go on in sin, and never be called to account for it; if there is any man here that believes he can go on trampling under foot the Son of God, and not have to suffer for it, oh, man, throw that hope away to-night, for it is baseless. It is absolutely certain that there will be a day in which Jesus Christ will judge the world in righteousness.

II. The Universality of the Judgment -- In the second place please note the universality of the judgment day. "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world.- It will be no class judgment; every man and woman on the face of this earth will have to face the Judge in that day. Of course all who are Christians, all who have accepted Christ as their Saviour, and surrendered to Him as their Lord, will have been caught up to meet Him in the air. But all the rest will have to face the Judge in that day. There will be no escaping that day. men often escape human courts. There is many a thief that has never been arrested, there is many a murderer that remains unhung; but when God sends forth His officers to gather the people for that judgment day, they will have to come, and they will have to stay right there until their case is settled. Men have often escaped me when I am preaching. When the preaching becomes too pointed, they get up and go out, and thus they escape me. You can't escape God that way. You will have to come there, and you will have to stay there until your case is decided. He is going to judge the world in righteousness. How you would rejoice if every, infidel in London were at this meeting to-night. But most infidels would not dare to come to this meeting. But there will be a meeting that every infidel will be at. There will be one meeting that every hypocritical church member will be at. There will be a meeting where every unpenitent sinner will be present-the meeting with Jesus Christ at the judgment bar of God. That man who is sitting in this meeting to-night trying to make light of everything I am saying-you will be at that meeting, and you will not make light of it; you will be there face to face with Jesus Christ. That woman who has come to this meeting to-night for any purpose but a good one, you will meet Christ there at the judgment bar of God.

III. The Basis of the Judgment

1. The deeds done in the body." In 2 Corinthians, chapter v, verse 10, are the words, "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." The deeds in the body are the basis of that judgment. There are preachers who tell us that a man can die in sin, and after he is dead can have another probation, a second chance to repent, that he may repent after his death and turn to God and be saved. The Old Book does not hold out any such hope. That kind of teaching contradicts

the plain teaching of the Word of God, which says distinctly that "the deeds done in the body," in the life that now is, are to determine the issues of Eternity.

If a man to-night who is living in drunkenness, who is squandering his time, squandering his money, squandering his manhood in a life of dissipation; you will have to answer for it in that day. That woman to-night who is living a life of frivolity and pleasure instead of living for the God who made her, and the Christ who died for her; you will have to answer for it in that day. That man here who professes to be a Christian but lives like the world; you will have to answer for it in that day. That man who has made gold his god, overreaching his neighbour in business, oppressing his employee, turning a deaf ear to the cry of the widow and orphan: you will have to answer for it in that day. That man who knows the truth, but will not heed it because it will hurt him in business or politics; you will have to answer for it in that day. That man who is a libertine, living in lust, living like a beast, scattering ruin wherever he goes; you will have to answer for it in that day. The deeds done in the body-they will all come up, things that have been forgotten for years. There is a man here who years ago did a base, nefarious deed, and to-night he is very comfortable in the thought that no one on earth knows of it. Man, the whole world will know about it in that day unless you repent, and Jesus Christ will know about it and will pass judgment upon it. There is a woman here to-night who has a very black page in her past history, but of late years she has been very comfortable over that black page. No one now knows anything about it; it is all forgotten; there is no one to bring it up. The whole world will know about it in that day. unless you repent and turn to Christ.

2. "The secret things" will be judged. In Romans ii. 16, we read: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." The secret things, the things done in the dark, the things done under the cover of night, the things that nobody saw but God; all will be brought to light on that day.

I remember hearing years ago of an incident that happened here, in your own country. A woman had killed her husband by driving a nail into his skull, and so successfully had she covered up the wound that he was buried without any suspicion being cast upon her. After several years the woman flattered herself that she would never be found out. One day, however, the grave-digger was at work in the cemetery, and threw up this man's skull, and there he saw the nail I do not know that he suspected the woman, but he took it to her and said, "Look there." She threw up her hands and cried, "My God! Found out at last." It will all be found out at last, the secret things, the thoughts and imaginations of the heart. Oh, you men who are boasting of your morality, how would YOU like to have the

thoughts and fancies and desires and the last twenty-four hours photographed and thrown upon a screen before this audience tonight? The whole world will see those secret things in that day, not those of twenty-four hours only, but those of a lifetime, unless you repent; You, madam, who bare boasted of your purity and your nobility of character above others, and fancied that you ought to be saved because of your goodness; how would you like to have the hidden things of the chambers of imagery and imagination and desire photographed and thrown on a screen before all this audience? But the whole world will see it in that day, unless you repent. The secret things will all come to light.

3. The Lord tells us again that the basis of judgment will be our words. In Matthew xii. 36 I read, "But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Our careless, thoughtless, unstudied words reveal what we are at heart. Our studied speeches do not reveal what we are but what we would like to be; but our idle words, that we drop accidentally, they are the best revelation of what there is in our hearts. Your impure words, your unkind words, your harsh words, your words of gossip and slander; you will give account thereof.

On one occasion, at a service in Minneapolis, one of my workers came to me and said, "Here is an infidel; will you come and speak to him?" I went to him, and in reply to my question, he said, "Yes, I am an infidel!" I said, "Why are you an infidel?" He replied, "Because the Bible is full of contradictions." "Full of contradictions?" I said. "Yes," he said. "Will you please show me one?" I asked. "Oh" said he, "it is full of them" "Well," I said, "if there are so many you ought to be able to show me one." "Oh, it is just full of them," he said. "Well" I insisted, "please show me one.", Then he replied, "Well, I don't pretend to know as much, about the Bible as you do." I said, "Then what are you talking about it for in this way?" Then I looked him right square in the eye and I told him what Jesus said of the idle words that men speak "Now," I said, "this is God's Word. God is the author of this book, and you lightly and thoughtlessly have been slandering the Word of God, and thus you have been slandering God, the author of it. I want to say to you, sir, that you will have to give account of your words in the day of judgment." The man turned pale, and well he might. I want to say to you men to-night that are pulling the Word of God to pieces because you have been told that some German scholar says so and so; you men that dare to criticise the book you don't know anything about; you men that are taking up the idle talk of newspapers and reviews and retailing it, slandering God's Word and God, the author of it; you will have to give an account thereof in the day of judgment. Well may you tremble. I want to say to you men who have taken the name of the glorious Son of God, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, lightly on your lips, and have been saying

flippantly, "I don't believe that Jesus is divine, I don't believe that Jesus is the Son of God;" you men who have been robbing the glorious Son of God of what is His due, you will have to give an account of this in the day of judgment.

4. But the great basis of the judgment day will be what we do with Jesus Christ. We are told in John iii 18, 19, "He that believeth in him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." God has sent one down into this world to be our Saviour. He has sent His only Son. The rejection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom God has appointed to be our Saviour, our King and our Lord, is the most daring and damning of all sins. Light has been sent into the world and men have loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. There is nothing that reveals what is in the human heart so clearly as what a man does with Christ. Christ is God incarnate, the light of God come into the world, and the rejection of Jesus Christ proves a wicked heart.

The great question in the judgment day will be, "What did you do with Jesus Christ?" Oh, I can imagine some people in that day. That man who sits in yonder gallery trying to make light of what I am saying tonight, he will be there; I see him standing before the judgment bar, and the throng falls back, there is profound silence. Then comes rolling forth, like the sound of many waters, the majestic voice of the Judge, "What did you do with Jesus Christ?"

IV. The Judge. -- We now come to the fourth point. Who is to be the judge in that day? Jesus Christ himself- "God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

Christ is to be the Judge. That same Christ whom you are rejecting is to be the Judge. That same Christ whom you are robbing of the honor which is His due is to be the Judge. That same Christ whose divinity you are denying, not that you have any reason for denying it, but simply you don't want to have to believe it and want comfort in your sin-that same Christ whom you are trampling under foot will sit as Judge in that day. That will be a very dark day for some people. It will be a dark day for Annas and Caiaphas, who robbed Jesus of every form of justice. Now they stand before the bar, and Christ sits upon the throne. I can imagine Pontius Pilate in that day, who knew that Jesus Christ was innocent, and yet condemned Him to appease the Jewish mob. Pilate will stand at the bar, and the Christ he so basely wronged will be on the throne. I can imagine - the soldiers who spat upon Him, and mocked Him, and crowned Him with thorns. The

Christ they spat upon,, buffeted and crowned with thorns, sits upon the throne and they stand at the judgment bar. I can imagine Judas Iscariot, who for thirty pieces of silver sold his Master after three years of close association with Him; now he stands before the bar, and the Christ he betrayed sits upon the throne. I can imagine that man and woman in this audience to-night who have been telling their friends that they do not believe that Jesus is divine, who have been trampling the Son of God under foot, who have been resisting the invitations of mercy it may be for years; you stand before the throne, and the Christ whom you have defamed, slandered, rejected and trampled under foot, sits as Judge.

V. The Issues of the Judgment Day. -- Once more, please notice the issues of the judgment day. They will be eternal. They will be either eternal joy and life and glory, or eternal death, eternal darkness, eternal despair and eternal shame. Oh! men and women, I would that I had it in my power to-night so to picture to you that great judgment day that every man and woman in this audience, would go out from here with the judgment day of Christ before them as a great reality; but it surpasses my power. There is the judgment, throne; its blazing glory, its overwhelming splendor. I cannot describe. There is the Christ upon the throne. His face shining with a glory above the glory of the Noonday sun, His eyes like flames of fire piercing men through and through. And there you stand before that awful judgment bar, the eyes of Christ upon you like a flame of fire, piercing you through and through, your whole life laid bare and your secret thoughts revealed.

Oh, men and women, repent, REPENT, REPENT! "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised him from the dead."

Repent, REPENT, REPENT!

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