

#1960—July 19, 2009—“Hall of Presidents”—3

[Gauger:] *Moody Presents* the Hall of Presidents.

[R. A. Torrey Sr.:] ... so completely proven. And upon his authority, we accept the entire Old Testament and the entire New Testament as the Word of God.

[Gauger:] From the Moody Bible Institute, this is *Moody Presents*, the Hall of Presidents, a legacy look at the men who shaped the school that Moody founded. I'm Jon Gauger, glad to have you along for this historic series of broadcasts. His name was Reuben Archer Torrey, born in 1856, just five years before the Civil War broke out. Torrey was raised in a wealthy home, attended Yale University, and studied abroad at Leipzig and Erlangen, Germany. During his early student days at Yale, young Torrey became an agnostic and, quite frankly, a heavy drinker. Yet even during the days of this wild life he was strangely aware of a conviction that some day he was to preach the gospel.

At the end of his senior year in college, Reuben Archer Torrey was saved. While at Yale Divinity School, he came under the influence of D. L. Moody. And you know, it's interesting—Moody held meetings in New Jersey, where Torrey grew up, and happened to notice him there attending one of the meetings. In his characteristic blunt fashion, Moody said to Torrey, “Young man, you'd better get to work for God.” Well, it was that night that Torrey got his first taste of leading souls to Christ. Little did Moody know the mighty forces he was setting in motion and thus stirring R. A. Torrey to service. His ministry was characterized by revival, in the midst of which he was called to Moody Bible Institute, then known as the Chicago Evangelization Society. Dr. Torrey, who possessed the rare combination of gifts of scholar, teacher, and evangelist, authored more than forty books, including the Sunday school commentary *Gist of the Lesson*, published annually for thirty years.

Dr. Torrey died on October 26, 1928, but not before leaving behind an incredible legacy in the men and women of the Moody Bible Institute. We're about to hear a rare recording of R. A. Torrey's teaching, a message titled “Is the Bible the Word of God?” This was a signature issue for Dr. Torrey, who by his own admission involved into an agnostic background as a young man. But when he came to know that the Bible is reliable, it's something he never let go of, never grew tired of teaching. A recording was made in about 1920. It's nearly ninety years old. It was made shortly after World War I using disk record technology—just on the scene back then. Now, previous weeks here on the Hall of Presidents we've heard dramatized sermons, but this is the real voice, an actual recording of R. A. Torrey, the second president of the Moody Bible Institute. Walk with us now down the Hall of Presidents as we hear Dr. Reuben Archer Torrey preaching “Is the Bible the Word of God”?

[Torrey:] Is the Bible the Word of God? If the Bible is the Word of God, an absolutely trustworthy revelation from God Himself, of Himself, His purposes and His will, of man's duty and destiny, of spiritual and eternal realities, then we have a starting point from which we can proceed to the conquest of the whole domain of religious truth. But if the Bible is not the Word of God, if it is the mere product of man's thinking, speculating, and guessing, not altogether trustworthy in regard to religious and eternal truth, then we are all at sea, not knowing wither we are drifting, but we may be sure that we are not drifting toward any safe port.

I did not always believe the Bible to be the Word of God. I sincerely doubted that the Bible was the Word of God. I doubted that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. I doubted whether there was a personal God. I was not an infidel; I was a skeptic. I did not deny; I questioned. I was not an

atheist; I was an agnostic. I did not know, but I determined to find out. If there was a God, I determined to find that out and act accordingly. If there was not a God, I determined to find that out and act accordingly. If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, I determined to find that out and act accordingly. If Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, I determined to find that out and act accordingly. If the Bible was the Word of God, I determined to find that out and act accordingly. And if the Bible was not the Word of God, I determined to find that out and act accordingly.

I found out. I found out beyond the peradventure that there is a God, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that the Bible is the Word of God. Today it's with me not a matter of mere probability nor even of mere belief, but of absolute certainty.

I'm going to give you some of the reasons why I believe the Bible to be the Word of God. Not all the reasons—it would take months to do that. Not even the reasons which are the most conclusive to me, personally, for these are of such a personal and experimental character that they cannot be conveyed to another. But I will give you reasons that will prove conclusive to any candid seeker after the truth, to anyone who desires to know the truth and is willing to obey it. They will not convince one who is determined not to know the truth or who is unwilling to obey it. If one will not receive the love of the truth, he must be left to his own deliberate choice of error and given over to strong delusions and believe a lie. But if one is searching for the truth, no matter how completely he's in the fog today, he can be led into the truth.

I believe the Bible to be the Word of God first of all because of the testimony of Jesus Christ to that fact. We live in a day in which many men say that they accept the teaching of Jesus Christ, but that they do not accept the teaching of the whole Bible. They say that they believe what Jesus Christ says, but as to what Moses said or is said to have said, and what Isaiah said or is said to have said, and what Jeremiah said and Paul said and John said and the rest of the Bible writers, they do not know about that.

Now, this position may at the first glance seem rational, but in point of fact it is utterly irrational. If we accept the teaching of Jesus Christ, we must accept the whole Bible, for Jesus Christ has set His stamp of His authority upon the entire book. And if we accept His authority, we must accept all that upon which He set the stamp of His authority.

As to Christ's endorsement of the Old Testament, turn first of all to Mark 7:13. Jesus has just quoted from the Law of Moses—not merely from the Ten Commandments, but from other portions of the Law of Moses as well. He has set over against the teaching of the Law of Moses the traditions of the Pharisees and Scribes, and in this verse he says, "Ye do make the Word of God of none effect through your tradition." Now, here he distinctly calls the Law of Moses "the Word of God." It is oftentimes said that the Bible nowhere claims to be the Word of God. Why, here Jesus Christ Himself distinctly asserts that the Law of Moses is the Word of God. If then we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we must accept the Law of Moses as the Word of God.

Of course this only covers the first five books of the Old Testament, but if we can accept this as the Word of God, we will have little difficulty with the rest of the Old Testament, for it is here that the hottest battle is being fought today.

Turn again to Matthew 5:18. Here Jesus says, "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled." Every Hebrew scholar knows that a "jot" is the Hebrew character *yodh*, the smallest character in the Hebrew alphabet, less than half the size of any other character in the Hebrew alphabet. And a "tittle" is a little horn that the Hebrews put on their consonants. Here Jesus asserts that the Law of Moses as originally given

is absolutely infallible down to its smallest letter and part of a letter. If then we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we must accept the authority of the Law of Moses as originally given and as contained in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Turn next to John 10:35. Jesus has just quoted in proof of a point which He is making from one of the Psalms and adds, "The Scripture cannot be broken," thus setting the stamp of His authority on the absolute irrefragability of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Turn again to Luke 24:27 and you will read that, "Jesus, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." And in the 44th verse He says, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms." Every scholar knows that the Jews divided their Bible—our present Old Testament Scriptures—into three parts: the Law, the first five books of the Old Testament; the Prophets, most of the books which we call prophetic and some of those which we call historical; and the remaining books of the Old Testament, the Psalms or sacred writings. Jesus Christ takes up each one of these three recognized divisions of these Old Testament Scriptures and sets the stamp of His authority upon each one of them. If then we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we are driven logically to accept the entire Old Testament Scriptures.

In Luke 16:31 Jesus says, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one be raised from the dead," thus in the most emphatic way endorsing the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures. In John 5:47 Jesus says, "If ye believe not his writings [Moses' writings], how shall you believe my word?" thus setting the stamp of His authority upon the teaching of Moses as being as truly from God as was His own. We must then, if we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, accept the entire Old Testament.

But how about the New Testament? Did Jesus set the stamp of His authority upon it also? He did. But how could He when not a book of the New Testament was written when He departed from this earth? He did it by way of in anticipation. Turn to John 14:26 and you will hear Jesus saying, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you," thus setting the stamp of His authority not only upon the apostolic teaching as given by the Holy Spirit but upon the apostolic recollection of what He Himself had taught.

[Gauger:] You're listening to *Moody Presents*, the Hall of Presidents, and the somewhat scratchy recording you hear is the voice of Dr. Reuben Archer Torrey, second president of Moody Bible Institute. A quick reminder that you can hear today's message again or order the complete Hall of Presidents series—that's eighteen messages on nine CDs—at our Web site, moodypresents.mbn.org. Now back to our recording made in 1920 by a man who was born five years before the Civil War began, the second president of Moody Bible Institute, Dr. Reuben Archer Torrey, with his message "Is the Bible the Word of God?"

[Torrey:] If then we accept the authority of Jesus Christ, we are driven to accept the authority of the entire New Testament. So then, if we accept the teaching of Jesus Christ, we must accept the entire Old Testament and the entire New Testament. It is either Christ and the whole Bible or no Bible and no Christ.

He is accredited to us by five unmistakable divine testimonies. First, Christ is accredited to us by the testimony of the divine life that He lived, for He lived as never a man lived. To suppose that these four men who wrote the Gospels imagined the life here set forth would be to suppose a greater miracle than any recorded in the Gospels.

You will see in the second place that the life here set forth is apart from all other human lives, that it stands by itself, that it is manifestly a divine life lived under human conditions. Napoleon Bonaparte was a good judge of men. He once said regarding the life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, in which he had been reading, "I know men, and Jesus Christ was not a man." What he meant was, of course, that Jesus Christ was not a mere man.

Secondly, Jesus Christ is accredited to us by the divine words that He spoke. If anyone will study the teaching of Jesus Christ with candor and faithfulness, He will soon see that it has a character that distinguishes it from all other teachings ever uttered upon the earth.

Third, Jesus Christ was accredited to us by the divine works that He wrought. Not only did He heal the sick, which many others have done, but cleansing the leper, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, stilling the tempest by a word, turning water into wine, and feeding five thousand with five small loaves and two small fishes, which was a creative act. These miracles of power are clear credentials of God come forth to teach. We cannot study them tangibly and not come to the same conclusion as Nicodemus did. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these kinds that thou doest except God be with him."

Of course, we bear in mind the fact that strenuous efforts have been made to eliminate the supernatural elements from the story of the life of Jesus Christ, but all these efforts have resulted in failure, and all similar efforts must result in failure.

Let any candid man take the life of Jesus and read it for himself with attention and care, and he will soon discover that the life there pictured could not have been imagined but must have been really lived, that the teachings reported as uttered by Jesus are no fictitious teachings put into the mouth of a fictitious person, but the real utterances of a real person. He will also discover that the character and teaching set forth in the Gospels are inexplicably interwoven with the stories of the miracles. He will find that if you eliminate the miracles, the character and the teachings disappear, that the character and teachings cannot be separated from the miraculous element without a violence of treatment that no reasonable man will permit.

Today this much at least is proven—that Jesus lived and walked substantially as is recorded in the four Gospel records of His life. Personally, I believe that more than this is proven, but this is enough for our present purpose. If Jesus lived and walked substantially as the Gospels record—cleansing the leper, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, stilling the tempest with His word, feeding the five thousand with the five small loaves and the two small fishes—then He bears unmistakable credentials as God come forth to teach.

Fourth, Jesus Christ is also accredited to us by His divine influence upon all subsequent history. Jesus Christ was beyond peradventure one of three things. He was either the Son of God in a unique sense, a divine person incarnate in human form, or else He was the most daring impostor that ever lived, or else one of the most hopeless lunatics. That He claimed to be the Son of God in a unique sense and that all men should honor Him even as they honored the Father, as He said in John 5:23, and that He and the Father were One, as He said in John 10:30, and that he that had seen Him had seen the Father, as He said in John 14:9, of this there can be no honest doubt.

Jesus was then either the divine person that He claimed to be, or the most daring impostor, or a most hopeless lunatic. Was His influence upon subsequent history the influence of a lunatic? No one but a lunatic would say so. Was His influence upon subsequent history the influence of an impostor? No one but one whose own heart was thoroughly tainted with deceit and fraud would

think of saying so. Not an impostor? Not a lunatic? We have only one alternative left. He was what He claimed to be, the Son of God, God the Son.

Fifth, Jesus Christ is accredited to us by His resurrection from the dead. I shall hope to show you at another time the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will see that the historic evidence for the resurrection of Christ is absolutely convincing in its character, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the best proven facts of history. But the resurrection of Christ is God's seal to Christ's claim.

Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God, God the Son. He was put to death for making that claim. Before being put to death, He said that God would set His seal to the claim by raising Him from the dead. They killed Him. They laid Him in the sepulcher. They rolled a stone to the door of the sepulcher. They sealed that door with a Roman seal, which to break was death. And when the appointed hour of which Christ had spoken came, the breath of God swept through the sleeping clay, and Jesus rose triumphant over death. Therefore I believe the Bible to be the Word of God because of the testimony of Jesus Christ to that effect.

A school of criticism has arisen that assumes to set up its authority against the authority of Jesus Christ. They say, for example, "Jesus says that the 110th Psalm was by David and was messianic, but we say that the 110th Psalm is neither by David, nor is it messianic." They ask us to give up the authority and infallibility of Jesus Christ and the Bible and accept their authority and their infallibility in their place. Very well, but before doing it we demand their credentials. We do not yield to the claim of authority and infallibility of anyone until he presents his credentials. Jesus Christ presents His credentials.

First of all, He presents the credentials of the divine fact that He lived. What have they to place in comparison with that? If there is any force in the argument that if a man's life is in the right his doctrine cannot be in the wrong—and there is force in the argument—it bears immeasurably more for the authority of Jesus Christ than it does for the authority of any critic or school of critics.

Second, Jesus presents the credential of the divine words that He spoke. What have they to put up against that? The words of Jesus Christ have stood the test of nineteen centuries and shine out with greater luster and glory today than ever. What school of criticism has ever stood the test of nineteen centuries? If one has to choose between the teaching of Christ and that of any school of criticism, it will not take any thoroughly sane man long to choose.

Third, Jesus Christ presents His third credential, the divine works that He wrought, the unmistakable seal of God upon His claim. What has the school of criticism to put up against that? Absolutely nothing. It has no miracles but miracles of literary ingenuity in the attempt to make the preposterous appear historical.

Fourth, Jesus Christ presents the credential of His influence upon human history. We all know what the influence of Jesus Christ has been, how benign and how divine. Everything that is best in modern civilization, everything that is best in national, domestic, and individual life is due to the influence of Jesus Christ. Alas, we also know the influence of the school of criticism. We know that it is weakening the power of ministers and Christian workers everywhere. We know that it is emptying churches. We know that it is depleting missionary treasuries. We know that it is paralyzing missionary efforts in every field where it has gone. I know this by personal observation and not by hearsay. This may not be their intention. With some of them, it is not

their intention, but nonetheless it is a fact. The influence of Jesus has been thoroughly beneficent. The influence of this school of criticism is utterly bad.

Fifth, Jesus presents His fifth credential, His resurrection from the dead. What has this school of criticism to set up over against that? Nothing whatever. Jesus Christ established His claim. The opposing school of criticism stands dumb. Therefore we refuse to bow to the assumed and unsubstantiated authority and infallibility of any school of criticism, of any priest or pope or theological professor. But most gladly do we bow to the authority and infallibility of Jesus Christ, so completely proven. And upon His authority, we accept the entire Old Testament and the entire New Testament as the Word of God.

[Gauger:] From a recording made about 1920, that's Dr. Reuben Archer Torrey asking and answering "Is the Bible the Word of God?" Dr. Torrey, of course, was the second president of Moody Bible Institute, handpicked by Dwight Moody himself to lead the fledgling new school, and he did it through some very formative years. Reuben Archer Torrey. Today's message, as all our Hall of Presidents messages, is available at our Web site, moodypresents.mbn.org. You can listen again online or, if you prefer, order our compilation CD collection, the Hall of Presidents. Complete information is right there at the Web site: moodypresents.mbn.org. All kinds of other great resources are waiting for you as well at moodypresents.mbn.org. I'm Jon Gauger saying thanks so much for listening, inviting you back next week when we'll hear a message from Dr. James M. Gray, third president of Moody, right here on *Moody Presents*, the Hall of Presidents.