

How Can I Be Sure?

by Manford George Gutzke

How Can I Be Sure I Am Born Again?

Since so many precious promises belong to the children of God in a special way, how can I know that I am personally a child of God; that I have been born again?

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, 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. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:3-7).

It is true that for many people who believe the Gospel, becoming a believer involves a real change; and because of this it is to be feared that often the popular understanding is in error. Some think that the life of a Christian is a mode of living that anybody can adopt if it appeals to him.

No doubt there are many cases of sincere people turning over a new leaf, trying to do good and be good, avoiding evil and so on, with the earnest desire to win the blessing of God, who nevertheless are not successful in their efforts.

The sad fact is that when a person tries these things in his own strength, he fails. Often he falls into despair, finally becoming discouraged and quitting. Even the believer who has committed himself or herself to the Lord is often so depressed with his or her own weakness, discouraged because of personal foolishness and sin, that even if such a person truly did believe in the Lord he may actually begin to doubt his own salvation. When he hears the glowing testimony of some believer who has been victorious in his spiritual experience, it is easy for the discouraged person in his humility to feel he probably does not even belong to the Lord; that he is not even a Christian. Such doubts haunt the soul; they depress the spirit; they discourage and weaken the person.

We know that the Bible speaks of believers being "babes in Christ." One can understand that such a person who has just begun walking with the Lord and trusting Him, could be discouraged by his own shortcomings and weaknesses, and could become doubtful. It would be a comfort to such a person if he could be sure he had actually been received by the Lord, so that this term "born again" might refer to something that could be known in himself for sure. "Born again" can refer to that condition that exists when God takes any soul to be His own. He adopts believers as children into His family.

The question I am raising in our hearts just now is this: how can anyone know that he is in this group who belongs to the Lord? how can anyone know he actually is God's? This would be the case if that soul had been "born again."

Being "born again" - being regenerated - can mean something only if God is real - if the soul is real - and if the Holy Spirit and Heaven are real. If these things are not real those words do not mean anything; therefore, being "born again" can be meaningful only if the invisible world is real. How could anybody know about that? If a person wants to know for sure that he is born again he will have to be a person who believes in God, in the soul, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit and in Heaven; otherwise that term would not mean anything.

How can a man know about those things? He will have to come to this knowledge very simply

through the revelation that is in Scripture. This is something that is revealed by God in His Word.

Let us consider what is involved in being born again. This is actually a strange matter. There is much about God's working in the soul that no one knows for sure. The Lord Himself said that we must be born of the Spirit, and then He went on to say that the Spirit moves as He pleases. The Spirit is like the wind: we hear the sound thereof but we do not know whence it cometh or whence it goeth, so is everyone born of the Spirit.

Let us first consider the whole matter of being born at all - the whole concept of birth. Being "born again" is actually using as a reference the common universal human experience of birth. That is the way I came into the world: I was born. But while birth is experienced by every human being, there is something true about it that is so very simple it could easily be missed. One thing I know for certain about being born is that I do not remember it. So that when someone says "I am not sure I am born again," I ask, "What did you expect? Did you think you would feel something, or hear bells ringing, or in some way something would be done that you would remember always?" Then I ask if he remembers the first time he was born. I do not want to belittle the blessing that comes when a person is sure of the moment when he said "yes" to the Lord; but the person who was born as a human being was here before he knew it. So it seems possible that the moment when God begins to work in the soul may pass unnoticed by the individual. We may know nothing about it at the time; but we do know it happens, and that it is important and it is necessary.

If you have a plant growing in the garden, it is not a healthy thing to be digging it up constantly to look at the roots. Let it grow. Leave the roots alone. God does many things in the soul that will move along effectually if we just leave them alone. The believer should look into the face of God; and trust in Him.

There is more true about being born that is important: the child will be like his earthly parents: "like father like son." That is one reason why the child is a sinner. But there is a marvelous truth about that: the Gospel promises that "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish." For this reason to be born again is a glorious blessing.

Some earnest souls, who really trust and belong to the Lord have been made uneasy for one reason or another. These want to be sure they really belong. There are some simple tests they could give themselves.

So let us ask this of anyone who is concerned about his or her relationship to the Lord. Do you believe the Bible? This is absolutely essential. If you do not believe the Bible you could not know for sure that you are "born again." Do you believe the revelation about Jesus Christ? Do you believe He died for your sins, was buried and rose again on the third day? Do you accept Him as your Savior and Lord? Have you confessed Him before man? Do you look up to God as your Father, wanting to please Him? Do you love the brethren? Are you careful how you live, that you may walk pleasing in His sight?

If you can honestly and sincerely say that although you may not make a perfect score, this is the direction of your mind, I can say to you confidently: relax. You do not have to worry about whether you are born again; the evidence is there that you are. I once had occasion to talk over long distance with a woman who was troubled with the thought she did not really belong to God. I said to her: "You care. You actually want to be well pleasing in His sight. You are concerned that you might not belong. You want to be His. Such feelings are tokens of the fact you really are alive in the spirit. The evidence is there."

Frankly, how can I know I am alive? Pinch me - I'll know.

How Can I Be Sure Heaven Is Real?

"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" (I Peter 1:8).

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead . . ." (Romans 1:20).

There is no question about the way in which the Bible directs our attention to that which is out of sight; to the things of Heaven and of God and of eternity. In thinking about the life in Christ, of being a believer, we think of Heaven. We are dealing with God, thus we say: "Our Father, who art in Heaven . . ." When the Lord Jesus was here as Jesus of Nazareth, He made this statement:

"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13).

When we think about earth and Heaven we remember that in the beginning God made the Heavens and the earth. They were made at one time. As far as the Bible is concerned, they are equally real. We read also that Jesus of Nazareth lifted up His eyes unto Heaven. Obviously the Bible speaks of Heaven as being real. But how can a human being on earth who has never seen it be sure? Some people are so constituted that if they have not seen something they cannot be sure about it.

Are you the kind of person who can be sure about anything? Can you be sure about certain people in whom you have put your trust?

Let me ask you again: does that mother over there love her child? You will say "Yes." How do you know? Can you see the love in her heart? You probably will tell me you can see the love in what she does. And that is true. That is the way you can tell. The extension wire on a vacuum cleaner brings electricity to the machine. You cannot see or feel or hear it, but you know it is there because it runs the machine. You can apply all of the above ideas to the question as to whether you are sure about God, whom you have never seen, and about Heaven, which you have never seen.

So let me ask you again: "Have you ever been sure of anything that is unseen?" When you are thinking about the whole business of Heaven and whether or not Heaven is real, consider: who says there is a Heaven? We know the Lord says it, because it is in the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Turn to the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation and you will find Heaven talked about there. All believers talk about Heaven. And while this is not proof positive, it does incline the heart to believe. Listen to this from our Lord:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-2).

In my own experience, I came out of the darkness of unbelief. I was unhappy in that darkness; yet I did not believe. When I began to have faith I kept reading in the Bible to find out what else was true, I came across this passage about Heaven, and it was a wonderful thing to read. The Lord talked about coming from Heaven and going to Heaven. Then I could see that He told me not to let my heart be troubled, or afraid, because Heaven is real. Yes, Heaven is real and I am going there. There will be a place for me in Heaven, because Jesus of Nazareth said so.

The Lord Jesus also went on to say: "Comfort one another with these words." We can tell them it is true that Heaven is real. It is also true that Jesus of Nazareth taught that when you have laid up your treasures in Heaven, moths and rust do not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal. It does not stand alone; it is the plain testimony of the Bible. Throughout the Bible as far as the Scriptures are concerned, the reality of Heaven is obvious.

If you had a set of apothecary scales, perfectly balanced, and you let the sunlight fall on one of those balances, do you think you could weigh a sunbeam? Do you think that sunlight has any weight? Try it - you will find it does not have any weight. Is the sunbeam then not true? Oh, yes it is. If you put your hand in it, your hand will be warm. There is no way to measure eternity by a calendar, but is it real? It certainly is!! We can say with reverence about Heaven: I can be as sure of Heaven as I am that water is wet. I can be as convinced of Heaven as I am that God is real.

How Can I Be Sure I Am Forgiven?

Do you realize that a person cannot be strong if he feels guilty?

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psalms 103:1-5).

These marvelous words are found at the beginning of Psalm 103. As we read this psalm we find other wonderful statements about God:

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust . . . But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children" (Psalm 103:8-17).

These words give us the assurance that Almighty God is gracious toward us, and that He will forgive.

Guilt is an awful feeling that generates when I realize that I have broken a commandment, or when I have failed to do what is right in a situation. The matter was in my hands and I could have done it, but I did not: then the guilt is mine.

What I am concerned with just now is the feeling of guilt, the frame of mind I have when I am in the presence of the judge. This is a fact about human nature. If I do something wrong and I think that nobody sees what I have done, it is surprising how little guilt I feel. As long as I think I got away with it, I do not feel guilty; but if I am in the presence of someone who has the right to judge: someone who sees my evil deed and knows what I have done; then I feel the guilt that is involved.

It seems almost as if my feeling of guilt depends upon who sees me. I might actually be at fault and not feel it. My feeling of guilt may depend upon others, whose esteem I value. I do not want them to see me as that kind of person; but if I am that kind of person and I act that way, I will feel guilty.

For years I have tried to train myself to observe all the little traffic rules. I stop at every stop sign whether anybody is there or not. I do not mind saying that one of the reasons I stop is because somebody might be there. Someone might ask, "If a policeman is not there, what difference does it

make?" The fact is I am publicly associated with the propagation of the Gospel; people have a right to think that I should show that I am walking in the presence of God. If I am walking in the presence of God, I do not need to have anybody see me when I come to a stop sign: God sees me.

It is quite possible that some of us feel in our own conscience that we know what is right and what we should do. If I am a believer, speaking in the presence of a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then I am in the presence of God who knows all things.

There is a certain sad situation that is very similar: in the presence of some people I feel guilty even when I am not. It is possible some folks have power over me, and they are in a position to invoke some kind of punishment when I do wrong. From the time I was a little boy to this day, there have always been some people of whom this was true. When I come into their presence, I feel half way guilty even when I have done nothing wrong.

The glory of the Gospel is that sin can be forgiven, and it will be forgiven through Christ. Pardon is real, and pardon is wonderful. It is joy to the believer to know he has been pardoned, and it is the glory of God that He pardoneth iniquity.

Very simply I now raise the question: how can I be sure I am pardoned? If I am ever to have the feeling of pardon, I will have to believe in God; and I will have to believe the Bible because that is where I read about the Gospel and God. If I have confidence in God and the Bible, and I still have any sense of guilt, it will stay with me. Nobody in the world can take it away from me. It will be like my shadow. But I can be sure I am forgiven if I believe in Christ; if I have in mind that He died for me, making atonement for me and reconciling me to God. He suffered my penalty. I can be very practical about this: God will not collect the same debt twice. I am forgiven because Christ died for me. How do I know? The Bible says so. Remember the instance when a woman taken in sin was brought before Him and He said to her: "Neither do I condemn thee." What wonderful assurance for the soul! "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

What about a really great sin? There is not a single deed a human being can perform, that the blood of Jesus Christ cannot cleanse.

So I ask myself again: how can I be sure that I am forgiven? Good evidence that I am actually forgiven in my soul is when I have peace of heart and mind; when day in and day out, I do not feel any real burden about my past, and I do not have fear about my future that I might be called up for some judgement.

Some years ago when I was sharing my spiritual experience with a young friend, this person asked me this question: "In all our conversations you have never talked about your sins. Does this mean you do not think you have ever done anything wrong?" And I, of course, was able to say: "No, not at all." When I came to examine this for myself I found out the wonderful blessed truth: I had really believed that Christ Jesus bore away my sins; that He actually suffered for me, and as a consequence I was not going to suffer. So I did not have to answer for any of my sins.

Some may say: "You must think you are home free. "I do! And I praise the Lord! I can be sure my heart is free in the sight of God and I have been forgiven, when I have joy. If I have put my trust in the Lord and I do believe His Word, God will fill my heart with a great sense of peace and joy.

It will also be evident that I have been forgiven when I can forgive others. I mean not only people I do not like, but people who have actually injured me or hindered me in some way. Finally, I can know I am forgiven if I can turn to God and pray with confidence. I can look into his face and actually make my requests known, with confidence that He will hear me. If I can come into His presence with this assurance of Him hearing me, it is evidence of the fact that I have been forgiven.

So in all these ways we can give thanks to God for His marvelous grace in forgiving us our sins. How can we be sure? God says so; we should believe it.

How Can I Be Sure I Have The Holy Spirit Within Me?

Do you realize that the Holy Spirit is a Person?

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"
(Galatians 4:4-6).

In these verses Paul sets forth marvelous truth. In this passage there is a parallel construction: the record reads that God "sent forth" His Son, and He then "sent forth" the Spirit of His Son. The same verb is used: God "sent forth" the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.

When the Scriptures reveal God sent forth His Son to redeem them that were under the law, we have in mind all men are under the law. So it would be right to say that God sent forth His Son for all men, to redeem them that were under the law. By that we understand that He sent the Lord Jesus Christ to die on Calvary's Cross so that He might take away sins: the sins of the whole world. Does this mean that everybody is saved? At once we must say "no," because the Scriptures go on to say "But as many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

By putting the two statements in Galatians 4:4-6 together for comparison, another truth is obvious. First, "God sent forth His Son to redeem them that were under the law," and as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the children of God. And second, God "hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into the hearts" of those who are His children. We read that Paul asked certain believers: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

Apparently some who believe in Jesus Christ have not received the Holy Spirit. Now let us look more closely. Christ Jesus died for all men: this is true. But not all have received Him; and so not all are saved. The Holy Spirit was given to all believers, but not all believers have received Him; and so not all are blessed of God. If I want to be sure that the Holy Spirit is in me, I should remember I am thinking about something that cannot be seen or felt; but which can only be known on the basis of Scripture.

The believer must be told. The Word of God gives the assurance. This must be believed and received. Other persons have had dealings with God. Some have told us about their experience and we are helped by their testimony. It is written in the Scriptures that God is everywhere and God sees me; this is true even though I do not feel it, see it, hear it, smell it, or touch it. It is real. In the same way, this matter of having the Holy Spirit in the heart is obscure because there is no physical feeling. The believer does not have any physical sensation or personal thrill. Some people seem to feel that the coming of the Holy Spirit into the heart should be associated with or attended by certain experiences that can be sensed.

There are people about whom this is true, that when they are given the grace to believe the presence of God is in them they have certain reactions, certain feelings as a consequence. In some cases there may be physical reactions, and in some cases there may be emotional reactions. Sometimes there will be obvious psychological reactions. I do not doubt that at all. There can be certain consequences in such notable ways in some cases, and persons who have that kind of experience, yearning for the presence of the Holy Spirit and praying for the Holy Spirit, may have been given the Holy Spirit.

I do not doubt there are those who have been taught they should pray for Him, whose praying may lead up to the point where they have some sort of notable experience. Something may happen to them. There may be physical demonstration of some kind. They may have the experience of "speaking in tongues." I think, generally speaking, people who have had that sort of experience are inclined to feel they know for sure. But sometimes I am inclined to think their confidence and their assurance may be overstated. It seems possible they are far more affected by what happened to them than by the truth itself. In other words, because at one time they had the experience of speaking in tongues, they now think for sure that their spiritual experience is on a higher level. Whereas on the basis of Scripture and my own personal experience I find I am led to be skeptical about that.

If I want to be sure in my own heart that the Holy Spirit is in me, there are some steps I can take toward that end. I need to believe first that the Holy Spirit is a Person, just as I would believe that God is a Person. That means that the Holy Spirit can think and He can feel and He can will. In the second place, I need to believe that He came into believers in a new way at Pentecost such as He had not come before. He was always one of the Godhead. He was right there at the creation because in the opening verses of Scripture we read that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" in the creation of the world. He was promised to come in a new way into believing, obedient souls, when the Lord Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, which was "the coming of the Spirit."

In the Gospels we read how Jesus of Nazareth spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit, who was not yet given while Christ was here on earth. We need to be clear in our understanding that He came into believers at the time of Pentecost to dwell in them, enabling them to do the will of God. We need to believe this is true, if we are ever going to be sure He is in us. We can be sure He comes into the hearts of believers. The Lord Jesus said about the Holy Spirit: "He shall be in you." That was the word.

But then He also taught He must be received: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." How could you receive Him if you already had Him? The way you could receive a guest who was already in your front room. Suppose someone opened the door and admitted a guest, an expected guest, into your front room. Suppose while you were in the kitchen the maid should come in and tell you "Mrs. Brown is in the front room." You would go to "receive" her: and that means you would go to make her welcome.

Something like this was involved, I think, when Paul asked the believers at Ephesus: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" Apparently there is such a thing as believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and not entering into a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit by consciously receiving Him. They said at that time: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Any number of people are not clear on this subject for the simple reason that they have not been told. The Holy Spirit will show us the things of Christ. We may be unaware of that function but He will do it. Finally, He will bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. He sheds light. "In Him there is no darkness at all."

You can be sure the Holy Spirit is in you if you believe the Scriptures. If you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have been adopted into the family of God; as a child of God, the Holy Spirit has been sent into your heart. The Holy Spirit needs to be received that you might be blessed. In that way you will know that this truth is from Scripture. I cannot add more than the Scriptures tell you, but the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. When I humbly yield myself to His presence, He will give me assurance that He is there. Someone will ask: "Can I know for sure?" Can you know that Christ died for you for sure? If you are sure these things are true you can know the Holy Spirit is in you for sure; and for the same reason: because it is

revealed in the Scriptures.

How Can I Know Christ Jesus Is Praying For Me?

"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).

"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1).

John points out believers have a Representative, a Friend in the presence of God; One who will defend them. It will not be a case of the Lord Jesus Christ explaining that what they did was just a mistake, or giving an alibi for them; it will be an open, honest confession of the fault and the failure as it is; but the Lord Jesus will be able to present Himself as the One who carried away the sins of the world. This one aspect of the Gospel is in many ways the most wonderful truth of all: the living Christ Jesus the Lord is praying for believers now, in the presence of God.

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

Because of these passages of Scripture each believer can rejoice in two things: first, in case he sins Christ Jesus is there to intercede on his behalf. He is the Advocate; He appears in the great heavenly assembly to represent the believer before God. He is there with the evidence that he has paid the penalty. In the second place, before the believer even enters into this crisis, before he comes face to face with the fact of his own sin, Christ has already prayed for him. John writes this passage in such a way that it is plain he does not encourage believers to sin. But he wants believers to know they have a Savior praying for them.

Do you believe that? Do you ever think about it? Are you sure this is your experience? And are you trusting the Lord Jesus Christ to save your soul? Then remember this wonderful fact; the living Lord Jesus Christ is right now in the presence of God praying for you. Right at the very point where the believer might falter and fail, Christ is there to pray for him. If a believer can be sure that Christ Jesus is praying for him, he should be able to rest quietly and go to sleep peacefully any night.

It is gloriously true. "No one knows what a day will bring forth," but the Lord knows. "We know not what to pray for as we ought;" but the Lord knows. He knows how weak we are, and how foolish. He knows our problems, and He is in the presence of God praying for me and praying for you. When we have that in mind it will give us assurance about what will happen tomorrow.

Perhaps you will ask: "Why doesn't He stop it all?" Consider for a moment: do you want to leave here? Do you want to go home to Heaven, to be with Him?

"In the world you shall have tribulation" but you need not have any concern about that. When tribulation comes you have a Friend, a Savior, who is pleading in glory. This can bring assurance about certain burdens you may have. He is praying for you. Because this is true you will find comfort when called upon to go through pain or distress.

We are much more blessed in all this than we can ever know. "The keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." He is awake and on our side always. How can we know this? You will find it in the Bible. Knowing this is what the Bible promises, and believing it, you can be sure. You can depend on it, Jesus Christ is faithful.

"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).

Do you remember the case of Thomas, the disciple, who doubted that Jesus was raised from the dead? You remember how, when they told him they had seen the Lord, Thomas told them honestly,

"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).

When the Lord met him, He said:

"Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27).

Thomas fell at His feet, calling Him, "My Lord and my God." Then there followed these wonderful words: "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." You can be blessed and comforted if you will just let your spirit accept and believe the revelation about the living Lord Jesus Christ. This is a treasure for you, reserved, hidden for all who believe. This is part of the blessing you have when you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and believe His Word.

How Can I Know I Am Saved?

Do you think it is possible for a person to be sure of his salvation?

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:13).

The way this is phrased indicates that anybody may need support for this kind of assurance. Just believing the idea is true apparently will not bring the knowing; we need other things with believing. We need other considerations that we may know for sure that we have eternal life, and that we may believe on the Son of God in order that we may believe more and more.

How can I know for sure that I am truly saved? Perhaps we should have some understanding of all that is meant by the very words we use. How can I "know" anything "for sure?" There are some unhappy people who cannot be "sure" of anything, even that they are saved. The way we can know anything for sure is when the matter is open to testing, to experimentation. For instance, how do I know that a wall is hard? Bump it. Much can be known for sure if we can put it to the test. Some years ago, I asked a professor, "How do you arrive at conviction" He answered: "Actually when you have them, we call them prejudices; when we have them, we call them conclusions. But we do not use the word 'conviction'."

I told my wife about it: "Do you realize they do not know how a person gets a conviction?" Her answer was: "That would not be hard." So I asked her: "How would you ever have a conviction?" Pointing to the back of the stove where there was a kettle with water she said: "Look at that water. Is it hot? Do you want to be convinced whether it is hot? Stick your finger in it." In those few words she gave me what turned out to be one of the most important insights that I ever recognized in all my studies in psychology. Of course we give it a big word; we call it "participation." That is what it is, and if

anybody ever wants to really know anything for sure, let him stick his finger into it.

Now let me consider another question: what does it mean to be saved? When I had the feeling that I was saved, I understood that my future, my eternal consequence would be good. I felt: "Praise the Lord! Because I am forgiven, I am not going to hell!" That is what it meant to me to be saved, and I was happy about that then; and I still am. I still rejoice over this. No matter what my record is, no matter what I may have done wrong or what I have failed to do right, I am pardoned. There is nothing on the record against me. That is what it means to be saved.

How can I know that? The Bible tells me so. Being saved, my inner being will be affected. I will be inwardly changed and my attitude toward God will be different. I will be disposed to trust Him; I will want to obey Him and to be well pleasing in His sight.

The believer's attitude toward other men will also be changed. When he has been saved the result will be that he will have compassion on people. He will be sympathetic with people. Also he will have respect for those who are in authority. He will have consideration for others, and charity for the poor. You may say again there is nobody like that. Then in that case you have not known a real believer.

There will also be a change in the believer's attitude toward values. He will seek to lay up treasures in Heaven. A saved person will be more concerned about what is in Heaven than what is here. When a person is saved his whole manner of life will be changed. "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16) is the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth in the Sermon on the Mount. These fruits will include: love toward God, love toward man, repentance about self and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are fruits that belong. In the last analysis, it is the way the believer acts that tells the story. When a person seeks to arrive at a judgement about himself only by comparing himself with others, he will arrive at being uncertain.

There are some ways in which a person can make sure that he will be saved. In the first place, he will have to understand the Gospel. When he understands the Gospel, it will be clear to him that the Bible teaches that the free gift of God is eternal life. The Bible makes it plain that Christ Jesus died for sins according to the Scripture: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." If a person does not know what the Bible teaches, or does not believe what the Bible teaches, he will naturally think being saved will depend partly on him. And if he thinks being saved depends partly on him, he will never be sure.

Some may feel there is a virtuous humility in being unsure. I have known people like that. Such persons were not sure they were going to Heaven; they were not sure they belonged to God; they were proud of this uncertainty because they thought that showed they were humble people. They looked upon persons who said they were sure as if they were arrogant. But the Bible teaches that a believer can know he belongs to God. (I John 5:13).

It is important to understand what the Bible teaches. When a person understands the Gospel he can be sure of being saved. If a person does not understand what the Bible teaches, he is left in his mind to his own ideas. It is natural that he will think he must do something about it. That means he will never be sure because if he has something to do about it, he could fail. Then all would be lost. The believer can be sure he is saved when he knows in his own heart that he has met the conditions outlined in the Bible. First, there is the matter of repentance. This will be induced when the person knows deep down in his own heart that he is a sinner; when something happens inside him as it did with Isaiah when he said:

"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5).

Or perhaps it will be with him as it was with Job when he could say:

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

Or perhaps he will think as Paul did:

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18).

Make no mistake about it: the first condition to be met by anyone coming to God is that he should repent.

The second condition is to believe the Gospel as it is taught in the Scripture. The Apostle Paul could say:

"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" (II Timothy 1:12).

If any man believes the Gospel as it is set out in the Scripture he can have that kind of assurance.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

I remember a time in the course of my darkest hour of doubt. After I had become a believer, and had had a glorious experience in accepting Christ Jesus as my Savior and in rejoicing in the goodness of God, there came a time in which I became aware of a great doubt. This was particularly heavy because I was afraid I had not really turned myself over to God. During this time I was in darkness and this massive doubt depressed my soul.

One morning in Spring I went into the woods, where I sat on a stump from 9 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It was a lovely day in Spring in Canada. I read my Bible; I prayed and searched my heart. I looked to God though I was in doubt that I really belonged to Him. In the afternoon this word came to my heart: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." I knew I had confessed Him before men, and that promise took the burden off my soul. I suddenly realized I might falter and flounder, but He would not. He had given me His word: "Him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven." As soon as I realized that, I knew I was safe in the Lord. When my assurance had been restored I thanked Almighty God for being so kind in showing this to me. Then I realized that over the past months I had been barren. I had not really served Him. And right then I pledged that if He would help me from that time forward I would not be such a dead loss so far as my witness and my service to the Lord would be concerned.

There is yet another condition I should meet: I should love others. In the days when I was at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, preparing my heart and mind to go as a missionary, I was again attacked by a real doubt that I had committed myself to the Lord. I was a born doubter. I had been reading in I John to get assurance that I belonged to God, and I read there that one of the evidences that I belonged would be that I loved the brethren (I John 3:14). There came a time when I had been witnessing, when a man to whom I was witnessing about Christ insulted me. However, instead of being offended at the person I was actually sorry for him. That was an entirely new experience for me. My heart was filled with joy. I

knew now that I really belonged to God because I had really loved that man, although I had no reason to do so. These, then, are the conditions which if sincerely met by the believer will give a real assurance that that person belongs to God through Christ Jesus.

There is yet another set of conditions which may be met by the sincere believer. When my judgement of myself is one of repentance, and that evidence is there before me, I realize in my own way that I can step in beside Job and Isaiah and Paul, and know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. Again, when my confession of Christ is actually real I can expect easily to have assurance of His favor. This would be especially true for many people uniting with the church and taking an open stand in the community. For such persons who profess to believe in Jesus Christ, and who bear open testimony of His grace, it would be helpful if they would say openly, "God was good to me. God blessed me." In my own life as I worship God, I find myself praising Him. I am thankful to Him for His daily care: the big things and the little things. I not only thank Him for saving my soul and keeping it from hell; I thank Him for preparing a home in Heaven for me, and I thank Him for comforting me day in and day out. I thank Him for the little things of providence: that the man who drove so recklessly did not run into me on the highway; for the fact that when my gas tank was empty, I was close to a gas station. And this is also true when I study and care about the Bible: I find myself turning to God in prayer. I not only pray because it is the thing to do, I pray because I want His help. All this is evidence that I really do believe in Almighty God, who is the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

All this can be recognized as we think about the worship of God. So far I have mentioned three things: I am to confess Christ so far as the world is concerned; for myself I am to repent; and so far as God is concerned, I am to worship Him. To understand this truth even more fully let us look at some practical situations. In my own being I respect my parents, and when I grew more mature I showed respect to all who have authority. I find that I give consideration to my fellow-men, I am interested in every good work; I take part in the things that help others; I have charity toward the poor. I am disposed to almsgiving in the Biblical sense. My interest in missions is to win souls, and my interest in Heaven is such that I look forward to it. I do not claim to do all of these things perfectly, but these aims in my heart are my evidence. If any one of these things were left out, my assurance would lag, and I would begin to doubt myself. When I have the inner assurance that I belong: "His Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

You may think I have labored this point about being sure, as if it must be a rather uncertain thing. Sadly enough, it is. For a human being on earth to believe that he has a home in Heaven is difficult. A person can hear about it, he can think about it, and he can describe it from what he reads in the Scripture: but to feel sure about it he will need to meet some of these conditions I have set forth.

I can be sure, but never cocksure; because in all that I have talked about my obedience is involved. My faith is involved. My performance and understanding are involved. My feelings are involved. And with me there is always room for mistakes; yet I can be sure. If there is evidence in my life, I can be sure because "by their fruits you shall know them."