

1 John 5:13 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN

Click chart to enlarge

Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

STUDY GUIDE

1 JOHN 5

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+

"Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading. (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

"Asking questions is the key to understanding."

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...

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1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life:

Greek - Tauta egrapha (AAI) humin hina eidete (2PRAS) hoti zoen echete (2PPAI) aionion tois pisteuousin (PAP) eis to onoma tou huiou tou theou:

BGT 1 John 5:13 Τατα γραψα μν να εδτε τι ζων χετε α νιον, το ς πιστεουσιν ες τ νομα το υο το θεο .

ESV 1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

Wuest - These things I write to you in order that you may know with an absolute knowledge that life you are having, eternal (life), to you who believe on the name of the Son of God. (Note that Wuest follows the original

Greek text closer than the NAS or ESV) ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission) .

KJV 1 John 5:13 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.

NET 1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

CSB 1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

NIV 1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

NLT 1 John 5:13 I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.

NRS 1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

NJB 1 John 5:13 I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

NAB 1 John 5:13 I write these things to you so that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

YLT 1 John 5:13 These things I did write to you who are believing in the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that life ye have age-during, and that ye may believe in the name of the Son of God.

MIT 1 John 5:13 I wrote these things to you in order that you might know you have life forever, that which is afforded those who believe in the name of God's son.

GWN 1 John 5:13 I've written this to those who believe in the Son of God so that they will know that they have eternal life.

BBE 1 John 5:13 I have put these things in writing for you who have faith in the name of the Son of God, so that you may be certain that you have eternal life.

RSV 1 John 5:13 I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

NKJ 1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

ASV 1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.

- **These things I have written:** 1Jn 1:4 2:1,13,14,21,26 Joh 20:31 21:24 1Pe 5:12
- **Who believe in the Name:** 1Jn 3:23 Joh 1:12 2:23 3:18 Ac 3:16 4:12 1Ti 1:15,16
- **That you may know:** 1Jn 5:10 1Jn 1:1,2 Ro 8:15-17 2Co 5:1 Ga 4:6 2Pe 1:10,11
- [1 John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Acts 4:12+ “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other **Name** ([onoma](#)) under heaven that has been given among men, by which we **must** ([dei](#) = necessity, compulsory!) be saved ([sozo](#)).”

1 John 5:10+ The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself (cf Ro 8:16); the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.

John 20:31+ but these have been written that you may **believe** ([pisteuo](#)) that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ([pisteuo](#) - present tense) you may have life in (en) (SEE LOCATIVE OF SPHERE) His **Name** ([onoma](#)).

1 John 3:19+ We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall **assure** ([peitho](#) - be persuaded or confident in) our heart before Him (COMMENT - his readers could be confident that they were genuine believers).

John 17:3+ "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

Romans 8:38-39+ (ASSURANCE) For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:12+ (ASSURANCE) For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

John 10:28-29+ (ASSURANCE) and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. 29" My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

JOHN'S PURPOSE FOR HIS LETTER

These things I have written ([grapho](#)) **to you who believe** ([pisteuo](#) - present tense) **in the Name** ([onoma](#)) **of the Son of God, so that** ([hina](#) - speaks of purpose of his letter) **you may know** ([eido/oida](#) in perfect tense - speaks of permanence of this knowledge) **that** ([hoti](#)) **you have** (echo - present tense - continually possess, have as one's own) **eternal** ([aionios](#)) **life** ([zoe](#) - true life is only in God, for all other "life" eventually dies) - What **things**? This is not as easy as one might think. Personally, I believe John is referring to all he had already written. A lesser percentage favor **things** as referring just to vv 1-12. **Believe** is in the present tense which speaks of continual belief. While our faith may fluctuate like the stock market, it does not drop to zero (although there are times when it may feel that way). Feelings come and go, and can be deceiving. To counteract feelings ("I'm not sure I am saved"), God has given us His sure Word (2Pe 1:19+) that our faith might be firmly grounded on that truth. Specifically in this letter, John has given us "tests" to assess the authenticity of our faith and give us assurance (See "[tests](#)" [below](#)). The more we are in the Word and the Word is in us and is lived out in the power of the Spirit, the more sure our faith and assurance will be. As Paul writes in Romans "faith [comes] from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Ro 10:17+). Our belief is in the **Name** above all names, [Jesus](#) (Jehovah is Salvation), His **Name** signifying all of His attributes, all of His finished work of redemption on the Cross. What is the purpose (**so that**) of John's writing in this epistle? It is that the readers and all believers might have a sure and certain and lasting knowledge that we continually possess **eternal life**. (Interpretation favored by John Stott, I Howard Marshall, Stephen Smalley, et al) **Have** (echo) is in the present tense which signifies this is not a transient, on and off possession but a continual possession. The Spirit inspired John to write an epistle that would give us assurance that **eternal life** is our present, [permanent possession which cannot be lost!](#) Eternal life is not just quantitative but reflects a quality of life, the very life of God, for it is an unbreakable covenant with Christ Who is our life (Col 3:4+) for He is the Word of Life (1Jn 1:1+), and now "we might live through Him" (1Jn 4:9+) and daily experience "that which is life indeed." (1Ti 6:19+) In sum, eternal life is a Person (Jn 14:6+)! What John has written should give each of us a [beyond a shadow of a doubt](#)" type of knowledge that we are born again and that we will live forever with the Triune God in heaven. **Eternal life** is "a person's new and redeemed existence in Jesus Christ that is granted by God as a gift to all believers. **Eternal life** refers to the quality or character of our new existence in Christ as well as the unending character of that life."

*John wrote his Gospel so that people might believe and be saved;
he wrote his first epistle so that those who believe would know they are saved.*

John MacArthur favors **these things** as encompassing the entire letter noting that "there is a strong parallel between 1Jn 5:13 and John 20:31 ("these have been written so that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that **believing** you may have **life** in His Name"). Since that verse unquestionably refers back to the entire Gospel of John, the parallel expression in 1Jn 5:13 most likely refers back to the entire epistle. John wrote his Gospel so that people might believe and be saved; he wrote his first epistle so that those who believe would know they are saved. (See [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 202](#)) **Steven Cole** agrees that "**These things**" refer to the entire letter John has written this letter so that his little children will not be unsettled by the false teachers. ([1 John 5:5-13 Is Christianity Merely Psychological?](#)) (Others who favor **these things** in 1 John 5:13 refers to the entire letter include Raymond Brown, Donald Burdick, Rudolf Bultmann, J L A Houlden, R C H Lenski, Kenneth Grayston, I Howard Marshall, Simon Kistemaker, C M Hass, Gary Burge, F F Bruce, John Stott, Daniel Akin, Stephen Smalley, B F Westcott, etc).

*In a real sense, the entire letter of 1 John
has been pointing to this verse.*

-- Danny Akin

NET Note on to what **these things** refers - Theoretically the pronoun (tauta = "**these things**") could refer (1) to what precedes or (2)

to what follows. Since it is followed by (hina) clause which gives the **purpose** for the writing, and a new subject is introduced in 1Jn 5:14 (confidence), it seems almost certain that the **(these things)** in 1Jn 5:13 refers to preceding material. Even at this, some would limit the referent of tauta (**these things**) (1) only to 1Jn 5:1–12 [As does A T Robertson] or even 1Jn 5:12, but more likely tauta (**these things**) in 1Jn 5:13 refers (2) to the entirety of the letter, for two reasons: (a) based on the structural analogy with the Gospel of John, where the conclusion refers to all that has preceded (Ed: Presumably they refer to Jn 20:31), it is probable that the conclusion to 1 John refers likewise to all that has preceded; and (b) the statement **These things I have written to you** in 1Jn 5:13 forms an inclusion with the statement **these things we write** (kai tauta graphomen hēmeis) at the end of the prologue (1Jn 1:4) and encompasses the entire body of the letter.

David Smith - The purpose for which St. John wrote his Gospel was that we might believe in the Incarnation, and so have Eternal Life (Jn 20:31); the purpose of the Epistle is not merely that we may have Eternal Life by believing but that we may know that we have it. The Gospel exhibits the Son of God, the Epistle commends Him. It is a supplement to the Gospel, a personal application and appeal.

W A Criswell - The author begins this final section by restating his purpose for writing. While John's Gospel is primarily evangelistic and especially directed to unbelievers (John 20:31+), 1 John is written to Christians. Since the author's readers are being harassed by false teaching, he wants them to recognize that they possess **eternal life**. Two words for "know" ([eido/oida](#), [ginosko](#)) occur a total of seven times in this passage. In light of their spiritual status, these believers ought to have confidence in their relationship with God. 1Jn 5:14-17 relates this confidence to prayer; 1Jn 5:18-20 recounts several important spiritual truths.

*First John is written to those who are Christians
to give them assurance that they are saved.*
-- Max Anders

NET Note on so that (term of purpose/result) - This [hina](#) (**so that**) introduces a clause giving the author's purpose for writing **these things** (tauta), which refers to the entirety of the preceding material (**ED**: See discussion above on [these things](#)). The two other Johannine statements about writing, 1 John 1:4 and John 20:31, are both followed by purpose clauses introduced by [hina](#) as here (**ED**: [SEE ALL 19 USES OF HINA IN 1 JOHN](#)).

R C H Lenski ably explains why John choose to use [eido/oida](#) and not [ginosko](#) for **know** in this verse - John uses ο δα ([eido/oida](#)) as he does also in the three following notable statements (1Jn 5:18–20) and not γινώσκω ([ginosko](#)). His intention is not that he wants to exclude the knowing of the heart, which realizes with full effect upon the readers (γινώσκω - [ginosko](#)), but that he wants his readers to know also intellectually, with a clear understanding of the mind that they have life eternal only as believers in the Name of the Son of God over against all the heretics who refuse to believe in this name and revelation and deny the Son of God (1Jn 2:22; 4:15) (Borrow [The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude](#))

*John doesn't want us to hope so,
but to know so.*

Steven Cole - "If they **believe** in the Name (= Person) of the Son of God, then they may **know** that they have eternal life. John doesn't want us to **hope so**, but to **know so**. You can **know** because God's testimony about His Son is trustworthy. Your faith must rest in Jesus Christ Alone, not in anything or anyone else. If your faith is in Christ, then you have the **inner witness of His Spirit**, that you are a child of God (cp 1Jn 4:13+, Ro 8:14-16+). You have the evidence in your life that He has changed your heart. You now believe the truth about Jesus. You obey God's commandments (1Jn 2:3+). You love God and others (1Jn 5:2+). John's Gospel (John 20:31+) was "written so **that you might believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His Name." His first epistle was written so that you who already believe in the name of the Son of God would not be shaken by false teaching, but rather, "so that you may know that you have eternal life." If you don't know whether or not you have eternal life, nothing is more important than to make sure. Go back and read again God's testimony to His Son in the Gospels. See the witness of the Spirit throughout the life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. God's testimony to Jesus is the foundation of our faith. Christianity is not just a psychological experience. It rests on this solid witness. But, then, you must believe God's testimony about His Son. If you're neutral or ambivalent about it, you are not believing it. Worse, you're calling God a liar. John Stott writes ([The Letters of John](#) p. 182), "*Unbelief is not a misfortune to be pitied; it is a sin to be deplored. Its sinfulness lies in the fact that it contradicts the word of the one true God and thus attributes falsehood to Him.*" Repent of your unbelief, of the audacity of calling the God of truth a liar. Accept His testimony to His Son and receive as a gift the eternal life that only the living God can impart. ([1 John 5:5-13 Is Christianity Merely Psychological?](#))

*Assurance of eternal life
constitutes the first Christian certainty*
-- John MacArthur

John MacArthur - In 1654 the Puritan **Thomas Brooks** wrote, "Assurance is the believer's ark where he sits, Noah-like, quiet and still in the midst of all distractions and destructions, commotions and confusions... [However] most Christians live between fears and hopes, and hang, as it were, between heaven and hell. Sometimes they hope that their state is good, at other times they fear that their state is bad: now they hope that all is well, and that it shall go well with them for ever; [then] they fear that they shall perish by the hand of such a corruption, or by the prevalency of such or such a temptation ... They are like a ship in a storm, tossed here and there" ([HEAVEN ON EARTH](#)). ([A Believer's Assurance- A Practical Guide to Victory over Doubt](#))

John Stott - It is common today to decry any claim to assurance of salvation, to dismiss it as presumptuous, and to affirm that no certainty is possible on this side of death. But certainty and humility do not exclude one another. If God's revealed purpose is not only that we should hear, believe and live, but also that we should know, presumptuousness lies in doubting His word, not in trusting it. (Borrow ([The Letters of John](#)))

MacArthur adds "Assurance is an inextricable part of saving faith. The apostle John said, "I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1John 5:13, emphasis added). The Christian faith is a secure faith. As one hymn triumphantly declares, "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word." (See [Saved Without A Doubt: Being Sure of Your Salvation - Page 115](#))

Herbert Lockyer - The assurance of salvation is plainly written over the pages of the New Testament. Christ and His apostles lived in the air of certainty... The epistles glow with the truth that we may know we possess salvation. (See [100 Bible Verses Everyone Should Know by Heart - Page 87](#))

Henry Morris - The most definitive basis for our assurance of salvation is true faith in "the name of the Son of God," with whatever that entails. John has also given a number of tests for knowing that our faith in Him is true faith, not just mental assent to a tenet of faith. Such tests are noted in 1 John 2:3; 2:5; 2:6; 2:29; 1Jn 3:2,3; 3:14; 3:18,19; 3:24; 1Jn 4:13; 1Jn 5:2 (compare John 20:31).

A T Robertson on **that you may know** - He wishes them to have eternal life in Christ (John 20:31) and to know that they have it, but not with flippant superficiality (1Jn 2:3-6+).

*To receive zōē is to have God's life now
and to be guaranteed eternal life in the future.*

-- Philip Comfort/Wendell Hawley

Robert W. Yarbrough on **eternal life** - The divinely bestowed gift of blessedness in God's presence that endures without end. This relates especially to the quality of life in this age, and to both the quality and duration of life in the age to come. (See lengthy article on [Eternal Life, Eternity, Everlasting Life](#))

*Eternal life does not refer
primarily to a period of time but a Person.*

-- John MacArthur

As alluded to above while **eternal life** "does not refer primarily to duration of life, but to quality of life. Eternal life is to know Jesus Christ (Jn 17:3), Who Himself is eternal life (1Jn 5:20), and to share in His life. It is a present possession, not merely a future hope (Jn 3:36; 5:24; 6:47, 54; 10:28; 1Jn 3:15), though it is not fully manifested in this life."

*Eternal life is a relationship with the
Person of Jesus Christ and possessing His nature*

-- John MacArthur

Barker - John's first epistle is addressed to those who have accepted this belief but still need assurance that through this name they have indeed received eternal life. So the author refers six times (in addition to v. 13) to what we believers know:

- We know that he hears us—whatever we ask.
- We know that we have what we asked.
- We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin.
- We know that we are children of God.
- We know also that the Son of God has come.
- We ... know him who is true. (1Jn 5:15, 18–20)

(See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition](#))

English = graph, graphic, etc) means to engrave or inscribe with a pen or stylus characters or letters on a surface which can be wood, wax, metal, leather, stone, parchment, dirt (John), paper, etc.

Who believe (4100)(**pisteuo**) means to entrust oneself to an entity (in this case Jesus) in complete confidence. To believe in with the implication of total commitment to the one who is trusted (Jesus). This is not just intellectual assent, but a that is not associated in a change in one's heart and thus in one's behavior or actions. Belief in the New Testament sense that effects the new birth denotes more than a "demonic" like, intellectual assent to a set of facts or truths. The demons believe but they are clearly not saved. Genuine belief does involve an intellectual assent and consent of one's mind, but also includes an act of one's heart and will. Biblical saving faith is not passive assent but an active staking of one's life on the claims of God. The respected Greek lexicon author W E Vine defines belief as consisting of (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Th 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not believe [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."); (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe [pisteuo] in His name") and (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender.

Name (3686) **onoma** means that by which something or someone is called or known. Thus **aname** constitutes the distinctive designation of a person or thing. However in antiquity the **name** meant more than it does today. We use **aname** as little more than a distinguishing mark or label to differentiate one person from another. But in the ancient world the **name** signified not only the person's identity but the inherent character of the person designated by the name. Stated another way, in ancient times, one's whole character (title, reputation, person) was implied in the **name**. For example, in John 1:12 to "believe in His Name" (cf Jn 3:18, 20:31, 1Jn 3:23) is to believe (with a belief that results in a new, "circumcised" heart) in all Jesus is and all He has accomplished to effect our eternal redemption (Heb 9:12). The **Name** when used of Jesus indicates the full revelation of the Son of God. **Detzler** says " In Hebrew thinking a **name** is identified with character, and the **name** of God is the repository of God's power." (see [NIDNTT article online page 648](#) for 9 page article on **NAME**)

USES OF ONOMA BY JOHN - Jn. 1:6; Jn. 1:12; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 3:1; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 5:43; Jn. 10:3; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 12:13; Jn. 12:28; Jn. 14:13; Jn. 14:14; Jn. 14:26; Jn. 15:16; Jn. 15:21; Jn. 16:23; Jn. 16:24; Jn. 16:26; Jn. 17:6; Jn. 17:11; Jn. 17:12; Jn. 17:26; Jn. 18:10; Jn. 20:31; 1 Jn. 2:12; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 5:13; 3 Jn. 1:7; 3 Jn. 1:15; Rev. 2:3; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:4; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 6:8; Rev. 8:11; Rev. 9:11; Rev. 11:13; Rev. 11:18; Rev. 13:1; Rev. 13:6; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 13:17; Rev. 14:1; Rev. 14:11; Rev. 15:2; Rev. 15:4; Rev. 16:9; Rev. 17:3; Rev. 17:5; Rev. 17:8; Rev. 19:12; Rev. 19:13; Rev. 19:16; Rev. 21:12; Rev. 21:14; Rev. 22:4

So that (in order that)(2443) **hina** is a conjunction which is used as a marker of purpose, definition or result and is rendered in order that, that, so that. With the result or consequence that. With the particular aim or purpose of; in order that. See also [Dana-Mantey Greek Grammar page 264](#)

"So that" means "in order to" which answers the question "Why?" We use it to begin adverb clauses of purpose. Let's hear an example: It helps to lower blood sugar so that you feel less hungry. The adverb clause is "so that you feel less hungry." It shows the purpose for the action in the main clause. Why does it help to lower blood sugar? To feel less hungry. ([LearnEnglish](#))

ALL USES OF HINA IN JOHN'S EPISTLES - 1 Jn. 1:3; 1 Jn. 1:4; 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:1; 1 Jn. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:27; 1 Jn. 2:28; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:11; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:9; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 4:21; 1 Jn. 5:3; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:20; 2 Jn. 1:5; 2 Jn. 1:6; 2 Jn. 1:8; 2 Jn. 1:12; 3 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:8;

May know (1492)(**eido** in the [perfect tense](#) = **oida**) means speaks not of experiential knowledge, but of absolute, beyond a shadow of a doubt knowledge. It means to know with a settled, absolute, intuitive knowledge. **Eido/oida** is distinguished from [ginosko](#) because **ginosko** generally refers to knowledge obtained by experience or "experiential knowledge". **Eido/oida** often refers more to an intuitive knowledge, although this distinction is not always clear cut. Generally speaking, **eido/oida** is not so much that which is known by experience as an intuitive insight that is drilled into one's heart. **Eido/oida** is knowledge that is characterized by assurance, something known with certainty. **Eido/oida** is an intuitive knowledge which in the case of believers can only be given by the Holy Spirit. In sum, for believers **eido/oida** suggests Spirit given fullness of knowledge, absolute knowledge (that which is without a doubt), rather than a progress in knowledge (cp [ginosko](#)).

EIDO IN JOHN'S EPISTLES - MOST USES (5) ARE FOUND IN CHAPTER 5 - 1 Jn. 2:11; 1 Jn. 2:20; 1 Jn. 2:21; 1 Jn. 2:29; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:15; 1 Jn. 5:18; 1 Jn. 5:19; 1 Jn. 5:20; 3 Jn. 1:12;

Eternal (166) **aionios** from [aion](#)) means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time (Ro 1:20 - God's power, Mt 18:8 - God's place of judgment, Ro 16:26+ - God's attribute). **Aionios** (eternal) is the exact antithesis of [proskairos](#) (temporal). See additional [discussion of aionios](#) in study of eternal punishment, specifically the importance of

an [accurate understanding of aionios as a refutation of the false teaching of universalism](#) (everyone will be saved). **Mounce** notes that **aionios** is an adjective which typically functions in three settings: the eternity of God and the divine realm; the blessings of salvation; and everlasting conditions that have neither beginning nor end. It is worth noting that some evangelical writers believe eternal life but do not believe in eternal punishment. Jesus' own words clearly refute such [specious](#) teaching - "And these will go away into **eternal (aionios) punishment**, but the righteous into **eternal (aionios) life**." (Mt 25:46+) While I do not like the thought of eternal punishment, I believe this declaration from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who spoke more about the subject of hell than anyone else.

JOHN'S USES OF AIONIOS - Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:14; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 6:68; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 17:2; Jn. 17:3; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:11; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Rev. 14:6

ETERNAL LIFE - used 41x in 41v with over 50% of uses by John - Matt 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mark 10:17, 30; Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; John 3:15-16, 36; 4:14; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:50; 17:2-3; Acts 13:46, 48; Rom 2:7; 5:21; 6:22f; Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jude 1:21

Life (2222) **zoe** in Scripture is used (1) to refer to **physical life** (Ro 8:38+, 1Co 3:22+, Php 1:20+, Jas 4:14+, etc) but more often to (2) to **supernatural life** in contrast to a life subject to eternal death (Jn 3:36+). This quality of life speaks of fullness of life which alone belongs to God the Giver of life and is available to His children now (Ro 6:4+, Ep 4:18+, Jn 20:31+) as well as in eternity future (Mk 10:30+, Titus 1:2+ on Eternal Life). In short, **zoe** describes the eternal life, the divine life which is only found in Jesus but which is available as a gift to all who believe He is the Son of God. [Click for an in depth 8 PAGE discussion of zoe](#)

Kenneth Wuest on **supernatural life** - The ethical and spiritual qualities of this LIFE which God IS, are communicated to the sinner when the latter places his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, and this becomes the new, animating, energizing, motivating principle which transforms the experience of that individual, and the saint thus lives a Christian life. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

Lawrence Richards writes that "Zoe in classical Greek refers to natural life--the principle that enables living things to move and to grow. In the NT, zoe focuses on the theological meaning rather than on the biological. From the perspective of the NT, in every respect life is the counterpart of death. Each book of the NT speaks of zoe. In each, the principle of life lifts our vision beyond our earthly existence to reveal a unique quality of life that spans time and eternity and that has its roots in God. It is the biblical use and meaning of zoe that most concerns us as we examine what the NT says about life. (BORROW [Expository Dictionary of Bible Words](#))

ZOE USES BY JOHN - Jn. 1:4; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:14; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:26; Jn. 5:29; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 5:40; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:33; Jn. 6:35; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:48; Jn. 6:51; Jn. 6:53; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 6:63; Jn. 6:68; Jn. 8:12; Jn. 10:10; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 11:25; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 14:6; Jn. 17:2; Jn. 17:3; Jn. 20:31; 1 Jn. 1:1; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:11; 1 Jn. 5:12; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:20; Rev. 2:7; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 7:17; Rev. 11:11; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 16:3; Rev. 17:8; Rev. 20:12; Rev. 20:15; Rev. 21:6; Rev. 21:27; Rev. 22:1; Rev. 22:2; Rev. 22:14; Rev. 22:17; Rev. 22:19

*You ought not to be a doubting Christian;
you ought to be a shouting Christian.*

Adrian Rogers - I want you to look 1Jn 5:11 "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"—and then, here's the verse. Look at it clearly and plainly—"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may"—now, you help me. What's the next word?—"know"—K-N-O-W—"that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:11–13). Not think, not guess, not hope, not surmise, not wonder, but know with a rock-ribbed assurance that you have eternal life. Every Christian ought to have this privilege. You ought not to be a question mark with your head all bent over, wondering whether you're saved. You ought to be an exclamation point standing up straight and tall, saying, "Thank God. I know if I died right now, I would go to Heaven. And, I know that I'm living this day in the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives in me, because I have been redeemed—I have been saved—by His power divine." You ought not to be a doubting Christian; you ought to be a shouting Christian. You ought not to have a "hope-so salvation"; you ought to have a "know-so salvation." (ED: OR "HOPE SURE SALVATION") And, this verse tells us that we can know it: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that [you] may know" (1 John 5:13). ([A KNOW SO SALVATION](#))

ILLUSTRATION - When Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, was on his deathbed, a friend asked him, "Sir, what are

your speculations?” Simpson replied: “Speculations! I have no speculations! ‘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.’ (2Ti 1:12+)”

John Piper sums up 1 John - Summing up all these reasons for writing 1 John goes like this *I am writing because you are true believers, but there are deceivers in your midst, and I want you to be rock-solid confident in your present possession of eternal life as regenerate children of God, so that you are not drawn away after sin. And if this letter has that effect my joy will be complete. So at the heart of his reason for writing is the desire to help them know they are born again—that they now have new spiritual life. Eternal life.* (See his full sermon for [Eleven Evidences of the New Birth](#))

D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES 1 John 5:13 [Eternal life means a life that can never be taken away from me](#)

If you have it, you ought to know it.

And, if you do have it, you can never lose it.

Adrian Rogers - John wanted them to have the proper assurance. Look, if you will, in 1 John chapter 5—and he’s going to tell us the fourth reason that he wrote this book. First John chapter 5 and verse 13—and remember each of these: he says, “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” (1 John 5:13). He wants you to have the proper assurance. He wants you to know that you’re saved; and friend, if you don’t know that you’re saved, maybe it’s because you need to be saved. And, if you are saved and don’t know that you’re saved, it’s because you’re living beneath your privileges. You ought to be able to say, “Praise God! I know that I’m saved.” A New Testament Christian is not supposed to be a question mark, going around with his head all hung over; he’s supposed to be an exclamation point. He’s supposed to say, “I know that I’m saved.” I was in a hospital one time—led a woman to Jesus Christ who we believed was on her deathbed. And, I prayed with her, and she asked Christ into her heart (**ED: CAVEAT - THIS IS NOT BIBLICAL**) and asked Christ to save her. And then, I turned to one of her children, a grown man who was in that room. I said, “Isn’t that wonderful that your mother has been saved?” He said, “Nobody can know she’s saved. Nobody can know he’s saved in this life.” He was a member of a particular church. We have a lot of them around here, but I’m not going to call the name. And, he said, “Nobody can know that they’re saved.” He said, “The best you can do is you can just simply hope that you’re saved.” I said, “Friend, have you ever heard 1 John chapter 5, verse 13? ‘These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that [you] may know that [you] have eternal life’ ” (1 John 5:13). Friend, if you can have it and not know it, you can lose it and not miss it. Amen. But, I want to tell you something, friend: if you have it, you ought to know it. And, if you do have it, you can never lose it.

Related Resources on Assurance

- Assurance of Salvation - multiple articles, etc on one page
- [A Believer's Assurance](#) - John MacArthur
- Assurance by Hampton Keathley - topics
 - [1. Preface to The Assured Life](#)
 - [1.1. Introduction to the Truth of Assurance](#)
 - [1.2. Assurance Regarding the Gospel](#)
 - [1.3. Assurance of Salvation](#)
 - [1.4. Assurance of Eternal Security](#)
 - [1.5. Assurance of God's Daily Provision](#)
 - [1.6. Assurance of God's Provision for Sin](#)
 - [1.7. Assurance of God's Guidance](#)
 - [1.8. Assurance of Eternal Rewards](#)
- [1 John 3:19-24 Blessed Assurance - sermon by Steven Cole](#)
- [Full Assurance - Sermon by C H Spurgeon](#)
- [Assurance of Salvation... How Can We Have Assurance? from Spurgeon gems webstie](#)
- [Heaven On Earth-A Serious Discourse Concerning a Well-Grounded Assurance-Thomas Brooks \(1667\)](#) (See also [Genuine assurance](#))
- [Assurance of Salvation from John Newtons Letters](#)
- [Assurance by J C Ryle](#)

- [How can I have assurance of my salvation?](#)
- [How can a believer have assurance of salvation?](#)
- [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith?](#)
- [If you doubt your salvation, does that mean you are not truly saved?](#)
- [What if I don't feel saved?](#)
- [Doubt vs. The Assurance of Salvation](#)
- [The Assurance of Conversion - Octavius Winslow](#)
- [Spurgeon's pastoral wisdom in dealing with a woman lacking assurance](#)
- [A Test of Assurance - How We Know Whether We Love God - Thomas Watson](#)
- [Assurance of Grace and Salvation - What It Is - William S Plumer](#)
- [The Assurance of Hope - John Angell James, 1859](#)
- [Obedience to Christ Gives Assurance of the Truth of His Doctrines Archibald Alexander](#)
- Nave Topical Bible [Assurance](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Assurance](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Assurance](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Assurance](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary [Assurance](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Assurance](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Assurance](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Assurance](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Assurance Assurance \(2\)](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Assurance](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Assurance](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Assurance](#)

Related Resources on Eternal Life

- Nave Topical Bible [Eternal Life](#)
- Thompson Chain Reference [Life, Eternal](#)
- The Topic Concordance [Eternal Life](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Life, Eternal](#)
- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary [Eternal Life, Eternality, Everlasting Life](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary [Eternal Life](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Eternal Life](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Eternal Life](#)
- Hastings' NT Dictionary [Eternal Life \(2\) Eternal Life](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Eternal Life](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Eternal Life](#)

Know in 1 John - 40 times in 32 verse - 1 Jn. 2:3; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 2:11; 1 Jn. 2:13; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:18; 1 Jn. 2:20; 1 Jn. 2:21; 1 Jn. 2:29; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 3:20; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:2; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 4:16; 1 Jn. 5:2; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:15; 1 Jn. 5:18; 1 Jn. 5:19; 1 Jn. 5:20;

Danny Akin - See [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John - Page 139](#) - In a letter to a man named George Ticknor dated November 25, 1817, Thomas Jefferson was critical of state legislatures for not “perceiv[ing] the important truths that knowledge is power, that knowledge is safety, and that knowledge is happiness.” One might challenge particulars of Jefferson’s statement, but there is a ring of truth in it to be sure. The apostle John certainly thought knowledge was important. He was vitally concerned that his “little children” (v. 21) know a number of things to be true because they had come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. In fact, a quick survey of this five-chapter letter reveals at least the following things we can know:

1. We can know that we know God (1 John 2:3, 13, 14; 1 John 4:7).
2. We can know that we are in God (1 John 2:5).
3. We can know that it is the last hour (1 John 2:18).
4. We can know the truth (1 John 2:21; 1 John 3:19).
5. We can know that Jesus is righteous (1 John 2:29).

6. We can know that we will be like Jesus (1 John 3:2).
7. We can know that Jesus came to take away sins (1 John 3:5).
8. We can know that Jesus is sinless (1 John 3:5).
9. We can know that we have passed out of death into life (1 John 3:14).
10. We can know that no murderer has eternal life (1 John 3:15).
11. We can know love (1 John 3:16; 1 John 4:16).
12. We can know that God abides in us (1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:13).
13. We can know the Spirit of God (1 John 4:2).
14. We can know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception (1 John 4:6).
15. We can know that we love God's children (1 John 5:2).
16. We can know that we have eternal life (1 John 5:13).
17. We can know that God answers prayer (1 John 5:15).
18. We can know that we will not practice sin (1 John 5:18).
19. We can know that we belong to God (1 John 5:19).
20. We can know that the Son of God has come (1 John 5:20).
21. We can know that the Son of God has given us understanding (1 John 5:20).
22. We can know Him who is true (1 John 5:20).

It is clear from 1 John alone that the child of God can know and be certain of quite a lot!

QUESTION - [How can I have assurance of my salvation? Watch associated video](#)

ANSWER - The assurance of salvation is, simply put, knowing for sure that you are saved. Many Christians throughout history have written about their struggles in being assured of their salvation. The problem is that many followers of Jesus Christ look for the assurance of salvation in the wrong places.

We tend to seek assurance of salvation in the things God is doing in our lives, in our spiritual growth, in the good works and obedience to God's Word that is evident in our Christian walk. While these things can be [evidence of salvation](#), they are not what we should base the assurance of our salvation on. Rather, we should find the assurance of our salvation in the objective truth of God's Word. We should have confident trust that we are saved based on the promises God has declared, not because of our subjective experiences.

How can you have assurance of salvation? Consider 1 John 5:11–13: "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God *so that you may know that you have eternal life*' (emphasis added). Who is it that has the Son? It is those who have believed in Him (John 1:12). If you have Jesus, you have life. Not temporary life, but eternal. And, according to 1 John 5:13, you can *know* that you have this eternal life.

God wants us to have assurance of our salvation. We should not live our Christian lives wondering and worrying each day whether we are truly saved. That is why the Bible makes the plan of salvation so clear. Believe in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Acts 16:31). Do you believe that Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins and rose again from the dead (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21)? Do you trust Him alone for salvation? If your answer to these questions is "yes," you are saved! Assurance means freedom from doubt. By taking God's Word to heart, you can have no doubt about the reality of your eternal salvation.

Jesus Himself assures those who believe in Him: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28–29). Eternal life is just that—eternal. There is no one, not even yourself, who can take Christ's God-given gift of salvation away from you.

Take joy in what God's Word is saying to you: instead of doubting, we can live with confidence! We can have the assurance from Christ's own Word that our salvation will never be in question. Our assurance of salvation is based on the perfect and complete salvation God has provided for us through Jesus Christ. Are you trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? If the answer is "yes," rest assured, you are saved. [GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith?](#)

ANSWER- This is one of the most important questions in the Christian life. Many believers doubt their salvation because they don't see signs of genuine faith in their lives. There are those who say we should never doubt our decision to follow Christ, but the Bible encourages us to examine ourselves to see if we are truly "in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5). Thankfully, God has given us ample

instruction for how we can know for sure that we have eternal life. The first epistle of John was actually written for that purpose, as it states in 1 John 5:13,

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

There is a series of tests in 1 John that we can use to examine ourselves and our faith. As we look at them, remember that no one will perfectly fulfill all of them all the time, but they should reveal a consistent trend that characterizes our lives as we grow in grace.

1. Do you enjoy having fellowship with Christ and His redeemed people? (1 John 1:3)
2. Would people say you walk in the light, or walk in the darkness? (1 John 1:6-7)
3. Do you admit and confess your sin? (1 John 1:8)
4. Are you obedient to God's Word? (1 John 2:3-5)
5. Does your life indicate you love God rather than the world? (1 John 2:15)
6. Is your life characterized by "doing what is right"? (1 John 2:29)
7. Do you seek to maintain a pure life? (1 John 3:3)
8. Do you see a decreasing pattern of sin in your life? (1 John 3:5-6) [Note: this refers to not continuing in sin as a way of life, not a total absence of sin.]
9. Do you demonstrate love for other Christians? (1 John 3:14)
10. Do you "walk the walk," versus just "talking the talk"? (1 John 3:18-19)
11. Do you maintain a clear conscience? (1 John 3:21)
12. Do you experience victory in your Christian walk? (1 John 5:4)

*If you bear these "birthmarks,"
you can say with confidence that you are a child of God.*

-- Warren Wiersbe

If you are able to truthfully answer "Yes" to these questions (or a majority of them, and are working on the others), then your life is bearing the fruit of true salvation. Jesus said that it is by our fruits that we are known as His disciples (Matthew 7:20). Fruitless branches—professing believers who do not display the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) are cut off and thrown into the fire (John 15:6). A genuine faith is one that not only believes in God (the demons themselves do that - James 2:19), but leads to open confession of sin and obedience to Christ's commands. Remember, we are saved by grace through faith, not by our works (Ephesians 2:8-9), but our works should display the reality of our salvation (James 2:17-18). Genuine saving faith will always produce works; a faith that is perpetually without works is no faith at all and saves no one.

In addition to these confirmations, we need to remember God's promises and the reality of the war we are in. Satan is just as real as Jesus Christ, and he is a formidable enemy of our souls. When we turn to Christ, Satan will look for every opportunity to deceive and defeat us. He will try to convince us that we are unworthy failures or that God has given up on us. When we are in Christ, we have the assurance that we are kept by Him. Jesus Himself prayed for us in John 17:11 that the Father would "protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one." Again in verse 15, He prayed, "keep them from the evil one."

In John 10:27-29, Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand." If you hear and obey the voice of Jesus, then you are one of His sheep, and He will never let you go. Jesus gave a wonderful word picture here of Christians securely held within His loving hands and the Father's almighty hands wrapping themselves around His, giving us a double assurance of eternal security. GotQuestions.org

Other Resources from Gotquestions.org:

- [If you doubt your salvation, does that mean you are not truly saved?](#)
- [What if I don't feel saved?](#)
- [How can I detect a false conversion?](#)

**HELPING PEOPLE HAVE
THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION
John Piper**

FULL ASSURANCE IS GOD'S WILL FOR US.

"And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end." Hebrews 6:11

ASSURANCE IS PARTIALLY SUSTAINED BY OBJECTIVE EVIDENCES FOR CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

"To [his apostles] He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days." Acts 1:3

ASSURANCE CANNOT NEGLECT THE PAINFUL WORK OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you - unless indeed you fail the test?" 2 Corinthians 13:5

ASSURANCE WILL DIMINISH IN THE PRESENCE OF CONCEALED SIN.

"When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long." Psalm 32:3

ASSURANCE COMES FROM HEARING THE WORD OF CHRIST.

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Romans 10:17

"These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." John 20:31

REPEATED FOCUSING ON THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS CRUCIAL FOR ASSURANCE

"Since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith." Hebrews 10:21-22

WE MUST PRAY FOR EYES TO SEE THE TRUTHS THAT SUSTAIN ASSURANCE.

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." Ephesians 1:18-19

ASSURANCE IS NOT EASILY MAINTAINED IN PERSONAL ISOLATION.

"And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.'" 1 Corinthians 12:21

ASSURANCE IS NOT DESTROYED BY GOD'S DISPLEASURE AND DISCIPLINE.

"Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, the LORD is a light for me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me out to the light, and I will see His righteousness." Micah 7:8-9

WE MUST OFTEN WAIT PATIENTLY FOR THE RETURN OF ASSURANCE.

"I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear and will trust in the LORD." Psalm 40:1-3

ASSURANCE IS A FIGHT TO THE DAY WE DIE.

"Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life." 1 Timothy 6:12

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7

ASSURANCE IS FINALLY A GIFT OF THE SPIRIT.

"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God." Romans 8:16

"The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself... And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." 1 John 5:10-11

Longing for your assurance,

Pastor John ([Source](#))

Assurance - Gerald L. Borchert

In the midst of a world filled with uneasiness and insecurity, assurance of a person's security in God is one of the hallmarks of the authentic Christian life. Such assurance is not based on human resources, abilities, or ingenuity, but on confidence in the caring power of God for believers.

Such divine concern in the life of an individual or a community of faith is not to be likened to some superficial good luck charm or magical incantation that protects a person against the traumas and tragedies of human existence. Instead, assurance in God provides an anchor of confidence and hope (Hebrews 6:18) in the midst of pain and sorrow, because the believer has learned the secret of casting all worries and cares on God, who is genuinely concerned for people (1 Peter 5:7).

Assurance can be linked to faith and faithfulness (Hebrews 10:22), because it is one of the ways that the biblical writers describe an authentic relationship with God. While reliance on God is accompanied by the confidence that God is intimately involved in the lives of believers (1 John 5:14), faith in God does not earn a sense of security or assurance. Moreover, it cannot be achieved by attendance at church, by works of kindness, or by ecclesiastical pardon. The foundation for the assurance of one's salvation or well-being with God is rooted in a divine gift. God is the provider of salvation in Jesus Christ (John 3:16 ; 2Col 5:18-19). Moreover, it is God who will bring to completion this divine gift (Philippians 1:6). It is this assurance that God continues to work in the lives of believers that is the basis for the Christian doctrine of perseverance—endurance or continuing response to God's leading (Ephesians 6:18 ; Hebrews 12:1 ; James 1:25). Assurance and perseverance are two sides of the same message.

Assurance of a relationship with God in Christ is the way believers express the mysterious connection between the infinite nature of God and the fallible nature of humanity. Life with God (whether in ancient Israel or in Christianity) is a dynamic reality, not some chess game in which God moves all the pawns and kings without reference to human response (note the amazing conditional statement in Jeremiah 18:7-10). Resisting temptation (with divine help cf. Matthew 6:13 ; 1 John 5:14) is a key to sense of security in God (cf. 1Col 10:13; James 4:7). Evil and the devil are not some toys with which believers can play (1 Peter 5:8-9).

But believers are not left to their own resources. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers is a guarantee or assurance that God is at work in believers' lives (2Col 1:22; 5:5). It is through the Spirit that believers know the reality of God's presence in their lives (1 John 4:13). Forces external to them will never be able to separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:35-39); no power (symbolized by robber or wolf) is able to steal believers (symbolized by sheep) out of the loving arms of God's Son (John 10:28).

This sense of assurance for believers is not merely limited to the present era on earth, but the resurrection of Jesus assures Christians that they are not deluded in their expectation of a future hope with their Lord (1 Corinthians 15:17-20). The resurrection of Jesus is the powerful guarantee that Christian preaching and faith are not in vain (v. 14). The Holy Spirit's presence provides assurance that Christians will receive their promised inheritance with God (Ephesians 1:14). ([BED](#))

Jerry Bridges - WITH NO UNCERTAINTY

Be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure. (2 PETER 1:10)

Life is filled with uncertainties, some major, some minor. But whether the issue is significant or trivial—waiting for the results of a cancer biopsy or wondering if you'll make your connecting flight—no one likes uncertainty.

"How may we attain a right relationship with God?" is the most important question we can ever ask. That being true, it follows that uncertainty over whether that relationship is real has to be the greatest uncertainty of all. If a cancer biopsy rates an eight or nine on our stress scale, this question has to be off the chart.

God, however, doesn't want us to be uncertain about it. As the apostle John said, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). God wants us to know we have eternal life. To some people the claim to know such a thing sounds presumptuous and arrogant. But if God wants us to know it, we're only laying hold of what pleases Him when we affirm our assurance of eternal life.

How then can I know that I have eternal life—that I've indeed come into a right relationship with God? The Scriptures show us three means by which God assures us that we do have eternal life: (1) the promises of His Word, (2) the witness of the Spirit in our hearts, and (3) the transforming work of the Spirit in our lives.

The unsearchable riches of Christ are a treasure trove of blessings given to us. Part of that treasure is the assurance God gives that we do have eternal life. Don't stop short of availing yourself of His riches until you have that assurance.

Horatius Bonar - ETERNAL LIFE IN BELIEVING

'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.'—1 JOHN 5:13.

IT is the beloved disciple who here writes to us, expressing his own mind and that of the Holy Ghost; he who of all the disciples had been nearest to the Master, and known both the love and the life that were in Him; he who said, 'In Him was life, and the life was the light of men,'—it is he who writes to us these words of grace. Let us listen to him. We shall find in what he says little about himself, but much about the Master. With Him Christ is all and in all.

I. To whom he writes.—'To them that believe on the name of the Son of God.'

This is their special mark or character; that by which the Holy Spirit distinguishes them, and by which He would have them know themselves. They are not singled out as better or worthier than others; they were part of that world which lieth in wickedness. But they believed in the name of the Son of God, and this made them what they became. They have nothing to say for themselves but this, 'We believed in the name of the Son of God;' or, as John puts it elsewhere, 'We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.' God's description of a Christian is just 'He is one who believes on the name of His Son.' How simple and comforting! How this brushes aside the metaphysical and unbelieving perplexities with which many souls surround themselves; dwelling on marks and evidences innumerable, instead of at once taking themselves the comfort of knowing that a Christian is one who believes in the name of the Son of God! Let us mark each word. (1) 'The Son of God:' the only-begotten of the Father; the Word; the Christ; God manifest in the flesh; the Son of God. (2) 'The name:' that revealed display of this Son of God which has been given us by the testimony of the Father to the Son; not simply the words or names, but the name; the divine revelation or interpretation of the character, the person, the work of His Son. (3) 'Believe:' receive the Father's testimony as such; not man's word, but God's. Our reception of the Father's testimony to the true character of the Son;—this it is that makes us Christians. This is the divine definition or designation of a Christian man,—he believes on the name of the Son of God.

II. What he writes.—'These things have I written to you.' This refers not to the preceding verses merely, but to the whole epistle. Let us note some of the special things which embody the substance of what John writes.

- (1.) The life was manifested.—It came out, and it came down to us. It was not hidden or mysterious.
- (2.) The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.—Both in his gospel and in his epistle he bears witness of the blood,—the cleansing blood.
- (3.) Confession and forgiveness.—The sinner says, 'I have sinned;' God says, 'I freely pardon.'
- (4.) The love of God.—He laid down His life for us. Herein is love! Love in coming and in dying. God is love.
- (5.) Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.—The message is that Jesus is the Christ; and that he who believeth it becomes a son.
- (6.) This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life.—A record or testimony from God is proclaimed to us. It is a testimony concerning life, and concerning Him in whom it is.

These are some of the things concerning which John here speaks. They are all of them most good and true. They suit us, and they are meant for us. They are the fountainhead of blessing, the wells of living water, at which we stand and drink. They carry us back to the closing chapters of John's gospel, and specially to that verse, 'These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name' (John 20:31).

III. Why he writes.—His purpose in writing is thus stated: 'That ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.' It is a twofold object that he has in view in writing.

- (1.) That they might know that they had eternal life.—To have a thing, and to know that we have it, are not always the same thing. I may have a thing, and yet I may be unconscious or incredulous of possessing it. John writes these blessed words of truth that we may know that we have life in believing on the name of the Son of God. He thus rebukes and condemns those who say, I believe on the name of the Son of God, yet I don't know whether I have life. He tells us that they who believe have the life, and ought to be satisfied of this, and not to remain uncertain. It is as if he were speaking to some and saying, 'You do not know your privileges: you say you believe, yet you are still hesitating as to whether any consequences flow to you from that believing; you are still as uncertain as to your being in possession of eternal life as if you had never believed at all.' He writes to remove all doubt and darkness and distrust. The things which he writes are such, that, as soon as believed, they ought to assure us that we are heirs of life eternal.

(2.) That they might believe on the name of the Son of God.—That is, that they might go on in this their faith, continuing as they had begun; not resting on a past faith, but increasing more and more in this belief. Often in the gospels we read that ‘His disciples believed on Him,’ though they had believed already. What Jesus did or spoke increased and strengthened faith. So is it here. John’s object in what he writes is to give us a new impulse in believing; for, just as we need continual breathing and feeding, so we need continual believing. The air we breathe and the food we eat must be pure and wholesome, so must the doctrine be on which our faith is nourished. Do we seek continuance of faith, increase of faith? Read and re-read what John has written. Thus faith comes; and thus it waxes stronger and stronger.

Alan Redpath - On July 2, 1937, aviatrix Amelia Earhart and her flight companion, Lieutenant Commander Fred Noonan, vanished in the vicinity of Howland Island in the South Pacific. They were attempting a round-the-world flight in a twin-engine Lockheed aircraft. In her last radio contact with a United States naval vessel, Miss Earhart transmitted this terse message: “Position doubtful.” She undoubtedly knew her approximate position, but because she didn’t know her precise position she and her flight companion went to their deaths.

A man once came to D. L. Moody and said he was worried because he didn’t feel saved. Moody asked, “Was Noah safe in the ark?” “Certainly he was,” the man replied. “Well, what made him safe, his feeling or the ark?” The inquirer got the point. “How foolish I’ve been,” he said. “It is not my feeling; it is Christ who saves.”

One day a friend who was filled with doubt and spiritual perplexity asked the Scottish preacher McLeod Campbell, “Pastor, you always seem to have peace of soul. Tell me, how can you feel that you’ve got such a tight hold on God?” With a smile Campbell exclaimed, “I don’t always feel that I have hold of Him, but praise the Lord, I know that He always has hold of me.”

A little boy was being tempted by the Devil when the boy was in bed. He was getting nowhere with the temptations the Devil was bringing. Then he finally opened his Bible to 1 John 5:13, put it under his bed, and said to the Devil, “Here, you read it for yourself.”

Remember Whose You Are - Frank Ray

1 John 5:13 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.

John the beloved disciple was responsible for penning at least three books of the New Testament—the Gospel of John, the 1, 2, and 3 epistles of John and the book of Revelation. John met the Lord at the age of twenty-five. Now he is around ninety-five years of age. He has experience under his belt. He is an old man but he is equipped to get the story out.

The first epistle of John is a specific book just for folk that are born again. It’s a book written for saved, sanctified, baptized, and filled with the Holy Ghost people. It is a book for the Saints. He wants his saints reassured concerning who they are and whose they are. The devil will try to convince you that you aren’t saved. He wants you to believe that you don’t have a thing. You need to have repeated reassurance of who you are and whose you are.

So there is a word used over thirty times in the epistles of John and that is the word know. That ye may know that ye have eternal life. You see if you can have Jesus and not know, then you just might lose him and not miss him. So I don’t want to guess about my salvation; I don’t want to hope I’m saved, or think I’m saved, or hope one day I will be saved. No, I need to know about that, because life is too precious for me to spend all that time wondering and not knowing until I get to the gate. Then it’s too late.

I need to know I’m saved while I’m down here. There are too many fringe benefits for me to miss this while I’m here. I’m not saved just to go to Heaven; I’ve got some fringe benefits just by being saved. I have a closer walk with Him. So He places the key in the middle of the book to share with us the purpose of writing this book. He wrote the book for our assurance of eternal life through Jesus.

The Written Promise - [From Generation to Generation: Devotional Thoughts](#)

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”—1 John 5:13

A man once told H. A. Ironside, “I won’t go a foot further until I know I am saved, or else know it is hopeless to seek to be sure of it.”

Ironside asked the man if a happy feeling or the voice of an angel would give him the needed assurance. The man initially said yes. Ironside answered, “What if the devil gave you that happy feeling or transformed himself into an angel? Then on your deathbed Satan visited you and said ‘I gave you that happy feeling. I was that angel. You are lost forever.’ ”

The man agreed that an inner feeling or the voice of an angel would not give him assurance of eternal life.

Ironside went on, "God has given us something better than happy feelings, something more dependable than the voice of an angel. He has given His Son to die for your sins, and He has testified in His own unaltered Word that if you trust in Him all your sins are gone. Do you believe on the name of the Son of God?"

"I do, sir, I do indeed! I know He is the Son of God, and I know He died for me." That night the man had full assurance of eternal life.

God's promise is not found in feelings or miraculous visions. It is found in the Bible. Today give thanks that not only did Jesus die to give you eternal life, but He gave you the Bible so you will forever have that assurance.

"Jesus and I shall never part for God is greater than my heart."—Nathan Cole

Safe to the End

I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

Eternal or Temporary?

Most of the time you never question it, but every once in awhile you have a nagging suspicion that maybe you just think you're saved. Is salvation a game of Russian roulette with eternal consequences?

First of all, God doesn't want you to have to play a guessing game for the rest of your life. Evidently, early Christians struggled with the same questions, so John tried to answer their fears and nagging doubts about salvation. "The one who has the Son has life," wrote the apostle (1 John 5:12).

In His Hands

Second, Jesus didn't come to give you week long life; He came to give you eternal life. If it could be taken from you, it wouldn't be eternal, would it? Third, if the status of your salvation was based on your performance, none of us could ever be sure. But just as you were saved by grace, you are kept safe by grace. Your security does not depend on you!

Consider this: All of your sins were in the future when Jesus gave His life at Calvary. So if you've got Jesus, you've got all the life you'll ever need! You are secure in His hands. He will never leave you or forsake you (see Heb. 13:5). You can rest knowing that you're His.

Bottom Line

Your heavenly Father will never disown you. If you struggle to believe that, ask Him to increase your faith. He wants you to rest secure in Him.

Lee Strobel - SPIRITUAL CONFIDENCE (see [Today's Moment of Truth: Devotions to Deepen Your Faith](#))

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 JOHN 5:13

MANY PEOPLE SIMPLY GUESS WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR STANDING before God and their prospects of getting into heaven. They figure that as long as they're living a more-or-less moral life, observing a few religious practices, and doing better than the next person, then God will give them a pass into paradise after they die—or at least they hope he will.

Hope is the operative word in their calculations—because they don't really have an objective basis for their assumptions or any way of measuring whether they're really right with God. That hope erodes, though, in moments of personal awareness when they realize they're not all that moral after all, at least when it comes to their true thoughts, desires, motives, and intents—let alone their inconsistent outward actions. When this track record is mixed with an understanding of what Jesus taught about the performance level necessary to pass God's bar of entry, namely perfection (Matthew 5:48), then despair often sets in.

Hopelessness, ironically, is a more honest emotion than hope, given the reality of the situation. The truth is that if we were left to fend for ourselves before an unwaveringly holy God based on our own spiritual performances, all we'd be left with is despair.

We should be thankful we don't have to fend for ourselves or bank on our own spotty spiritual performance. Instead, if we confess our sins and turn to God to receive his forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9), then "we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One" (1 John 2:1). And because of Christ in our lives, we can know that "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John 5:11).

Once we're clear that we have asked Jesus for his forgiveness and leadership, this next confidence-building verse applies to us: "I

write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13, emphasis mine).

Christianity was never meant to be a "hope-so" faith; it is a "know-so" faith that's based on what Jesus, our Advocate, has done for us.

Truth for Today - God wants us to have spiritual confidence both for today and for eternity, but it must be grounded in a right relationship with Jesus. "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12).

1 JOHN 5:13 READ: John 10:22-30

A NEW Christian confided to another believer that he was doubting his salvation. "Yesterday I was filled with joy, and I thought I would never be in the dark again. But now it's all gone, and I'm in the depths. What's the matter with me?"

"Have you ever passed through a tunnel?" asked his friend.

"Sure," said the new believer.

"When you were in the tunnel, did you think the sun had been blotted out of the sky?"

"No, I knew it was there even though I couldn't see it." "Were you distressed when you were in the tunnel?" "No, I knew I'd soon be out in the light again."

"And did you get out?"

"Of course!" replied the new Christian. Then he paused as the truth dawned on him. "I see what you mean. God's promises remain the same no matter how I feel about myself. I should trust God, not my feelings!"

Emotions change. The tides of enthusiasm are often controlled by daily happenings. But based on what Christ has done and what the Bible says, we can have a settled assurance about our relationship with God. Tunnels are only temporary! —PRV (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Thank You, Lord, for the confidence I can have that Your glory still shines even when I can't see it. May this knowledge motivate me to keep moving toward You.

Taking God At His Word -

Many true believers in Christ are plagued with doubt about their salvation. Even though they have come in repentance and faith to Jesus as their Savior, they still wonder, "Will I really go to heaven?"

My late husband Bill often told about something that happened to him when he was 2 years old. One day he disobediently wandered from home and got lost. When his parents realized that he was missing, they went out searching for him. Finally, to everyone's immense relief, they spotted their tearful boy and carried him safely home.

Days later, Billy overheard his mother relate this incident to a visitor. When she reached the part where they went out searching for him, Billy began to relive the story. "Mommy, Mommy!" he sobbed. "Did you ever find me?" Surprised and deeply touched by his doubt, she embraced him and said, "Of course, my child! Don't you remember that happy moment? See, you're with us now, and we'll make sure that you always are." That comforted Billy, because he took her at her word.

The New Testament letter of 1 John was written to give believers the assurance of salvation. That assurance can be yours as you take God at His word. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For Further Study

Is it possible to be sure your sins are forgiven?

Read [The Assurance Of Salvation](#)

Christ's work makes us safe; God's Word makes us sure.

That You May Know

One day, while Wim was in the marketplace in the Netherlands, he struck up a conversation with a woman who remarked that you

can get to heaven by doing good works.

His attempt to explain that it is by God's grace that we are "saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8) brought a smile as the woman repeated confidently: "and ... by doing good works." Then another woman volunteered, "You can hope you'll go to heaven, but you can't be sure." Wim's assertion that he did know for sure was met with a muttered, "Nobody knows for sure."

Wim then showed the woman what 1 John 5:11-13 says. He explained: "See, it doesn't say hope there, it says know." Unconvinced, she said, "Like you, my pastor says that we have to have faith, but you really never know whether you've been good enough. You may think you have, but who can be sure?"

To some, Wim's confidence may seem incredible. But he based his words on this statement: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works" (Eph. 2:8-9).

It's true. We can't be good enough. We can never do enough good things. But we can be sure of heaven if we simply believe on the Lord (Acts 16:31). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We cannot earn our way to heaven
By word or work or worth;
But if we trust in Christ to save us,
Then we'll enjoy new birth.
—Branon

We are saved by God's mercy, not by our merit—by Christ's dying, not by our doing.

Taking God At His Word

These things I have written to you who believe ... , that you may know that you have eternal life. —1 John 5:13

Sadly, many true Christians are plagued with doubt about their salvation. Even though they have come in repentance and faith to Jesus as their Savior, they still wonder, "Am I really saved?"

My late husband Bill often told about something that happened to him when he was 2 years old. One day he disobediently strayed from home and got lost. When his parents realized that he was missing, they went out searching for him. Finally, to everyone's immense relief, they spotted their tearful boy and carried him safely home.

Days later, Billy overheard his mother relate this incident to a visitor. When she reached the part where they went out searching for him, Billy began to relive the story. "Mommy, Mommy!" he sobbed. "Did you ever find me?" Surprised and deeply touched by his doubt, she embraced him and said, "Of course, my child! Don't you remember that happy moment? See, you're with us now, and we'll make sure that you always are." That settled it for Billy. He simply believed her word.

The New Testament letter of 1 John was written to give believers the assurance of salvation. That assurance can be yours as you take God at His word. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

He who gave Himself to save me,
Now will keep me to the end;
In His care securely resting,
On His promise I depend.
-- H G Bosch

Christ's work makes us safe; God's Word makes us sure.

A Know-So Salvation

I have written to you who believe in ... the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. —1 John 5:13

Many Christians lack the joy and assurance of their salvation because they will not take God at His word. They do not accept at face value what He says, but rely on their personal feelings instead of on the Scriptures.

Bible teacher H. A. Ironside related a personal experience that helps us understand the importance of believing the Word of God.

After he had read to a woman some passages about trusting Christ, she said, "Well, I am trying to believe."

"Trying to believe whom?" asked Ironside. "It is God who has spoken in His Word. Are you saying you're trying to believe Him?"

Immediately she saw the light and exclaimed, "Oh, I didn't realize what I was saying. Yes, I do believe what God has declared." At last her heart found rest.

If you have placed your trust in the Lord Jesus, stop worrying about your salvation. God has done His part. Believe what the Bible says, and claim as your very own the new life that has been given you through faith in Christ. John 1:12 promises, "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." Take God at His word. Then you too will have a know-so salvation. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.
--Crosby

The blood of Christ makes us safe; the Word of God makes us sure.

Adrian Rogers - 1 John 5:13

One basic thing all Christians should know beyond the shadow of any doubt is that they are saved—that all of their sins are forgiven and buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness, that Jesus Christ has come to live in them, and that they are bound for heaven, either when they die or the Lord returns.

It is much better to be a shouting Christian than a doubting Christian. We ought not to walk around like a question mark with our heads bent over, but like an exclamation point! We should not be saying, "I hope I'm saved," but "I know I'm saved!"

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. 1John 5:13

When George B. McClellan was commissioned Major General of the Army, he wrote his wife, "I don't feel any different than I did yesterday. Indeed, I have not yet put on my new uniform. I am sure, however, that I am in command of the Union Army because President Lincoln's order to that effect now lies before me."

Accepting the authoritative word of his Commander in Chief, McClellan was confident of his position. Similarly, all who receive Jesus Christ as Savior can completely trust God's Word, the Bible, which says that we are "justified by faith" (Ro 5:1) and have "passed from death to life" (1 John 3:14). Our assurance of salvation is based on facts, not feelings.—H. G. B. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

WHEN A MAN IS IN CHRIST, HE IS SAFE; ALL THE DEVIL CAN DO IS WORRY HIM.

Robert Neighbour - 1 John 5:13

John's Gospel was written that we might know Christ, and be saved thereby.
John's Epistle was written that those who are saved might know their salvation.
John's Gospel is summed up in one word — "To know Him is to believe Him."
John's Epistle is summed up in one word — "To believe Him is to know you are His."

Matthew Henry - 1 John 5:13

Upon all evidence for the gospel, it is but right that we believe on the name of the Son of God. Believers have eternal life in the covenant of the gospel. Then let us thankfully receive the record of Scripture. We must always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain. The Lord Christ invites us to come to him in all circumstances, with our supplications and requests, notwithstanding the sin that besets us. Our prayers must always be offered in submission to the will of God. In some things they are speedily answered; in others they are granted in the best manner, though not as requested. We ought to pray for others, as well as for ourselves. There are sins that war against spiritual life in the soul, and the life above. We cannot pray that the sins of the

impenitent and unbelieving should, while they are such, be forgiven them; or that mercy, which supposes the forgiveness of sins, should be granted to them, while they willfully continue such. But we may pray for their repentance, for their being enriched with faith in Christ, and thereupon for all other saving mercies. We should pray for others, as well as for ourselves, beseeching the Lord to pardon and recover the fallen, as well as to relieve the tempted and afflicted. And let us be truly thankful that no sin, of which any one truly repents, is unto death

How Do You Know? - James Scudder

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. 1 John 5:13

How do you know for sure that you are saved? That's a big question that I've been asked many times over the years. I believe it is the single most important question that a person can ever ask. Why? Because the answer determines where you spend the rest of eternity.

Despite what theologians may tell you, the answer is really quite simple. Let me quote the Apostle Paul's answer to the Philippian jailer. He said, "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16:31)

That's all it takes. The moment you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior, God gives you His free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9) of eternal life. You now become part of God's family. As His child, you are safe in His hand, (John 10:28) and have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside you forever. (Ephesians 4:30).

Some will insist that a turning away from sin is necessary for Heaven. Yet, that would be a good work and would undermine the free grace of God. Others will say that if you fall away from the Lord, you cannot be saved or you were never saved. Again, you would be depending on your works.

1 John 5:13 says that God has given us the truth of the Gospel so that we can have complete and full assurance of our salvation.

Once you accept the shed blood of Christ on Calvary, you can be sure you are saved and on your way to Heaven.

Salvation is all the work of Christ, not in even the smallest way dependent on our own goodness

Already Settled

I love watching soccer, and I am a fan of the Liverpool Football Club in England's Premier League. When the Reds are playing, it is an anxiety-filled experience for me. Because one goal or one misplay can change the game's outcome, I feel a constant tension as I watch. That is part of what makes the games enjoyable. Recently, though, I saw a tape-delayed replay of one of Liverpool's games. I was surprised how much calmer I felt seeing the replay. Why? Because I already knew the outcome, and as a result I was able to relax and enjoy the action.

Life is often like observing live sporting events. There are shocks and surprises, frustrations and fears, because we are unsure of the outcome. Followers of Christ can draw comfort, however, from the fact that though many of life's situations are uncertain, our eternal outcome is settled by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

The apostle John wrote, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). Life may present us with surprises along the way, but because of Christ's work we can have peace. He has already settled our eternal outcome. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Faith looks beyond this transient life
With hope for all eternity—
Not with some vague and wistful hope,
But with firm trust and certainty.
—D. DeHaan

Peace rules the day when Christ rules the heart.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION - After John Wesley had been preaching for some time, some one said to him, "Are you sure, Mr. Wesley, of your salvation?" "Well," he answered, "Jesus Christ died for the whole world." "Yes, we all believe that; but are you sure that you are saved?" Wesley replied that he was sure that provision had been made for his salvation.

"But are you sure, Wesley, that you are saved?" It went like an arrow to his heart, and he had no rest or power until that question was settled. Many men and many women go on month after month, and year after year, without power, because they do not know their standing in Christ; they are not sure of their own footing for eternity. Latimer wrote Ridley once that when he was settled and steadfast about his own salvation he was as bold as a lion, but if that hope became eclipsed he was fearful and afraid and was disqualified for service. Many are disqualified for service because they are continually doubting their own salvation. - Moody's Anecdotes, pp. 101-102.

There are four basic categories:

- 1) Those who think they are saved, but aren't. Mt 7:21-3
- 2) Those we think are saved, but aren't. 1Jn 2:18-19
- 3) Those who are saved, but don't act like it: Corinthians.
- 4) Those who are saved, and they act like it.

Bill Hybels - Sometime when you're in an airport, observe the difference between passengers who hold confirmed tickets and those who are on standby. The ones with confirmed tickets read newspapers, chat with their friends or sleep. The ones on standby hang around the ticket counter, pace and smoke, smoke and pace. The difference is caused by the confidence factor. If you knew that in fifteen minutes you would have to stand in judgment before the Holy God and learn your eternal destiny, what would your reaction be? Would you smoke and pace? Would you say to yourself, "I don't know what God's going to say--will it be 'Welcome home, child,' or will it be 'Depart from me; I never knew you'?" - Too Busy Not To Pray, IVP, p. 113.

H. A. Ironside - An elderly man said to H. A. Ironside, "I will not go on unless I know I'm saved, or else know it's hopeless to seek to be sure of it. I want a definite witness, something I can't be mistaken about!" Ironside replied, "Suppose you had a vision of an angel who told you your sins were forgiven. Would that be enough to rest on?" "Yes, I think it would. An angel should be right." Ironside continued, "But suppose on your deathbed Satan came and said, 'I was that angel, transformed to deceive you.' What would you say?" The man was speechless. Ironside then told him that God has given us something more dependable than the voice of an angel. He has given His Son, who died for our sins, and He has testified in His own Word that if we trust Him all our sins are gone. Ironside read 1John 5:13, "You may know that you have eternal life." Then he said, "Is that not enough to rest on? It is a letter from heaven expressly to you." God's Spirit used that to bring assurance to the man's heart.

Source Unknown - Regarding salvation and assurance, there are three groups of people: (1) those who are secure but not sure; (2) those who are "sure" but not secure; and (3) those who are secure and sure. Category one are conscientious believers in Christ who are saved but lack assurance. In category two are professing Christians who say, "Even though I'm living in sin, I'll make it. After all, 'once saved, always saved!'" The third group are born-again believers who enjoy a warm, secure relationship with Christ each day. The objective basis of our salvation is the finished work of God's Son on the cross. The subjective basis for our assurance is our believing the truth about Christ (I John 2:2,4; 2:15; 5:1), loving the brethren (I John 3:14, 18, 19, 4:7-8), and obeying Christ's commandments (I John 2:3-5).

C H Spurgeon - Helps to full assurance (Full sermon [Full Assurance](#))

'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.' 1 John 5:13

To unbelievers this text is not written: it is for all who trust in Jesus, but it is for none besides. If you enquire why it is not addressed to unbelievers, I answer, simply because it would be preposterous to wish men to be assured of that which is not true. John never wished that a man who had not believed in Jesus Christ should even think that he had eternal life, for it would be a fatal error. 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life'; how, then, could he have an assurance of possessing it? Faith is a necessary preliminary to assurance; you must have the blade of faith before you can have the ripe corn of assurance. Dear friends, do not dream of being sure that you are saved apart from making sure that you have trusted yourselves with the crucified Saviour. The atonement presented by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gives assurance of salvation to all who trust in it, but to none besides. It would be taking things out of their due order, and it would be doing you real and perhaps fatal mischief if we should lead you to presume that you have eternal life before you have unreservedly believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. '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.' I speak, therefore, to all of you who have come to Christ, however imperfect and undeveloped your spiritual life may as yet be, but I invite none beside to the banquet of joyous confidence. As with a drawn sword of fire, John's words guard the way like the cherub at the gate of Paradise: his words, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God', keep back every man who has not

believed in Jesus from dreaming that he has eternal life.

The Possession of Eternal Life 1 John 5:13 - Archie Edwards

Four things are to be observed in this verse:

1. The gift of eternal life belongs to everyone who believes in Christ. "That ye may know that ye have eternal life."
 2. The verse reveals how this assurance of eternal life may be gained. "These things have I written ... that ye may know ..."
 3. The gift that the Father bestows upon the believer in Christ is an eternal one—"eternal life."
 4. This verse plainly implies that one may be a believer, may have eternal life, and yet not know that he has this eternal life. That is to say, he may be truly saved and, at the same time, entertain doubts about his salvation.
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C H Spurgeon - The blessing of full assurance (Full sermon [The Blessing of Full Assurance](#))

'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.' 1 John 5:13

According to the Authorized text, though not according to the Revised Version, John desired the increase and confirmation of their faith. He says, 'that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.' John wrote to those who believed, that they might believe in a more emphatic sense. As our Saviour has come not only that we may have life, but that we may 'have it more abundantly', so does John write, that having faith we may have more of it. Come, beloved, listen for a moment to this! You have the milk of faith, but God wills that you should have this cream of assurance! He would increase your faith. May you believe more extensively. Perhaps you do not believe all the truth, because you have not yet perceived it. There were members of the Corinthian church who had not believed in the resurrection of the dead, and there were Galatians who were very cloudy upon justification by faith. Many a Christian man is narrow in the range of his faith from ignorance of the Lord's mind. Like certain tribes of Israel, they have conquered a scanty territory as yet, though all the land is theirs from Dan to Beersheba. John would have us push out our fences and increase the enclosure of our faith. Let us believe all that God has revealed, for every truth is precious and practically useful. Perhaps your doctrinal belief has been poor and thin. Oh that the Lord would turn the water into wine! Many of you live upon milk and yet your years qualify you to feed on meat. Why keep the babes' diet? You that believe are exhorted to 'go in and out, and find pasture'; range throughout the whole revelation of God.

James Smith - THE KNOWING LIFE 1 JOHN 5:13

"These things have I written unto you that believe ... that ye may know" "Know" is one of the key-words of this Epistle. Let us examine some of them.

1. How can we be sure that "we know Him?" "If we keep His commandments" (2:3, 5).
 2. A constantly growing knowledge of God, His ways, and Word, is one sign of spiritual maturity (2:13).
 3. The Holy Spirit so teaches us that "ye know all things" (2:20).
 4. "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (3:2).
 5. We are certain "we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (3:14).
 6. The Holy Spirit with us advises us as to abiding in Him (3:24; 4:13).
 7. One infallible test of knowledge (4:1-3).
 8. The consciousness that we have eternal life comes through belief in God's Word (5:13).
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1 John 5 The Assurance of Eternal Life - Hailey's Bible Handbook

"**Know**" is one of the key words of this letter.

- "We know that we have come to know" God (1 Jn 2:3).
- "We know we are in him" (1 Jn 2:5).
- "We know that when he appears, we shall be like him" (1 Jn 3:2).
- "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers" (1 Jn 3:14).
- "We know that we belong to the truth" (1 Jn 3:19).
- "We know that [God] lives in us" (1 Jn 3:24).
- "We know that we live in" God (1 Jn 4:13).
- "I write these things to you... so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 Jn 5:13).
- "We know that [God] hears us" (1 Jn 5:15).

- "We know that we are children of God" (1 Jn 5:19).

Many Christians are discouraged because they do not feel sure that they are saved. Sometimes we hear it said that if we do not know that we are saved, it is a sign that we are not saved. But it is a mistake to identify assurance with salvation. A newborn babe scarcely knows it has been born, but it has. Assurance comes with growth. We believe it is possible for a Christian's faith to get stronger and stronger, until it reaches the full assurance of knowledge.

Eternal life (1 Jn 5:13) begins when a person becomes a Christian, and it never ends. It is a life of divine quality and endless duration. Assurance of this eternal life is the object of this letter.

THE KNOWING LIFE -1 JOHN 5:13 - James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose

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1. How can we be sure that "we know Him?" "If we keep His commandments" (1 Jn 2:3, 5).
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5. We are certain "we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn 3:14).
6. The Holy Spirit with us advises us as to abiding in Him (1 Jn 3:24; 4:13).
7. One infallible test of knowledge (41 Jn :1-3).
8. The consciousness that we have eternal life comes through belief in God's Word 1 Jn (5:13).

James Smith - EVIDENCES OF SALVATION

"That ye may know that ye have" (1 John 5:13).

Those who are in the enjoyment of salvation show it—

1. By praising God for it, 1 Peter 2:9.
2. By abhorring themselves, Job 42:5, 6.
3. By delighting in prayer, Acts 9:11.
4. By thirsting for the Word of God, Psa. 19:10.
5. By seeking to please the Lord, Col. 1:10.
6. By bringing others to Him, John 1:40-42.

James Smith - ASSURANCE

"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" (1 John 5:13).

I. The Persons to be Assured. "You that believe." To believe on the Name of the Son of God in John's day was to take up the ignominy of the Cross. The object of faith is not Christianity as a system, or the Bible as a book, but the Son of God as a living, abiding Personality. It is not written, "Believe and be saved," but "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). The faith that does not take hold of Christ is a dead faith. To be assured of salvation we need more than faith in things, we need faith in HIM.

II. The Blessing to be Assured Of. "Eternal life." This is something different from, and something better than, mere eternal existence. Devils know about eternal existence, but they know nothing experimentally of eternal life. This life stands for the sum of all good, here and hereafter. As the acorn seed contains within itself, potentially, all the power and majesty of the oak, so does this life, begotten in us by the Holy Spirit, contain the fullness of joy and glory that is yet to be revealed.

III. The Blessedness of Being Assured. "Ye may know." This word "know" is a favourite one with John. In these few verses (13 to 20) he makes use of it seven times. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ and don't know that you have eternal life, "ye may know." It is not only a possibility, but it is your privilege to know. This assurance is needful for the comfort and joy of salvation. How can we thank God for the gift of eternal life, if we are not sure that we have it?

IV. The Ground of this Assurance. "These things have I written unto you ... that ye may know." Assurance does not come through any special revelation from Heaven, apart from the written Word. "He that hath the Son hath life" (v. 12). These words, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and penned by the apostle, are for you who believe, that ye may know that ye have eternal life. Not to receive this

testimony is to make God a liar, and rob your soul of this blessed confidence. A little orphan girl, happy in the knowledge of Christ as her Saviour, was asked how she knew that she was saved, said, "He says it, and that's enough for me." Is it not enough for you?

James Smith - YE MAY KNOW 1 JOHN 5:13

In this Epistle there are many things that we know. We know—

1. That our sins are forgiven, 1Jn 3:5
 2. That we have passed from death unto life, 1Jn 3:14
 3. That we are of the Truth, 1Jn 3:19
 4. That He is in us, 1Jn 4:13
 5. That we have eternal life, 1Jn 5:13
 6. That He answers prayer, 1Jn 5:15
 7. That we have a new nature, R.V., 1Jn 5:18
 8. That the whole world lieth in wickedness, 1Jn 5:19
 9. That we have this knowledge from God, 1Jn 5:20
 10. That we shall be like Him, 1Jn 3:2
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James Butler - Many years ago, I spoke at Notre Dame High School in Chicago. Notre Dame high school was the premier Catholic High school for girls in Chicago. Immediately, some of you will say, 'What's a Baptist minister doing speaking in a Catholic High School? The reason I was there was I was asked to convey to several classes what our church believed. I had a good time. The students were very attentive and asked many questions. But the question that I will never forget was not asked by a student but by the teacher who asked 'Do you really believe that you can know for sure your eternal destiny?' I answered with delight that I could, and showed her and the class from the Scriptures including our text for this sermonette that we can know we are saved and headed for heaven. Many are asking that question today. Some are asking it mockingly and critically. The teacher at Notre Dame High School asked the question seriously and with proper respect. She was not mocking, she wanted to know. The Apostle John wrote his epistle so we could know. Do you know? If not you can know, but you must first receive Christ as Savior.

Lehman Strauss - To Provide Assurance

1 John 2:3, 4, 5, 29, 1 John 3:10, 14, 19, 23, 24, 1 John 4:1–3, 7, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 1 John 5:10, 13

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. (1 John 5:13)

We have seen that the Epistle contains a number of key words and phrases which appear repeatedly throughout. Some of these are Father, fellowship, sin, little children, born, and antichrist. Another of these oft-repeated words appears in our text. It is know. About the year a.d. 70, there arose a sect which boasted a superior knowledge over that of the Christian. They called themselves "Gnostics," a term applied to anyone who claimed esoteric insight and wisdom. Such a sect would quite naturally gain many followers since there are always the gullible who are quick to follow the man who claims to know. Now, a man may claim to know something and be correct in his claim. However, whenever anyone says he knows there never was a universal flood, or that an iron axhead could not have floated on water, or that no whale or sea monster could have swallowed a man, or that Jesus Christ is not the eternal Son of God, or that Christ could not have ascended bodily into Heaven, you can put it down as an absolute and certain fact that he does not know.

The present-day Gnostic thrives in the realm of science (so-called). Science is knowledge gained from observed facts, so that the man who claims to know finally and fully about any given subject is boasting, in substance, that he has seen and heard all there is to know about that subject. The different departments of science, or knowledge, are divisible into (1) the mathematical, which treats of quantity; (2) the physical, which treats of matter and its properties; (3) the biological, which treats of life and its varied phenomena; (4) the anthropological, which treats of man; and (5) the theological, which deals with God.

In all of these branches of science, or knowledge, no man knows all that can be known. "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Corinthians 8:2). There is a theoretical knowledge which must be distinguished from the true and practical. When a man thinks he knows, but has a mere theoretical knowledge, he is inclined to become puffed up, vain, conceited, for such "knowledge puffeth up" (1 Corinthians 8:1). Too often we are more ignorant than we know, or will admit. He who boasts his knowledge is swelled up with pride. It is this self-satisfied man who feels his knowledge is complete, and he is often the first to want to impart instructions and the most reluctant to receive instruction. The Holy Spirit's use of the term "puffed up" in First Corinthians shows that Corinth had in it many Gnostics or scientists (so-called).

In the Gnostic society in the early days of the Church, there were two schools of thought that aimed their attacks, at Christianity—the Cerinthian and the Docetist. Their discussions revolved about the Person of Christ, the former contending that Jesus was merely a man, while the latter, denying the reality of Christ's manhood, taught that He was some sort of phantom or ghost. The Holy Spirit answered these false claims of Gnosticism by giving in this Epistle some glorious and eternal facts which every child of God can possess with the assurance of intuitive knowledge. This divinely-given knowledge will prove, or confirm, one's faith in Jesus Christ and in the written Word of God.

The words, know, knoweth, known, and knew, in their combined appearances total not less than thirty-nine times in this Epistle. Indeed we have here an Epistle of knowledge, divinely given, therefore true, authentic, and final. No man can boast in this knowledge since he did not discover it through logic, by use of the spade, or in the laboratory. Such knowledge does not puff up. It tends, on the other hand, to humility and holy wonder.

The Gospel according to John was written that we might believe in Jesus Christ and be saved (20:31). The purpose of the Epistle is not merely that we might possess eternal life through believing, but that we may know that we possess it. The word know in chapter 5:13 is the Greek word oida. There is a difference between ginosko and oida. Ginosko suggests progress in knowledge; oida suggests fullness of knowledge, or to know perfectly, beyond the peradventure of a doubt. Saving faith in Jesus Christ gives the believer assurance that can never be destroyed. Some people say they believe, then they qualify their faith by adding "they hope" or "they suppose."

Seven times in chapter 5 we find the assuring words, "we know." The Christian possesses a knowing faith because Christianity is a religion of certainties. The child of God can be certain about his past sins (2 Timothy 1:12), his present sufficiency (Romans 8:28), and his prospective security (2 Corinthians 5:1). This is having a knowing faith, and it grows out of a saving faith. Without faith in Christ, we cannot possess His life. Without knowing that we have that life, we cannot enjoy and live it to the full. We need to know with a knowledge that is final and certain that we have eternal life.

Saving faith is not a barren, theoretical thing to which one has given assent in the past. Notice the form of the verb "believe." The text is not addressed to those who had believed something in past time, but rather "unto you that believe," who possess a present, active faith. It is the activity of faith that is the proof of life. And to this goal the Epistle is designed to bring the true believer. If your faith has been speculative and intellectual merely, and not experiential and practical, the Epistle has nothing to say to you. It is the child of God only who is to know that he has eternal life. If you have this life, you should know that you have it. This is the repeated and clear declaration of the Word of God (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47).

That there are believers who do not have this certainty, there can be no doubt. The reasons why it is lacking are many and varied: ill health, nervous disorders, lack of plain teaching of the Bible, neglect of Bible reading and prayer, lack of fellowship with other believers. It is no virtue to be the victim of doubts and fears about the eternal destiny of one's soul. In our text (1 John 5:13), the stress is upon the experiential and intuitive knowledge that all believers possess eternal life. This verse has been called by some the key text of the entire Epistle, designed to enable the Christian to discern with assurance his eternal destiny. Have you or have you not been saved? The First Epistle of John will determine this vital question, thus we appeal to the Epistle itself. But remember, no unsaved person can qualify to know something about life while he himself is dead. Who would expect a deaf man to pass judgment upon sound? Who would expect a blind man to pass judgment on color? Who would expect a dumb man to respond to a lecture on the fine art of public speaking?

It will not be possible for us to study, in this one lesson, all those passages where the word "know," and its equivalent, appear. We have selected a few which obviously and convincingly bear upon our subject.

And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. (1 John 2:3–5)

We are continuously in possession of the experiential knowledge that we have come to know Christ if we obey His will. Intellectual attainment proves nothing. We can prove that we know Christ only as we choose to obey Him. Mere lip service unsupported by this evidence makes one a liar (2:4). Loving obedience to the teaching of Christ gives assurance that one has more than mere theoretic and speculative knowledge. It proves that he has eternal life. To know Christ is to love Him, and to love Him is to keep His commandments (John 14:15). Only as we keep His Word can we know genuinely and practically that we are in Him (1 John 2:5, 29).

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. (1 John 3:14)

Love for the brethren is an infallible test of one's salvation, a distinguishing mark of a genuine conversion. Spiritual death is man's condition by nature (Romans 5:12–17; Ephesians 2:1, 5); spiritual life is his new state in Christ (John 5:24). Hatred is common to the

former; love characterizes the latter (John 13:34–35; Romans 5:5). So long as brotherly love is wanting, that is proof conclusive that the one with hatred in his heart “abideth in death.” He “is a murderer” (compare 1 John 3:14 with Matthew 5:21). (See also 1 John 3:10, 23; 4:7, 11, 12, 20, 21.) This outstanding characteristic of love pervades the whole Epistle. It should be a surprising and shocking thing to see one Christian acting in an unbrotherly way toward another believer (Acts 7:26). Have we been transferred out of death into life? Here is a simple test by which we may know (3:19).

... And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us. (1 John 3:24)

Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. (1 John 4:13)

We will know that we have eternal life if the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and we can know He dwells in us by the mutual witness of our human spirit with Himself (Romans 8:16). If the Holy Spirit does not indwell a man, that man is not saved (Romans 8:9). Christ promised that He would send the Spirit to abide with us (John 14:16). The Apostle Paul emphasizes the fact of the Spirit’s indwelling (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19–20). But right here we are called upon to make certain we have not been deceived by some other spirit (1 John 4:1–3).

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.... (1 John 5:10)

In 1865 Dr. James Morgan said, “Not only is it our duty to seek this assurance but to cultivate it. It is liable to many dangers and interruptions, and we need to cherish it carefully.”

(Borrow [The Epistles of John : Strauss, Lehman](#) - devotional commentary)

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

D L Moody

“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.” (1 John 5:13.)

THERE are two classes who ought not to have Assurance. First: those who are in the Church, but who are not converted, having never been born of the Spirit. Second; those are not willing to do God’s will; who are not ready to take the place that God has mapped out for them, but want to fill some other place.

Some one will ask “Have all God’s people Assurance?” No; I think a good many of God’s dear people have no Assurance; but it is the privilege of every child of God to have beyond doubt a knowledge of his own salvation. No man is fit for God’s service who is filled with doubts. If a man is not sure of his own salvation, how can he help any one else into the kingdom of God? If I seem in danger of drowning and do not know whether I shall ever reach the shore, I cannot assist another. I must first get on the solid rock myself; and then I can lend my brother a helping hand. If being myself blind I were to tell another blind man how to get sight, he might reply, “First get healed yourself; and then you can tell me.” I recently met with a young man who was a Christian; but he had not attained to victory over sin. He was in terrible darkness. Such an one is not fit to work for God, because he has besetting sins; and he has not the victory over his doubts, because he has not the victory over his sins.

None will have time or heart to work for God, who are not assured as to their own salvation. They have as much as they can attend to; and being themselves burdened with doubts, they cannot help others to carry their burdens. There is no rest, joy, or peace—no liberty, nor power—where doubts and uncertainty exist.

Now it seems as if there are three wiles of Satan against which we ought to be on our guard. In the first place he moves all his kingdom to keep us away from Christ; then he devotes himself to get us into “Doubting Castle;” but if we have, in spite of him, a clear ringing witness for the Son of God, he will do all he can to blacken our characters and belie our testimony.

Some seem to think that it is presumption not to have doubts: but doubt is very dishonoring to God. If any one were to say that they had known a person for thirty years and yet doubted him, it would not be very creditable: and when we have known God for ten, twenty or thirty years does it not reflect on His veracity to doubt Him.

Could Paul and the early Christians and martyrs have gone through what they did if they had been filled with doubts, and had not known whether they were going to heaven or to perdition after they had been burned at the stake? They must have had ASSURANCE.

Mr. Spurgeon says:

"I never heard of a stork that when it met with a fir tree demurred as to its right to build its nest there; and I never heard of a coney yet that questioned whether it had a permit to run into the rock. Why, these creatures would soon perish if they were always doubting and fearing as to whether they had a right to use providential provisions.

"The stork says to himself, 'Ah, here is a fir tree:' he consults with his mate, 'Will this do for the nest in which we may rear our young?' 'Aye,' says she; and they gather the materials, and arrange them. There is never any deliberation, 'May we build here?' but they bring their sticks and make their nest.

"The wild goat on the crag does not say, 'Have I a right here?' No, he must be somewhere: and there is a crag which exactly suits him; and he springs upon it.

"Yet, though these dumb creatures know the provision of their God, the sinner does not recognize the provision of his Saviour. He quibbles and questions, 'May I?' and 'I am afraid it is not for me;' and 'I think it cannot be meant for me;' and 'I am afraid it is too good to be true.'

"And yet nobody ever said to the stork, 'Whosoever buildeth on this fir tree shall never have his nest pulled down.' No inspired word has ever said to the coney, 'Whosoever runs into this rock cleft shall never be driven out of it.'" If it had been so it would make assurance doubly sure.

"And yet here is Christ provided for sinners, just the sort of a Saviour sinners need; and the encouragement is added, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out;' 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'

Now let us come to the Word. John tells us in his Gospel what Christ did for us on earth. In his Epistle He tells us what He is doing for us in heaven as our Advocate. In his Gospel there are only two chapters in which the word "believe" does not occur. With these two exceptions, every chapter in John is "Believe! Believe!! BELIEVE!!!" He tells us in Jn 20:31, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His name. That is the purpose for which he wrote the Gospel—"that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that, believing, we might have life through His name" (John 20:31).

Turn to 1 John 5:13, he there tells us why he wrote this Epistle: "**These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.**" Notice to whom he writes it: "**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.**" There are only five short chapters in this first Epistle, and the word "**know**" occurs over forty times. It is "Know! KNOW!! KNOW!!!" The Key to it is KNOW! and all through the Epistle there rings out the refrain—"that we might know that we have eternal life."

(Know in KJV of 1 John - 1 Jn. 2:3; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 2:18; 1 Jn. 2:20; 1 Jn. 2:21; 1 Jn. 2:29; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:2; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 5:2; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:15; 1 Jn. 5:18; 1 Jn. 5:19; 1 Jn. 5:20)

I went twelve hundred miles down the Mississippi in the spring some years ago; and every evening, just as the sun went down, you might have seen men, and sometimes women, riding up to the banks of the river on either side on mules or horses, and sometimes coming on foot, for the purpose of lighting up the Government lights; and all down that mighty river there were landmarks which guided the pilots in their dangerous navigation. Now God has given us lights or landmarks to tell us whether we are His children or not; and what we need to do is to examine the tokens He has given us.

In the third chapter of John's first Epistle there are five things worth knowing.

(1) In the fifth verse we read the first: "**And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.**" (1 Jn 3:5+) Not what I have done, but what HE has done. Has He failed in His mission? Is He not able to do what He came for? Did ever any heaven-sent man fail yet? and could God's own Son fail? HE WAS MANIFESTED TO TAKE AWAY OUR SINS.

(2) Again, in the nineteenth verse, the second thing worth knowing: "**And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.**" (1 Jn 3:19+) WE KNOW that we are of the truth. And if the truth make us free, we shall be free indeed. "**If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**" (John 8:36.)

(3) The third thing worth knowing is in the fourteenth verse, "**We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.**" (1 Jn 3:14+) The natural man does not like godly people, nor does he care to be in their company. "**He that loveth not his brother abideth in death**" He has no spiritual life.

(4) The fourth thing worth knowing we find in verse twenty-four: "**And he that keepeth His commandments**

dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us. (1 Jn 3:24+) We can tell what kind of Spirit we have if we possess the Spirit of Christ—a Christ-like spirit—not the same in degree, but the same in kind. If I am meek, gentle, and forgiving; if I have a spirit filled with peace and joy; if I am long-suffering and gentle, like the Son of God—that is a test: and in that way we are to tell whether we have eternal life or not.

- **ED:** SEE RELATED STUDY - [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

(5) The fifth thing worth knowing, and the best of all, is **“Beloved, now.”** Notice the word **“Now.”** It does not say when you come to die. **“Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is”** (1 Jn 3:2+).

But some will say, “Well, I believe all that; but then I have sinned since I became a Christian.” Is there a man or a woman on the face of the earth who has not sinned since becoming a Christian? Not one! There never has been, and never will be, a soul on this earth who has not sinned, or who will not sin, at some time of their Christian experience. But God has made provision for believers’ sins. We are not to make provision for them; but God has. Bear that in mind.

Turn to 1 John 2:1+: **“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”** He is here writing to the righteous. “If any man sin, we”—John put himself in—“we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” “What an Advocate! He attends to our interests at the very best place—the throne of God. He said, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away” (John 16:7). He went away to become our High Priest, and also our Advocate. He has had some hard cases to plead; but he has never lost one: and if you entrust your immortal interests to Him, He will “present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24+).

The past sins of Christians are all forgiven as soon as they are confessed; and they are never to be mentioned. That is a question which is not to be opened up again. If our sins have been put away, that is the end of them. They are not to be remembered; and God will not mention them any more. This is very plain. Suppose I have a son who, while I am from home, does wrong. When I go home he throws his arms around my neck and says, “Papa, I did what you told me not to do. I am very sorry. Do forgive me.” I say: “Yes, my son,” and kiss him. He wipes away his tears, and goes off rejoicing.

But the next day he says: “Papa, I wish you would forgive me for the wrong I did yesterday.” I should say: “Why, my son, that thing is settled; and I don’t want it mentioned again.” “But I wish you would forgive me: it would help me to hear you say, ‘I forgive you.’ “Would that be honoring me? Would it not grieve me to have my boy doubt me? But to gratify him I say again, “I forgive you, my son.”

And if, the next day, he were again to bring up that old sin, and ask forgiveness, would not that grieve me to the heart? And so, my dear reader, if God has forgiven us, never let us mention the past. Let us forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those which are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let the sins of the past go; for **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”** (1 John 1:9+).

And let me say that this principle is recognized in courts of justice. A case came up in the courts of a country—I won’t say where—in which a man had had trouble with his wife; but he forgave her, and then afterwards brought her into court. And, when it was known that he had forgiven her, the judge said that the thing was settled. The judge recognized the soundness of the principle, that if a sin were once forgiven there was an end of it. And do you think the Judge of all the earth will forgive you and me, and open the question again? Our sins are gone for time and eternity, if God forgives; and what we have to do is to confess and forsake our sins.

Again in 2 Corinthians 13:5+: **“Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”** Now examine yourselves. Try your religion. Put it to the test. Can you forgive an enemy? That is a good way to know if you are a child of God. Can you forgive an injury, or take an affront, as Christ did? Can you be censured for doing well, and not murmur? Can you be misjudged and misrepresented, and yet keep a Christ-like spirit?

Another good test is to read Galatians 5:22-23+, and notice the fruits of the Spirit; and see if you have them. **The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”** If I have the fruits of the Spirit I must have the Spirit. I could not have the fruits without the Spirit any more than there could be an orange without the tree. And Christ says **“Ye shall know them by their fruits;”** (Mt 7:16+) **“for the tree is known by his fruits”** (Mt 12:33+) Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good. The only way to get the fruit is to have the Spirit. That is the way to examine ourselves whether we are the children of God.

Then there is another very striking passage. In Romans 8:9⁺, Paul says: **“Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”** That ought to settle the question, even though one may have gone through all the external forms that are considered necessary by some to constitute a member of a Church. Read Paul’s life, and put yours alongside of it. If your life resembles his, it is a proof that you are born again—that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus.

But although you may be born again, it will require time to become a full-grown Christian. Justification is instantaneous; but sanctification is a life-work. We are to grow in wisdom. Peter says: **“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”** (2 Pet. 3:18⁺); and in the first chapter of his Second Epistle, **“Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** (2 Pe 1:5-8⁺) So that we are to add grace to grace. A tree may be perfect in its first year of growth; but it does not attain its maturity. So with the Christian: he may be a true child of God, but not a matured Christian. The eighth of Romans is very important, and we should be very familiar with it. In the fourteenth verse the apostle says: **“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God”** (Ro 8:14⁺) Just as the soldier is led by his captain, the pupil by his teacher, or the traveler by his guide; so the Holy Spirit will be the guide of every true child of God.

Then let me call your attention to another fact. All Paul’s teaching in nearly every Epistle rings out the doctrine of assurance. He says in 2 Corinthians 5:1⁺: **“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”** He had a title to the mansions above, and he says—I know it. He was not living in uncertainty. He said: **“I have a desire to depart and be with Christ”** (Phil 1:23⁺); and if he had been uncertain he would not have said that. Then in Colossians 3:4⁺, he says: **“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”** I am told that Dr. Watts’ tombstone bears this same passage of Scripture. There is no doubt there.

Then turn to Colossians 1:12⁺: **“Giving thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”**

Three haths: “HATH made us meet;” “HATH delivered us;” and “HATH translated us.” It does not say that He is going to make us meet; that He is going to deliver; that He is going to translate.

Then again in verse 14th: **“In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins”** (Col 1:14⁺) We are either forgiven or we are not, we should not give ourselves any rest until we get into the kingdom of God; nor until we can each look up and say, **“I know that if my earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”** (2 Cor. 5:1⁺).

Look at Romans 8:32⁺: **“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”** If He gave us His Son, will He not give us the certainty that He is ours. I have heard this illustration. There was a man who owed \$10,000, and would have been made a bankrupt, but a friend came forward and paid the sum. It was found afterwards that he owed a few dollars more; but he did not for a moment entertain a doubt that, as his friend had paid the larger amount, he would also pay the smaller. And we have high warrant for saying that if God has given us His Son He will with Him also freely give us all things; and if we want to realize our salvation beyond controversy He will not leave us in darkness.

Again in the 33d verse: “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ro 8:33-39⁺)

That has the right ring in it. There is Assurance for you. “I KNOW.” Do you think that the God who has justified me will condemn me? That is quite an absurdity. God is going to save us so that neither men, angels, nor devils, can bring any charge against us or Him. He will have the work complete.

Job lived in a darker day than we do; but we read in Job 19:25: **“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth.”**

The same confidence breathes through Paul’s last words to Timothy: **“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”** (2 Ti 1:12⁺) It is not a matter of doubt, but of knowledge. “I know.” “I am persuaded.” The word “Hope,” is not used in the Scripture to express doubt. It is used in regard to the second coming of Christ, or to the

resurrection of the body. We do not say that we “hope” we are Christians. I do not say that I “hope” I am an American, or that I “hope” I am a married man. These are settled things. I may say that I “hope” to go back to my home, or I hope to attend such a meeting. I do not say that I “hope” to come to this country, for I am here. And so, if we are born of God we know it; and He will not leave us in darkness if we search the Scriptures.

Christ taught this doctrine to His seventy disciples when they returned elated with their success, saying, **‘Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name.’** (Lk 10:17+) The Lord seemed to check them, and said that He would give them something to rejoice in. “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20+.)

It is the privilege of every one of us to know, beyond a doubt, that our salvation is sure. Then we can work for others. But if we are doubtful of our own salvation, we are not fit for the service of God.

Another passage is John 5:24+: **‘Verily, verily I say unto you: He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment,’** (the new translation has it so), **‘but is passed from death unto life.’**

Some people say that you never can tell till you are before the [great white throne of Judgment](#) whether you are saved or not. Why, my dear friend, if your life is hid with Christ in God (Col 3:3+), you are not coming into judgment for your sins. We may come into judgment for reward (2 Cor 5:10+). This is clearly taught where the lord reckoned with the servant to whom five talents had been given, and who brought other five talents saying, **‘Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.’** (Mt. 25:20, 21.) We shall be judged for our stewardship (cf 2 Jn 1:8, Rev 22:12+, Mt 6:19-21+, Jn 15:8). That is one thing; but salvation—eternal life—is another.

Will God demand payment twice of the debt which Christ has paid for us? If Christ bear my sins in His own body on the tree, am I to answer for them as well?

Isaiah tells us that, **‘He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with His stripes we are healed.’** (Isaiah 53:5+) In Romans 4:25+, we read: He **‘was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.’** Let us believe, and get the benefit of His finished work.

Then again in John 10:9: **‘I am the door: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.’** That is the promise. Then the 27th verse, **‘My sheep hear my voice; and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father which gave them is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.’** (Jn 10:27) Think of that! The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are pledged to keep us. You see that it is not only the Father, not only the Son, but the three persons of the [Triune God](#).

Now, a great many people want some token outside of God’s word. That habit always brings doubt. If I made a promise to meet a man at a certain hour and place to-morrow, and he were to ask me for my watch as a token of my sincerity, it would be a slur on my truthfulness. We must not question what God has said: He has made statement after statement, and multiplied figure upon figure. Christ says: “I am the door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.” “I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.” “I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (Jn 8:12) “I am the truth;” (Jn 14:6) receive Me, and you will have the truth; for I am the embodiment of truth. Do you want to know the way? “I am the way;” (Jn 14:6) follow Me, and I will lead you into the kingdom. Are you hungering after righteousness? “I am the Bread of life;” (Jn 6:35, 48) if you eat of Me you shall never hunger. “I am the Water of life;” (Rev 22:17+) if you drink of this water it shall be within you “a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” (Jn 7:38) “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.” (John 11:25, 26.)

Let me remind you where our doubts come from.

A good many of God’s dear people never get beyond knowing themselves servants. He calls us “friends.” If you go into a house you will soon see the difference between the servant and the son. The son walks at perfect liberty all over the house; he is at home. But the servant takes a subordinate place. What we want is to get beyond servants. We ought to realize our standing with God as sons and daughters. He will not “un-child” His children. God has not only adopted us, but we are His by birth: we have been born into His kingdom. My little boy was as much mine when he was a day old as now that he is fourteen. He was my son; although it did not appear what he would be when he attained manhood. He is mine; although he may have to undergo probation under tutors and governors. The children of God are not perfect; but we are perfectly His children.

Another origin of doubts is looking at ourselves. If you want to be wretched and miserable, filled with doubts from morning till night, look at yourselves. **‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee’** (Isa. 26:3) Many of God’s dear

children are robbed of joy because they keep looking at themselves.

Some one has said: "There are three ways to look. If you want to be wretched, look within; if you wish to be distracted, look around; but if you would have peace, look up." Peter looked away from Christ, and he immediately began to sink. The Master said to him: "**O thou of little faith! Wherefore didst thou doubt?**" (Mt. 14:31.) He had God's eternal word, which was sure footing, and better than either marble, granite or iron; but the moment he took his eyes off Christ down he went. Those who look around cannot see how unstable and dishonoring is their walk. We want to look straight at the "**Author and Finisher of our faith.**" (Heb 12:2+)

When I was a boy I could only make a straight track in the snow, by keeping my eyes fixed upon a tree or some object before me. The moment I took my eye off the mark set in front of me, I walked crooked. It is only when we look fixedly on Christ that we find perfect peace. After He rose from the dead He showed His disciples His hands and His feet. (Luke 24:40+.) That was the ground of their peace.

If you want to scatter your doubts, look at the blood; and if you want to increase your doubts, look at yourself. You will get doubts enough for years by being occupied with yourself for a few days.

Then again: look at what He is, and at what He has done; not at what you are, and what you have done. That is the way to get peace and rest.

Abraham Lincoln issued a [proclamation declaring the emancipation of three millions of slaves](#). On a certain day their chains were to fall off, and they were to be free. The proclamation was put up on the trees and fences wherever the Northern Army marched. A good many slaves could not read: but others read the proclamation, and most of them believed it; and on a certain day a glad shout went up, "We are free!" Some did not believe it, and stayed with their old masters; but it did not alter the fact that they were free. Christ, **the Captain of our salvation** (Heb 2:10KJV+), has proclaimed freedom to all who have faith in Him. Let us take Him at His word. Their feelings would not have made the slaves free. The power must come from the outside. Looking at ourselves will not make us free, but it is looking to Christ with the eye of faith.

Bishop Ryle has strikingly said: "Faith is the root, and Assurance the flower. Doubtless you can never have the flower without the root; but it is no less certain you may have the root, and not the flower.

"Faith is that poor trembling woman who came behind Jesus in the press, and touched the hem of His garment. (Mark 5:27+.) Assurance is Stephen standing calmly in the midst of his murderers, and saying, 'I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God' (Acts 7:56+).

"Faith is the penitent thief, crying, 'Lord, remember me' (Luke 23:42). Assurance is Job sitting in the dust, covered with sores, and saying, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth;' 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him' (Job 19:25; Job 13:15).

"Faith is Peter's drowning cry, as he began to sink, 'Lord, save me!' (Mt. 24:30). Assurance is that same Peter declaring before the Council, in after-times, 'This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner: neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:11, 12+).

"Faith is the anxious, trembling voice, 'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!' (Mark 9:24). Assurance is the confident challenge, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth?' (Ro 8:33, 34).

Faith is Saul praying in the house of Judas at Damascus, sorrowful, blind, and alone. (Acts 9:11.) Assurance is Paul, the aged prisoner, looking calmly into the grave, and saying, 'I know whom I have believed.' 'There is a crown laid up for me' (2 Ti 1:12; 2 Ti 4:8).

"Faith is LIFE. How great the blessing! Who can tell the gulf between life and death? And yet life may be weak, sickly, unhealthy, painful, trying, anxious, worn, burdensome, joyless, smileless, to the very end.

"Assurance is more than life. It is health, strength, power, vigor, activity, energy, manliness, beauty."

A minister once pronounced the benediction in this way: "The heart of God to make us welcome; the blood of Christ to make us clean, and the Holy Spirit to make us certain." The security of the believer is the result of the operation of the Spirit of God.

Another writer says: "I have seen shrubs and trees grow out of the rocks, and overhang fearful precipices, roaring cataracts, and deep running waters; but they maintained their position, and threw out their foliage and branches as much as if they had been in the midst of a dense forest." It was their hold on the rock that made them secure; and the influences of nature that sustained their life. So believers are oftentimes exposed to the most horrible dangers in their journey to heaven; but, so long as they are "rooted and grounded" in the Rock of Ages, they are perfectly secure. Their hold of Him is their guarantee; and the blessings of His grace give

them life and sustain them in life. And as the tree must die, or the rock fall, before a dissolution can be effected between them so either the believer must lose his spiritual life, or the Rock must crumble, ere their union can be dissolved.

Speaking of the Lord Jesus, Isaiah says: **'I will fasten Him as a nail in a sure place; and He shall be for a glorious throne to His Father's house: and they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons'** (Isaiah 22:23, 24).

There is ONE NAIL, fastened in a sure place; and on it hang all the flagons and all the cups. "Oh," says one little cup, "I am so small and so black, suppose I were to drop!" "Oh," says a flagon, "there is no fear of you; but I am so heavy, so very weighty, suppose I were to drop!" And a little cup says, "Oh, if I were only like the gold cup there, I should never fear falling." But the gold cup answers, "It is not because I am a gold cup that I keep up; but because I hang upon the nail." If the nail gives way we all come down, gold cups, china cups, pewter cups, and all; but as long as the nail keeps up, all that hang on Him hang safely.

"Born, died, kept

I once read these words on a tombstone: **"Born, died, kept."** Let us pray God to keep us in perfect peace, and assured of salvation.

ASSURANCE

J. C. Ryle

"Grace with assurance is no less than heaven let down into the soul."

- BISHOP HOPKINS. 1680.

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Ti 4:6-8⁺)

In the words of Scripture, which head this page, you see the Apostle Paul looking three ways: downward, backward, forward. Downward to the grave,-backward to his own ministry,-forward to that great day, the day of judgment.

I invite you this day to stand by the Apostle's side a few minutes, and mark the words he uses. Happy is that soul who can look where Paul looked, and then speak as Paul spoke!

He looks downward to the grave, and he does it without fear. Hear what he says.

"I am ready to be offered." I am like an animal brought to the place of sacrifice, and bound with cords to the very horns of the altar. The wine and oil have been poured on my head, according to the custom. The last ceremonies have been gone through. Every preparation has been made. It only remains to receive the death-blow, and then all is over.

"The time of my departure is at hand." I am like a ship about to unmoor and put to sea. All on board is ready. I only wait to have the moorings cast off that fasten me to the shore, and I shall then set sail and begin my voyage.

Reader, these are glorious words to come from the lips of a child of Adam like ourselves. Death is a solemn thing, and never so much so as when we see it close at hand. The grave is a chilling, heart-sickening place, and it is vain to pretend it has no terrors. Yet here is a mortal man who can look calmly into the narrow house appointed for all living, and say, while he stands upon the brink, "I see it all, and am not afraid."

Let us listen to him again. He looks backward to his ministerial life, and he does it without shame. Hear what he says.

"I have fought a good fight." There he speaks as a soldier. I have fought that good battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil, from which so many shrink and draw back.

"I have finished my course." There he speaks as one who has run for a prize. I have run the race marked out for me: I have gone over the ground appointed for me, however rough and steep. I have not turned aside because of difficulties, nor been discouraged by the length of the way. I am at last in sight of the goal.

"I have kept the faith." There he speaks as a steward. I have held fast that glorious Gospel which was committed to my trust. I have not mingled it with man's traditions, nor spoiled its simplicity by adding my own inventions, nor allowed others to adulterate it without withstanding them to the face. "As a soldier,-a runner,-a steward," he seems to say, "I am not ashamed."

Reader, that Christian is happy who, as he quits this world, can leave such testimony behind him. A good conscience will save no man,-wash away no sin,-not lift us one hair's breadth toward heaven. Yet, a good conscience will be found a pleasant visitor at our bed-side in a dying hour. Do you remember that place in "Pilgrim's Progress" which describes [Old Honest's passages across the river of death](#)? "The river," says Bunyan, "at that time overflowed its banks in some places; but Mr. Honest, in his life-time, had spoken to one, Good Conscience, to meet him there: the which he also did, and lent him his hand, and so helped him over." Believe me, there is a mine of truth in that passage.

Let us hear the Apostle once more. He looks forward to the great day of reckoning, and he does it without doubt. Mark his words.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Ti 4:8) A glorious reward, he seems to say, is ready and laid up in store for me: even that crown which is only given to the righteous. In the great day of judgment the Lord shall give this crown to me, and to all beside me who have loved Him as an unseen Saviour, and longed to see Him face to face. My work on earth is over. This one thing now remains for me to look forward to, and nothing more.

Reader, observe that the Apostle speaks without any hesitation or distrust. He regards the crown as a sure thing: as his own already. He declares with unflinching confidence his firm persuasion that the righteous Judge will give it to him. Paul was no stranger to all the circumstances and accompaniments of that solemn day to which he referred. The great white throne,-the assembled world,-the open books,-the revealing of all secrets,-the listening angels,-the awful sentence,-the eternal separation of the lost and saved,-all these were things with which he was well acquainted. But none of these things moved him. His strong faith overleaped them all, and only saw Jesus, his all-prevailing Advocate, and the blood of sprinkling, and sin washed away. "A crown," he says, "is laid up for me." "The Lord Himself shall give it to me." He speaks as if he saw it all with his own eyes.

Such are the main things which these verses contain. Of most of them I cannot pretend to speak, for space would not allow me. I shall only try to set before you one point in the passage, and that is "the assured hope" with which the Apostle looks forward to his own prospects in the day of judgment.

I shall do this the more readily, because of the great importance which I feel attaches to the subject of assurance, and the great neglect with which, I humbly conceive, it is often treated in this day.

But I shall do it at the same time with fear and trembling. I feel that I am treading on very difficult ground, and that it is easy to speak rashly and unscripturally in this matter. The road between truth and error is here especially a narrow pass, and if I shall be enabled to do good to some without doing harm to others, I shall be very thankful.

Reader, there are four things I wish to bring before you in speaking of the subject of assurance, and it may clear our way if I name them to you at once.

I. First, then, I will try to show you that an assured hope, such as Paul here expresses, is a true and Scriptural thing.

II. Secondly, I will make this broad concession,-that a man may never arrive at this assured hope, and yet be saved.

III. Thirdly, I will give you some reasons why an assured hope is exceedingly to be desired.

IV. Lastly, I will try to point out some causes why an assured hope is so seldom attained.

I. First, then, I will try to show you that an assured hope is a true and Scriptural thing.

Assurance, such as Paul expresses in the verses which head this tract, is not a mere fancy or feeling. It is not the result of high animal spirits, or a sanguine temperament of body. It is a positive gift of the Holy Ghost, bestowed without reference to men's bodily frames or constitutions, and a gift which every believer in Christ ought to aim at and seek after.

The Word of God appears to me to teach that a believer may arrive at an assured confidence with regard to his own salvation.

I would lay it down fully and broadly, that a true Christian, a converted man, may reach that comfortable degree of faith in Christ, that in general he shall feel entirely confident as to the pardon and safety of his soul,-shall seldom be troubled with doubts,-seldom be distracted with hesitation,-seldom be distressed by anxious questionings,-and, in short, though vexed by many an inward conflict with sin, shall look forward to death without trembling, and to judgment without dismay.¹

Such is my account of assurance. I will ask you to mark it well. I say neither less nor more than I have here

laid down.

Now, such a statement as this is often disputed and denied. Many cannot see the truth of it at all.

The Church of Rome denounces assurance in the most unmeasured terms. The Council of Trent declares roundly, that a "believer's assurance of the pardon of his sins is a vain and ungodly confidence;" and Cardinal Bellarmine, the well-known champion of Romanism, calls it "a prime error of heretics."

The vast majority of the worldly among ourselves oppose the doctrine of assurance. It offends and annoys them to hear of it. They do not like others to feel comfortable and sure, because they never feel so themselves. That they cannot receive it is certainly no marvel.

But there are also some true believers who reject assurance, or shrink from it as a doctrine fraught with danger. They consider it borders on presumption. They seem to think it a proper humility never to be confident, and to live in a certain degree of doubt. This is to be regretted, and does much harm.

I frankly allow there are some presumptuous persons who profess to feel a confidence for which they have no Scriptural warrant. There always are some people who think well of themselves when God thinks ill, just as there are some who think ill of themselves when God thinks well. There always will be such. There never yet was a Scriptural truth without abuses and counterfeits. God's election,-man's impotence,-salvation by grace,-all are alike abused. There will be fanatics and enthusiasts as long as the world stands. But, for all this, assurance is a real, sober, and true thing; and God's children must not let themselves be driven from the use of a truth, merely because it is abused.²

My answer to all who deny the existence of real, well-grounded assurance is simply this,-What saith the Scripture? If assurance be not there, I have not another word to say.

But does not Job say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"? (Job xix. 25, 26.)

Does not David say, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me"? (Psalm 23:4.)

Does not Isaiah say, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee"? (Isaiah 26:3.)

And again, "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." (Isaiah 32nd 17.)

Does not Paul say to the Romans, "I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, not height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"? (Ro 8:38, 39.)

Does he not say to the Corinthians, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"? (2 Cor. 5:1.)

And again, "We are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 6.)

Does he not say to Timothy, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him"? (2 Ti 1:12.)

And does he not speak to the Colossians of "the full assurance of understanding" (Coloss. ii. 2), and to the Hebrews of the "full assurance of faith," and the "full assurance of hope"? (Heb. 6th 11; 10:22.)

Does not Peter say expressly, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure"? (2 Peter 1:10.)

Does not John say, "We know that we have passed from death unto life"? (1 John 3:14.)

And again, "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." (1 John 5th 13.)

And again, "We know that we are of God." (1 John 5:19.)

Reader, what shall we say to these things? I desire to speak with all humility on any controverted point. I feel that I am only a poor fallible child of Adam myself. But I must say, that in the passages I have just quoted I see something far higher than the mere "hopes" and "trusts" with which so many believers appear content in this day. I see the language of persuasion, confidence, knowledge,-nay, I may almost say, of certainty. And I feel,

for my own part, if I may take these Scriptures in their plain, obvious meaning, the doctrine of assurance is true.

But my answer, furthermore, to all who dislike the doctrine of assurance, as bordering on presumption, is this: it can hardly be presumption to tread in the steps of Peter and Paul, of Job and of John. They were all eminently humble and lowly-minded men, if ever any were; and yet they all speak of their own state with an assured hope. Surely this should teach us that deep humility and strong assurance are perfectly compatible, and that there is not any necessary connection between spiritual confidence and pride.³

My answer, furthermore, is, that many have attained to such an assured hope as our text expresses, even in modern times. I will not concede for a moment that it was a peculiar privilege confined to the Apostolic day. There have been, in our own land, many believers who have appeared to walk in almost uninterrupted fellowship with the Father and the Son,-who have seemed to enjoy an almost unceasing sense of the light of God's reconciled countenance shining down upon them, and have left their experience on record. I could mention well-known names, if space permitted. The thing has been, and is,-and that is enough.

My answer, lastly, is, it cannot be wrong to feel confidently in a matter where God speaks unconditionally,-to believe decidedly when God promises decidedly,-to have a sure persuasion of pardon and peace when we rest on the word and oath of Him that never changes. It is an utter mistake to suppose that the believer who feels assurance is resting on anything he sees in himself. He simply leans on the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the Scripture of truth. He believes the Lord Jesus means what He says, and takes Him at His Word. Assurance, after all, is no more than a fall-grown faith; a masculine faith that grasps Christ's promise with both hands,-a faith that argues like the good centurion, if the Lord "speak the word only," I am healed. Wherefore, then, should I doubt? (Mt. 8:8).⁴

Reader, you may be sure that Paul was the last man in the world to build his assurance on anything of his own. He who could write himself down "chief of sinners" (1 Tim.1:15) had a deep sense of his own guilt and corruption. But then he had a still deeper sense of the length and breadth of Christ's righteousness imputed to him.-He, who would cry, "O wretched man that I am" (Rom. vii. 24), had a clear view of the fountain of evil within his heart. But then he had a still clearer view of that other Fountain which can remove "all sin and uncleanness." -He, who thought himself "less than the least of all saints" (Ephes. iii. 8), had a lively and abiding feeling of his own weakness. But he had a still livelier feeling that Christ's promise, "My sheep shall never perish" (John x. 28), could not be broken-Paul knew, if ever man did, that he was a poor, frail bark, floating on a stormy ocean. He saw, if any did, the rolling waves and roaring tempest by which he was surrounded. But then he looked away from self to Jesus, and was not afraid. He remembered that anchor within the veil, which is both "sure and steadfast." He remembered the word, and work, and constant intercession of Him that loved him and gave Himself for him. And this it was, and nothing else, that enabled him to say so boldly, "A crown is laid up for me, and the Lord shall give it to me"; and to conclude so surely, "The Lord will preserve me: I shall never be confounded."⁵

I may not dwell longer on this part of the subject. I think you will allow I have shown ground for the assertion I made,-that assurance is a true thing.

II. I pass on to the second thing I spoke of. I said, a believer may never arrive at this assured hope, which Paul expresses, and yet be saved.

I grant this most freely. I do not dispute it for a moment. I would not desire to make one contrite heart sad that God has not made sad, or to discourage one fainting child of God, or to leave the impression that men have no part or lot in Christ, except they feel assurance.

A person may have saving faith in Christ, and yet never enjoy an assured hope, like the Apostle Paul. To believe and have a glimmering hope of acceptance is one thing; to have joy and peace in our believing, and abound in hope, is quite another. All God's children have faith; not all have assurance. I think this ought never to be forgotten.

I know some great and good men have held a different opinion. I believe that many excellent ministers of the Gospel, at whose feet I would gladly sit, do not allow the distinction I have stated. But I desire to call no man master. I dread as much as any one the idea of healing the wounds of conscience slightly; but I should think any other view than that I have given a most uncomfortable Gospel to preach, and one very likely to keep souls back a long time from the gate of life.⁶

I do not shrink from saying, that by grace a man may have sufficient faith to flee to Christ; sufficient faith really

to lay hold on Him, really to trust in Him,-really to be a child of God, really to be saved; and yet to his last day be never free from much anxiety, doubt, and fear.

"A letter," says an old writer, "may be written, which is not sealed; so grace may be written in the heart, yet the Spirit may not set the seal of assurance to it."

A child may be born heir to a great fortune, and yet never be aware of his riches; live childish,-die childish, and never know the greatness of his possessions.

And so also a man may be a babe in Christ's family; think as a babe, speak as a babe; and though saved, never enjoy a lively hope, or know the real privileges of his inheritance.

Reader, do not mistake my meaning, while you hear me dwell strongly on assurance. Do not do me the injustice to say, I told you none were saved except such as could say with Paul, "I know and am persuaded,-there is a crown laid up for me." I do not say so. I tell you nothing of the kind.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ a man must have, beyond all question, if he is to be saved. I know no other way of access to the Father. I see no intimation of mercy, excepting through Christ. A man must feel his sins and lost estate,-must come to Jesus for pardon and salvation,-must rest his hope on Him, and on Him alone. But if he only has faith to do this, however weak and feeble that faith may be, I will engage, from Scripture warrants, he shall not miss heaven.

Never, never let us curtail the freeness of the glorious Gospel, or clip its fair proportions. Never let us make the gate more strait and the way more narrow than pride and love of sin have made it already. The Lord Jesus is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. He does not regard the quantity of faith, but the quality. He does not measure its degree, but its truth. He will not break any bruised reed, nor quench any smoking flax. He will never let it be said that any perished at the foot of the cross. "Him that cometh unto Me," He says, "I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37.)⁷

Yes, reader: though a man's faith be no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, if it only brings him to Christ, and enables him to touch the hem of His garment, he shall be saved,-saved as surely as the oldest saint in paradise; saved as completely and eternally as Peter, or John, or Paul. There are degrees in our sanctification. In our justification there are none. What is written, is written, and shall never fail: "Whosoever believeth on Him,"-not whosoever has a strong and mighty faith,-"Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." (Ro 10:11.)

But all this time, I would have you take notice, the poor soul may have no full assurance of his pardon and acceptance with God. He may be troubled with fear upon fear, and doubt upon doubt. He may have many a question, and many an anxiety,-many a struggle, and many a misgiving,-clouds and darkness,-storm and tempest to the very end.

I will engage, I repeat, that bare simple faith in Christ shall save a man, though he may never attain to assurance; but I will not engage it shall bring him to heaven with strong and abounding consolations. I will engage it shall land him safe in harbour; but I will not engage he shall enter that harbour in full sail, confident and rejoicing. I shall not be surprised if he reaches his desired haven weather-beaten and tempest-tossed, scarcely realizing his own safety, till he opens his eyes in glory.

Reader, I believe it is of great importance to keep in view this distinction between faith and assurance. It explains things which an inquirer in religion sometimes finds it hard to understand.

Faith, let us remember, is the root, and assurance is the flower. Doubtless you can never have the flower without the root; but it is no less certain you may have the root and not the flower.

Faith is that poor trembling woman who came behind Jesus in the press and touched the hem of His garment. (Mark 5:27.) Assurance is Stephen standing calmly in the midst of his murderers, and saying, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:56.)

Faith is the penitent thief, crying, "Lord, remember me." (Luke 23:42.) Assurance is Job, sitting in the dust, covered with sores, and saying, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." (Job 19:25.) "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." (Job 13:15.)

Faith is Peter's drowning cry, as he began to sink "Lord, save me." (Matt. 15:30.) Assurance is that same Peter declaring before the Council in after-times, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:11, 12.)

Faith is the anxious, trembling voice, "Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief." (Mark 9:24.) Assurance is the confident challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth?" (Ro 8:33, 34.) Faith is Saul praying in the house of Judas at Damascus, sorrowful, blind, and alone. (Acts 9:11.) Assurance is Paul, the aged prisoner, looking calmly into the grave, and saying, "I know whom I have believed. There is a crown laid up for me." (2 Ti 1:12; 4:8.)

Faith is life. How great the blessing! Who can tell the gulf between life and death? And yet life may be weak, sickly, unhealthy, painful, trying, anxious, worn, burdensome, joyless, smileless to the very end. Assurance is more than life. It is health, strength, power, vigour, activity, energy, manliness, beauty.

Reader, it is not a question of saved or not saved that lies before us, but of privilege or no privilege.-It is not a question of peace or no peace, but of great peace or little peace.-It is not a question between the wanderers of this world and the school of Christ: it is one that belongs only to the school;-it is between the first form and the last.

He that has faith does well. Happy should I be, if I thought all readers of this tract had it. Blessed, thrice blessed are they that believe. They are safe. They are washed. They are justified. They are beyond the power of hell. Satan, with all his malice, shall never pluck them out of Christ's hand.

But he that has assurance does far better,-sees more, feels more, knows more, enjoys more, has more days like those spoken of in Deuteronomy: even "the days of heaven upon the earth." (Dt. 11:21.)⁸

III. I pass on to the third thing of which I spoke. I will give you some reasons why an assured hope is exceedingly to be desired.

I ask your attention to this point especially. I heartily wish that assurance was more sought after than it is. Too many among those who believe begin doubting and go on doubting, live doubting and die doubting, and go to heaven in a kind of mist.

It will ill become me to speak in a slighting way of "hopes" and "trusts." But I fear many of us sit down content with them, and go no farther. I should like to see fewer "peradventurers" in the Lord's family, and more who could say, "I know and am persuaded." Oh, that all believers would covet the best gifts, and not be content with less! Many miss the full tide of blessedness the Gospel was meant to convey. Many keep themselves in a low and starved condition of soul, while their Lord is saying, "Eat and drink abundantly, O beloved. Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." (Cant. v. 1. John xvi. 24.)

1. Let us remember, then, for one thing, that assurance is to be desired, because of the present comfort and peace it affords.

Doubts and fears have power to spoil much of the happiness of a true believer in Christ. Uncertainty and suspense are bad enough in any condition,-in the matter of our health, our property, our families, our affections, our earthly callings,-but never so bad as in the affairs of our souls. And so long as a believer cannot get beyond "I hope" and "I trust," he manifestly feels a degree of uncertainty about his spiritual state. The very words imply as much. He says, "I hope," because he dares not say, "I know."

Now assurance goes far to set a child of God free from this painful kind of bondage, and thus ministers mightily to his comfort. It enables him to feel that the great business of life is a settled business, the great debt a paid debt, the great disease a healed disease, and the great work a finished work; and all other business, diseases, debts, and works, are then by comparison small. In this way assurance makes him patient in tribulation, calm under bereavements, unmoved in sorrow, not afraid of evil tidings; in every condition content, for it gives him a FIXEDNESS of heart. It sweetens his bitter cups, it lessens the burden of his crosses, it smooths the rough places over which he travels, and it lightens the valley of the shadow of death. It makes him always feel that he has something solid beneath his feet, and something firm under his hands,-a sure friend by the way, and a sure home at the end.⁹

Assurance will help a man to bear poverty and loss. It will teach him to say, "I know that I have in heaven a better and more enduring substance. Silver and gold have I none, but grace and glory are mine, and these can never make themselves wings and flee away. Though the fig tree shall not blossom, yet I will rejoice in the Lord." (Habak. iii. 17, 18.)

Assurance will support a child of God under the heaviest bereavements, and assist him to feel "It is well." An assured soul will say, "Though beloved ones are taken from me, yet Jesus is the same, and is alive for

evermore. Though my house be not as flesh and blood could wish, yet I have an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." (2 Kings iv. 26; Heb. xiii. 8; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.)

Assurance will enable a man to praise God, and be thankful, even in a prison, like Paul and Silas at Philippi. It can give a believer songs even in the darkest night, and joy when all things seem going against him. (Job ii. 10; Psalm xlii. 8.)

Assurance will enable a man to sleep with the full prospect of death on the morrow, like Peter in Herod's dungeon. It will teach him to say, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety." (Psalm iv. 8.)

Assurance can make a man rejoice to suffer shame for Christ's sake, as the Apostles did. It will remind him that he may "rejoice and be exceeding glad" (Matt. v. 12), and that there is in heaven an exceeding weight of glory that shall make amends for all. (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

Assurance will enable a believer to meet a violent and painful death without fear, as Stephen did in the beginning of Christ's Church, and as Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Taylor did in our own land. It will bring to his heart the texts, "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." (Luke xii. 4.) "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." (Acts vii. 59.)¹⁰

Assurance will support a man in pain and sickness, make all his bed, smooth down his dying pillow. It will enable him to say, "If my earthly house fail, I have a building of God." (2 Cor. v. 1.) "I desire to depart and be with Christ." (Phil. i. 23.) "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."¹¹ (Psalm lxxiii. 26.)

Reader, the comfort assurance can give in the hour of death is a point of great importance. Believe me, you will never think assurance so precious as when your turn comes to die.

In that awful hour, there are few believers who do not find out the value and privilege of an "assured hope," whatever they may have thought about it during their lives. General "hopes" and "trusts" are all very well to live upon, while the sun shines, and the body is strong: but when you come to die, you will want to be able to say, "I know" and "I feel."

Believe me, Jordan is a cold stream, and we have to cross it alone. No earthly friend can help us. The last enemy, even death, is a strong foe. When our souls are departing there is no cordial like the strong wine of assurance.

There is a beautiful expression in the Prayer-book service for the Visitation of the Sick: "The Almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in Him, be now and evermore thy defence, and make thee know and feel that there is none other name under heaven, through whom thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The compilers of that service showed great wisdom there. They saw that when the eyes grow dim, and the heart grows faint, and the spirit is on the eve of departing, there must then be knowing and feeling what Christ has done for us, or else there cannot be perfect peace.¹²

2. Let us remember, for another thing, that assurance is to be desired, because it tends to make a Christian an active working Christian.

None, generally speaking, do so much for Christ on earth as those who enjoy the fullest confidence of a free entrance into heaven. That sounds wonderful, I dare say, but it is true.

A believer who lacks an assured hope will spend much of his time in inward searchings of heart about his own state. Like a nervous, hypochondriacal person, he will be full of his own ailments, his own doubts and questionings, his own conflicts and corruptions. In short, you will often find he is so taken up with this internal warfare that he has little leisure for other things, little time to work for God.

Now a believer, who has, like Paul, an assured hope, is free from these harassing distractions. He does not vex his soul with doubts about his own pardon and acceptance. He looks at the everlasting covenant sealed with blood, at the finished work and never-broken word of his Lord and Saviour, and therefore counts his salvation a settled thing. And thus he is able to give an undivided attention to the work of the Lord, and so in the long run to do more.¹⁴

Take, for an illustration of this, two English emigrants, and suppose them set down side by side in New Zealand or Australia. Give each of them a piece of land to clear and cultivate. Let the portions allotted to them

be the same both in quantity and quality. Secure that land to them by every needful legal instrument; let it be conveyed as freehold to them and theirs for ever; let the conveyance be publicly registered, and the property made sure to them by every deed and security that man's ingenuity can devise.

Suppose, then, that one of them shall set to work to bring his land into cultivation, and labour at it day after day without intermission or cessation.

Suppose, in the meanwhile, that the other shall be continually leaving his work, and going repeatedly to the public registry to ask whether the land really is his own,-whether there is not some mistake,-whether, after all, there is not some flaw in the legal instruments which conveyed it to him.

The one shall never doubt his title, but just work diligently on.

The other shall hardly ever feel sure of his title, and spend half his time in going to Sydney, or Melbourne, or Auckland with needless inquiries about it.

Which, now, of these two men will have made most progress in a year's time? Who will have done the most for his land, got the greatest breadth of soil under tillage, have the best crops to show, be altogether the most prosperous?

Reader, you know as well as I do. I need not supply an answer. There can only be one reply. Undivided attention will always attain the greatest success.

It is much the same in the matter of our title to "mansions in the skies." None will do so much for the Lord who bought him as the believer who sees his title clear, and is not distracted by unbelieving hesitations. The joy of the Lord will be that man's strength. "Restore unto me," says David, "the joy of Thy salvation; then will I teach transgressors Thy ways." (Psalm 51:12.)

Never were there such working Christians as the Apostles. They seemed to live to labour. Christ's work was truly their meat and drink. They counted not their lives dear to themselves. They spent and were spent. They laid down ease, health, and worldly comfort, at the foot of the cross. And one grand cause of this, I believe, was their assured hope. They were men who could say, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John 4:19.)

3. Let us remember, for another thing, that assurance is to be desired, because it tends to make a Christian a decided Christian.

Indecision and doubt about our own state in God's sight is a grievous one, and the mother of many evils. It often produces a wavering and unstable walk in following the Lord. Assurance helps to cut many a knot, and to make the path of Christian duty clear and plain.

Many, of whom we feel hopes that they are God's children, and have true grace, however weak, are continually perplexed with doubts on points of practice. "Should we do such and such a thing? Shall we give up this family custom? Ought we to go into that company? How shall we draw the line about visiting? What is to be the measure of our dressing and our entertainments? Are we never, under any circumstances, to dance, never to touch a card, never to attend parties of pleasure?" These are a kind of questions which seem to give them constant trouble. And often, very often, the simple root of their perplexity is, that they do not feel assured they are themselves children of God. They have not yet settled the point, which side of the gate they are on. They do not know whether they are inside the ark or not.

That a child of God ought to act in a certain decided way they quite feel, but the grand question is, "Are they children of God themselves?" If they only felt they were so, they would go straightforward, and take a decided line. But not feeling sure about it, their conscience is forever hesitating and coming to a dead lock. The devil whispers, "Perhaps, after all, you are only a hypocrite: what right have you to take a decided course? Wait till you are really a Christian." And this whisper too often turns the scale, and leads on to some miserable compromise, or wretched conformity to the world.

Reader, I believe you have here one chief reason why so many in this day are inconsistent, trimming, unsatisfactory, and half-hearted in their conduct about the world. Their faith fails. They feel no assurance that they are Christ's, and so feel a hesitancy about breaking with the world. They shrink from laying aside all the ways of the old man, because they are not quite confident they have put on the new. Depend on it, one secret cause of halting between two opinions is want of assurance. When people can say decidedly, "The Lord He is the God," their course becomes very clear. (1 Kings xviii. 39.)

4. Let us remember, finally, that assurance is to be desired, because it tends to make the holiest Christians.

This, too, sounds wonderful and strange, and yet it is true. It is one of the paradoxes of the Gospel, contrary, at first sight, to reason and common sense, and yet it is a fact. Cardinal Bellarmine was seldom more wide of the truth than when he said, "Assurance tends to carelessness and sloth." He that is freely forgiven by Christ will always do much for Christ's glory, and he that enjoys the fullest assurance of this forgiveness will ordinarily keep up the closest walk with God. It is a faithful saying in 1 John iii. 3: "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." A hope that does not purify is a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.¹⁵

None are so likely to maintain a watchful guard over hearts and lives as those who know the comfort of living in near communion with God. They feel their privilege, and will fear losing it. They will dread falling from their high estate, and marring their own comforts, by bringing clouds between themselves and Christ. He that goes on a journey with little money about him takes little thought of danger, and cares little how late he travels. He, on the contrary, that carries gold and jewels will be a cautious traveller. He will look well to his roads, his house, and his company, and run no risks. The fixed stars are those that tremble most. The man that most fully enjoys the light of God's reconciled countenance, will be a man tremblingly afraid of losing its blessed consolations, and jealously fearful of doing anything to grieve the Holy Ghost.

Reader, I commend these four points to your serious consideration. Would you like to feel the everlasting arms around you, and to hear the voice of Jesus daily drawing nigh to your soul, and saying, "I am thy salvation"?- Would you like to be a useful labourer in the vineyard in your day and generation?-Would you be known of all men as a bold, firm, decided, single-eyed, uncompromising follower of Christ?-Would you be eminently spiritually-minded and holy?-I doubt not some readers will say, "These are the very things our hearts desire. We long for them. We pant after them: but they seem far from us."

Now, has it never struck you that your neglect of assurance may possibly be the main secret of all your failures,-that the low measure of faith which satisfies you may be the cause of your low degree of peace? Can you think it a strange thing that your graces are faint and languishing, when faith, the root and mother of them all, is allowed to remain feeble and weak?

Take my advice this day. Seek an increase of faith. Seek an assured hope of salvation like the Apostle Paul's. Seek to obtain a simple, childlike confidence in God's promises. Seek to be able to say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed: I am persuaded that He is mine, and I am His."

You have very likely tried other ways and methods and completely failed. Change your plan. Go upon another tack. Lay aside your doubts. Lean more entirely on the Lord's arm. Begin with implicit trusting. Cast aside your faithless backwardness to take the Lord at His word. Come and roll yourself, your soul, and your sins upon your gracious Saviour. Begin with simple believing, and all other things shall soon be added to you.¹⁶

IV. I come now to the last thing of which I spoke. I promised to point out to you some probable causes why an assured hope is so seldom attained. I will do it very shortly.

This is a very serious question, and ought to raise in all great searchings of heart. Few, certainly, of Christ's people seem to reach up to this blessed spirit of assurance. Many comparatively believe, but few are persuaded. Many comparatively have saving faith, but few that glorious confidence which shines forth in the language of St. Paul. That such is the case, I think we must all allow.

Now, why is this so?-Why is a thing which two Apostles have strongly enjoined us to seek after, a thing of which few believers have any experimental knowledge? Why is an assured hope so rare?

I desire to offer a few suggestions on this point, with all humility. I know that many have never attained assurance, at whose feet I would gladly sit both in earth and heaven. Perhaps the Lord sees something in the natural temperament of some of His children, which makes assurance not good for them. Perhaps, in order to be kept in spiritual health, they need to be kept very low. God only knows. Still, after every allowance, I fear there are many believers without an assured hope, whose case may too often be explained by causes such as these.

1. One most common cause, I suspect, is a defective view of the doctrine of justification.

I am inclined to think that justification and sanctification are insensibly confused together in the minds of many believers. They receive the Gospel truth,-that there must be something done IN US, as well as something done FOR US, if we are true members of Christ; and so far they are right. But, then, without being aware of it, perhaps, they seem to imbibe the idea that their justification is, in some degree, affected by something within

themselves. They do not clearly see that Christ's work, not their own work,-either in whole or in part, either directly or indirectly,-is the alone ground of our acceptance with God; that justification is a thing entirely without us, for which nothing whatever is needful on our part but simple faith,-and that the weakest believer is as fully and completely justified as the strongest.¹⁷

Many appear to forget that we are saved and justified as sinners, and only sinners; and that we never can attain to anything higher, if we live to the age of Methuselah. Redeemed sinners, justified sinners, and renewed sinners doubtless we must be,-but sinners, sinners, sinners, always to the very last. They do not seem to comprehend that there is a wide difference between our justification and our sanctification. Our justification is a perfect finished work, and admits of no degrees. Our sanctification is imperfect and incomplete, and will be to the last hour of our life. They appear to expect that a believer may at some period of his life be in a measure free from corruption, and attain to a kind of inward perfection. And not finding this angelic state of things in their own hearts, they at once conclude there must be something very wrong in their state. And so they go mourning all their days,-oppressed with fears that they have no part or lot in Christ, and refusing to be comforted.

Reader, consider this point well. If any believing soul desires assurance, and has not got it, let him ask himself, first of all, if he is quite sure he is sound in the faith, if his loins are thoroughly "girt about with truth," and his eyes thoroughly clear in the matter of justification. He must know what it is simply to believe before he can expect to feel assured.

Believe me, the old Galatian heresy is the most fertile source of error, both in doctrine and in practice. Seek clearer views of Christ, and what Christ has done for you. Happy is the man who really understands justification by faith without the deeds of the law.

Related Resources:

- [Why is justification by faith such an important doctrine?](#)
- [Justification vs sanctification—what are the differences?](#)
- [What is justification? What does it mean to be justified?](#)

2. Another common cause of the absence of assurance is, slothfulness about growth in grace.

I suspect many true believers hold dangerous and unscriptural views on this point: I do not of course mean intentionally, but they do hold them. Many appear to me to think that once converted, they have little more to attend to, and that a state of salvation is a kind of easy chair, in which they may just sit still, lie back, and be happy. They seem to fancy that grace is given them that they may enjoy it, and they forget that it is given, like a talent, to be used, employed, and improved. Such persons lose sight of the many direct injunctions "to increase,-to grow,-to abound more and more,-to add to our faith," and the like; and in this little-doing condition, this sitting-still state of mind, I never marvel that they miss assurance.

I believe it ought to be our continual aim and desire to go forward; and our watchword at the beginning of every year should be, "More and more" (1 Th 4:1): more knowledge,-more faith,-more obedience,-more love. If we have brought forth thirty-fold, we should seek to bring forth sixty, and if we have brought forth sixty, we should strive to bring forth a hundred. The will of the Lord is our sanctification, and it ought to be our will too. (Mt. 13:23; 1 Th 4:3.)

One thing, at all events, we may depend upon,-there is an inseparable connection between diligence and assurance. "Give diligence," says Peter, "to make your calling and election sure." (2 Peter 1:10.) "We desire," says Paul, "that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." (Heb. 6:11.) "The soul of the diligent," says Solomon, "shall be made fat." (Pr 13:4.) There is much truth in the old maxim of the Puritans: "Faith of adherence comes by hearing, but faith of assurance comes not without doing."

Reader, mark my words. Are you one of those who desires assurance, but have not got it? You will never get it without diligence, however much you may desire it. There are no gains without pains in spiritual things, any more than in temporal. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing." (Pr 8:4.) 18

3. Another common cause of a want of assurance is, an inconsistent walk in life.

With grief and sorrow I feel constrained to say, I fear nothing in this day more frequently prevents men attaining an assured hope than this. The stream of professing Christianity is far wider than it formerly was, and I am

afraid we must admit, at the same time, it is much less deep.

Inconsistency of life is utterly destructive of peace of conscience. The two things are incompatible. They cannot and they will not go together. If you will have your besetting sins, and cannot make up your minds to give them up; if you will shrink from cutting off the right hand and plucking out the right eye, when occasion requires it, I will engage you will have no assurance.

A vacillating walk,-a backwardness to take a bold and decided line,-a readiness to conform to the world, a hesitating witness for Christ,-a lingering tone of religion,-all these make up a sure receipt for bringing a blight upon the garden of your soul.

It is vain to suppose you will feel assured and persuaded of your own pardon and acceptance with God, unless you count all God's commandments concerning all things to be right, and hate every sin, whether great or small. (Psalm 119:128.) One Achan allowed in the camp of your heart will weaken your hands, and lay your consolations low in the dust. You must be daily sowing to the Spirit, if you are to reap the witness of the Spirit. You will not find and feel that all the Lord's ways are ways of pleasantness, unless you labour in all your ways to please the Lord.¹⁹

I bless God our salvation in no wise depends on our own works. By grace we are saved,-not by works of righteousness,-through faith,-without the deeds of the law. But I never would have any believer for a moment forget that our SENSE of salvation depends much on the manner of our living. Inconsistency will dim your eyes, and bring clouds between you and the sun. The sun is the same behind the clouds, but you will not be able to see its brightness or enjoy its warmth, and your soul will be gloomy and cold. It is in the path of well doing that the day-spring of assurance will visit you, and shine down upon your heart.

"The secret of the Lord," says David, "is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." (Psalm 24:14.)

"To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God." (Psalm 50:23.)

"Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them." (Psalm 119:165.)

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." (1 John 1:7).

"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him." (1 John 3:18, 19.)

"Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." (1 John 2:3.)

Paul was a man who exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. (Acts xxiv. 16.) He could say with boldness, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith." I do not wonder that the Lord enabled him to add with confidence, "Henceforth there is a crown laid up for me, and the Lord shall give it me at that day."

Reader, if any believer in the Lord Jesus desires assurance, and has not got it, let him think over this point also. Let him look at his own heart, look at his own conscience, look at his own life, look at his own ways, look at his own home. And perhaps when he has done that, he will be able to say, "There is a cause why I have no assured hope."

I leave the three matters I have just mentioned to your own private consideration. I am sure they are worth examining. May you examine them honestly. And may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

1. And now, in closing this important inquiry, let me speak first to those readers who have not given themselves to the Lord, who have not yet come out from the world, chosen the good part, and followed Christ.

I ask you, then, to learn from this subject the privileges and comforts of a true Christian.

I would not have you judge of the Lord Jesus Christ by His people. The best of servants can give you but a faint idea of that glorious Master. Neither would I have you judge of the privileges of His kingdom by the measure of comfort to which many of His people attain. Alas, we are most of us poor creatures! We come short, very short, of the blessedness we might enjoy. But, depend upon it, there are glorious things in the city of our God, which they who have an assured hope taste, even in their life-time. There are lengths and breadths of peace and consolation there, which it has not entered into your heart to conceive. There is bread enough and to spare in our Father's house, though many of us certainly eat but little of it, and continue weak. But the fault must not be laid to our Master's charge: it is all our own.

And, after all, the weakest child of God has a mine of comforts within him, of which you know nothing. You see the conflicts and tossings of the surface of his heart, but you see not the pearls of great price which are hidden in the depths below. The feeblest member of Christ would not change conditions with you. The believer who possesses the least assurance is far better off than you are. He has a hope, however faint, but you have none at all. He has a portion that will never be taken from him, a Saviour that will never forsake him, a treasure that fadeth not away, however little he may realize it all at present. But, as for you, if you die as you are, your expectations will all perish. Oh, that you were wise! Oh, that you understood these things! Oh, that you would consider your latter end!

I feel deeply for you in these latter days of the world, if I ever did. I feel deeply for those whose treasure is all on earth, and whose hopes are all on this side the grave. Yes: when I see old kingdoms and dynasties shaking to the very foundation,-when I see, as we all saw a few years ago, kings, and princes, and rich men, and great men fleeing for their lives, and scarce knowing where to hide their heads,-when I see property dependent on public confidence melting like snow in spring, and public stocks and funds losing their value,-when I see these things I feel deeply for those who have no better portion than this world can give them, and no place in that kingdom that cannot be removed.²⁰

Take advice of a minister of Christ this very day. Seek durable riches,-a treasure that cannot be taken from you,-a city which hath lasting foundations. Do as the Apostle Paul did. Give yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek that incorruptible crown He is ready to bestow. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him. Come away from a world which will never really satisfy you, and from sin which will bite like a serpent if you cling to it, at last. Come to the Lord Jesus as lowly sinners, and He will receive you, pardon you, give you His renewing Spirit, fill you with peace. This shall give you more real comfort than the world has ever done. There is a gulf in your heart which nothing but the peace of Christ can fill. Enter in and share our privileges. Come with us, and sit down by our side.

Lastly, let me turn to all believers who read these pages, and speak to them a few words of brotherly counsel.

The main thing that I urge upon you is this,-if you have not got an assured hope of your own acceptance in Christ, resolve this day to seek it. Labour for it. Strive after it. Pray for it. Give the Lord no rest till you "know whom you have believed."

I feel, indeed, that the small amount of assurance in this day, among those who are reckoned God's children, is a shame and a reproach. "It is a thing to be heavily bewailed," says old Traill, "that many Christians have lived twenty or forty years since Christ called them by His grace, yet doubting in their life." Let us call to mind the earnest "desire" Paul expresses, that "every one" of the Hebrews should seek after full assurance and let us endeavour, by God's blessing, to roll this reproach away. (Heb. 6:11.)

Believing reader, do you really mean to say that you have no desire to exchange hope for confidence, trust for persuasion, uncertainty for knowledge? Because weak faith will save you, will you therefore rest content with it? Because assurance is not essential to your entrance into heaven, will you therefore be satisfied without it upon earth? Alas, this is not a healthy state of soul to be in; this is not the mind of the Apostolic day! Arise at once, and go forward. Stick not at the foundations of religion: go on to perfection. Be not content with a day of small things. Never despise it in others, but never be content with it yourselves.

Believe me, believe me, assurance is worth the seeking. You forsake your own mercies when you rest content without it. The things I speak are for your peace. If it is good to be sure in earthly things, how much better is it to be sure in heavenly things. Your salvation is a fixed and certain thing. God knows it. Why should not you seek to know it too? There is nothing unscriptural in this. Paul never saw the book of life, and yet Paul says, "I know, and am persuaded."

Make it, then, your daily prayer that you may have an increase of faith. According to your faith will be your peace. Cultivate that blessed root more, and sooner or later, by God's blessing, you may hope to have the flower. You may not, perhaps, attain to full assurance all at once. It is good sometimes to be kept waiting. We do not value things which we get without trouble. But though it tarry, wait for it. Seek on, and expect to find.

There is one thing, however, of which I would not have you ignorant:-You must not be surprised if you have occasional doubts after you have got assurance. You must not forget you are on earth, and not yet in heaven. You are still in the body, and have indwelling sin: the flesh will lust against the spirit to the very end. The leprosy will never be out of the walls of the old house till death takes it down. And there is a devil, too, and a strong devil: a devil who tempted the Lord Jesus, and gave Peter a fall; and he will take care you know it.

Some doubts there always will be. He that never doubts has nothing to lose. He that never fears possesses nothing truly valuable. He that is never jealous knows little of deep love. But be not discouraged: you shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved you.²¹

Finally, do not forget that assurance is a thing that may be lost for a season, even by the brightest Christians, unless they take care.

Assurance is a most delicate plant. It needs daily, hourly watching, watering, tending, cherishing. So watch and pray the more when you have got it. As Rutherford says, "Make much of assurance." Be always upon your guard. When Christian slept, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, he lost his certificate. Keep that in mind.

David lost assurance for many months by falling into transgression. Peter lost it when he denied his Lord. Each found it again, undoubtedly, but not till after bitter tears. Spiritual darkness comes on horseback, and goes away on foot. It is upon us before we know that it is coming. It leaves us slowly, gradually, and not till after many days. It is easy to run down hill. It is hard work to climb up. So remember my caution,-when you have the joy of the Lord, watch and pray.

Above all, grieve not the Spirit. Quench not the Spirit. Vex not the Spirit. Drive Him not to a distance, by tampering with small bad habits and little sins. Little jarrings between husbands and wives make unhappy homes, and petty inconsistencies, known and allowed, will bring in a strangeness between you and the Spirit.

Hear the conclusion of the whole matter.

The man who walks with God in Christ most closely will generally be kept in the greatest peace.

The believer who follows the Lord most fully will ordinarily enjoy the most assured hope, and have the clearest persuasion of his own salvation.

Footnotes ([Revision and footnotes from Tony Capoccia - Bible Bulletin Board](#))

1 "Full assurance that Christ hath delivered Paul from condemnation, yea, so full and real as produceth thanksgiving and triumphing in Christ, may and doth consist with complaints and outcries of a wretched condition for the indwelling of the body of sin"-Rutherford's *Triumph of Faith*. 1645.

2 "We do not vindicate every vain pretender to 'the Witness of the Spirit;' we are aware that there are those in whose professions of religion we can see nothing but their forwardness and confidence to recommend them. But let us not reject any doctrine of revelation through an over-anxious fear of consequences."-Robinson's *Christian System*.

"True assurance is built upon a Scripture basis: presumption hath no Scripture to show for its warrant; it is like a will without seal and witnesses, which is null and void in law. Presumption wants both the witness of the Word and the seal of the Spirit. Assurance always keeps the heart in a lowly posture; but presumption is bred of pride. Feathers fly up, but gold descends; he who hath this golden assurance, his heart descends in humility."-Watson's *Body of Divinity*. 1650.

"Presumption is joined with looseness of life; persuasion with a tender conscience: this dares sin because it is sure, this dares not for fear of losing assurance. Persuasion will not sin, because it cost her Saviour so dear; presumption will sin, because grace cloth abound. Humility is the way to heaven. They that are proudly secure of their going to heaven, do not so often come thither as they that are afraid of going to hell."-Adams on *Second Epistle of Peter*. 1633.

3 "They are quite mistaken that think faith and humility are inconsistent; they not only agree well together, but they cannot be parted."-Traill.

4 "To be assured of our salvation," Augustine saith, "is no arrogant stoutness; it is our faith. It is no pride; it is devotion. It is no presumption; it is God's promise."-Bishop Jewell's *Defence of the Apology*. 1570.

"If the ground of our assurance rested in and on ourselves, it might justly be called presumption; but the Lord and the power of His might being the ground thereof, they either know not what is the might of His power, or else too lightly esteem it, who account assured confidence thereon presumption."-Gouge's *Whole Armour of God*. 1647.

"Upon what ground is this certainty built? Surely not upon anything that is in us. Our assurance of perseverance is grounded wholly upon God. If we look upon ourselves, we see cause of fear and doubting; but if we look up to God, we shall find cause enough for assurance."-Hildersam on *John iv*. 1632.

"Our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread as, "I imagine so," or "It is likely;" but the cable, the strong rope of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity. Our salvation is fastened with God's own hand, and Christ's own strength, to the strong stake of God's unchangeable nature."-Rutherford's Letters. 1637.

5 "Never did a believer in Jesus Christ die or drown in his voyage to heaven. They will all be found safe and sound with the Lamb on mount Zion. Christ loseth none of them; yea, nothing of them. (John vi. 39.) Not a bone of a believer is to be seen in the field of battle. They are all more than conquerors through Him that loved them." (Rom. viii. 37.)-Traill.

6 Extracts from English divines, showing that there is a difference between faith and assurance,-that a believer may be justified and accepted with God, and yet not enjoy a comfortable knowledge and persuasion of his own safety,-and that the weakest faith in Christ, if it be true, will save a man as surely as the strongest.

1. "Is it not necessary to justification to be assured that my sins are pardoned, and that I am justified? No: that is no act of faith as it justifieth, but an effect and fruit that followeth after justification.

"It is one thing for a man to have his salvation certain, another thing to be certain that it is certain.

"Even as a man fallen into a river, and like to be drowned, as he is carried down with the flood, espies the bough of a tree hanging over the river, which he catcheth at, and clings unto with all his might to save him, and seeing no other way of succour but that, ventures his life upon it. This man, so soon as he has fastened on this bough, is in a safe condition, though all troubles, fears, and terrors are not presently out of his mind, until he comes to himself, and sees himself quite out of danger. Then he is sure he is safe, but he was safe before he was sure. Even so it is with a believer. Faith is but the espying of Christ as the only means to save, and the reaching out of the heart to lay hold upon Him. God hath spoke the word, and made the promise to His Son: I believe Him to be the only Saviour, and remit my soul to Him to be saved by His mediation. So soon as the soul can do this, God imputeth the righteousness of His Son unto it, and it is actually justified in the court of heaven, though it is not presently quieted and pacified in the court of conscience. That is done afterwards: in some sooner, in some later, and by the fruits and effects of justification."-Archbishop Usher's "Body of Divinity." 1670.

2. "There are those who doubt, because they doubt and multiply distrust upon itself, concluding that they have no faith, because they find so much and so frequent doubting within them. But this is a great mistake. Some doubtings there may be, where there is even much faith; and a little faith there may be, where there is much doubting.

"Our Saviour requires, and delights in a strong, firm believing on Him, though the least and weakest He rejects not."-Archbishop Leighton's Lectures on the first nine chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel. 1670.

3. "The mercy of God is greater than all the sins in the world. But we sometimes are in such a case, that we think we have no faith at all; or if we have any, it is very feeble and weak. And, therefore, these are two things; to have faith, and to have the feeling of faith. For some men would fain have the feeling of faith, but they cannot attain unto it; and yet they must not despair, but go forward in calling upon God, and it will come at the length: God will open their hearts, and let them feel His goodness."-Bishop Latimer's Sermons. 1552.

4. "I know, thou sayest, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: and that 'Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.' (John iii. 15.) Neither can I know but that, in a sense of my own 'sinful condition, I do cast myself in some measure upon my Saviour, and lay some hold upon His all-sufficient redemption: but, alas, my apprehensions of Him are so feeble, as that they can afford no sound comfort to my soul!

"Courage, my son. Were it that thou lookest to be justified, and saved by the power of the very act of thy faith, thou hadst reason to be disheartened with the conscience of the weakness thereof; but now that the virtue and efficacy of this happy work is in the object apprehended by thee, which is the infinite merits and mercy of thy God and Saviour, which cannot be abated by thine infirmities, thou hast cause to take heart to thyself, and cheerfully to expect His salvation.

"Understand thy case aright. Here is a double hand, that helps us up toward heaven. Our hand of faith lays hold upon our Saviour; our Saviour's hand of mercy and plenteous redemption lays hold on us. Our hold of Him is feeble and easily loosed; His hold of us is strong and irresistible.

"If work were stood upon, a strength of hand were necessary; but now that only taking and receiving of a

precious gift is required, why may not a weak hand do that as well as a strong? As well, though not as forcibly.”-Bishop Hall’s “Balm of Gilead.” 1650.

5. “Many formerly, and those of the highest remark and eminency, have placed true faith in no lower degree than assurance, or the secure persuasion of the pardon of their sins, the acceptation of their persons, and their future salvation.

“But this, as it is very sad and uncomfortable for thousands of doubting and deserted souls, concluding all those to fall short of grace who fall short of certainty, so hath it given the Papists too great advantage.

“Faith is not assurance. But this doth sometimes crown and reward a strong, vigorous, and heroic faith; the Spirit of God breaking in upon the soul with an evidencing light, and scattering all that darkness, and those fears and doubts which before beclouded it.”-Bishop Hopkins on the Covenants. 1680.

6. “If any persons abroad have thought that a special and full persuasion of the pardon of their sin was of the essence of faith, let them answer for it. Our divines at home generally are of another judgment. Bishop Davenant and Bishop Prideaux, and others, have shown the great difference between recumbence and assurance, and they all do account and call assurance a daughter, fruit, and consequent of faith. And the late learned Arrowsmith tells us, that God seldom bestows assurance upon believers till they are grown in grace: for, says he, there is the same difference between faith of recumbence and faith of assurance, as is between reason and learning. Reason is the foundation of learning; so, as there can be no learning if reason be wanting (as in beasts), in like manner there can be no assurance where there is no faith of adherence. Again: as reason well exercised in the study of arts and sciences arises to learning, so faith, being well exercised on its proper object and by its proper fruits, arises to assurance. Further, as by negligence, non-attendance, or some violent disease, learning may be lost, while reason doth abide; so, by temptation, or by spiritual sloth, assurance may be lost, while saving faith may abide. Lastly, as all men have reason, but all men are not learned; so all regenerate persons have faith to comply savingly with the gospel method of salvation, but all true believers have not assurance.”-Sermon by B. Fairclough, Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in the Morning Exercises, preached at Southwark. 1660.

7. “Weak faith may fail in the applying, or in the apprehension and appropriating of Christ’s benefits to a man’s own self. This is to be seen in ordinary experience. For many a man there is of humble and contrite heart, that serveth God in spirit and truth, yet is not able to say, without great doubtings and waverings, I know and am fully assured that my sins are pardoned. Now shall we say that all such are without faith? God forbid.

“This weak faith will as truly apprehend God’s merciful promises for the pardon of sin as strong faith, though not so soundly. Even as a man with a palsied hand can stretch it out as well to receive a gift at the hand of a king as he that is more sound, though it may be not so firmly and steadfastly.”-Exposition of the Creed, by William Perkins, Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge. 1612.

8. “A want of assurance is not unbelief. Drooping spirits may be believers. There is a manifest distinction made between faith in Christ and the comfort of that faith,-between believing to eternal life and knowing we have eternal life. There is a difference between a child’s having a right to an estate and his full knowledge of the title.

“The character of faith may be written in the heart, as letters engraven upon a seal, yet filled with so much dust as not to be distinguished. The dust hinders the reading of the letters, yet doth not raze them out.”-Discourses by Stephen Charnock, of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. 1680.

9. “This certainty of our salvation, spoken of by Paul, rehearsed by Peter, and mentioned by David (Psalm iv. 7), is that special fruit of faith which breedeth spiritual joy, and inward peace which passeth all understanding. True it is, all God’s children have it not. One thing is the tree, and another thing is the fruit of the tree: one thing is faith, and another thing is the fruit of faith. And that remnant of God’s elect which feel the want of this faith have, notwithstanding, faith.”-Sermons by Richard Greenham, Minister and Preacher of the Word of God. 1612.

10. “You that can clear this to your own hearts that you have faith, though it be weak, be not discouraged, be not troubled. Consider that the smallest degree of faith is true, is saving faith as well as the greatest. A spark of fire is as true fire as any is in the element of fire. A drop of water is as true water as any is in the ocean. So the least grain of faith is as true faith, and as saving as the greatest faith in the world.

“The least bud draws sap from the root as well as the greatest bough. So the weakest measure of faith doth as truly ingraft thee into Christ, and by that draw life from Christ, as well as the strongest. The weakest faith hath

communion with the merits and blood of Christ as well as the strongest.

"The least faith marries the soul to Christ. The weakest faith hath as equal a share in God's love as the strongest. We are beloved in Christ, and the least measure of faith makes us members of Christ. The least faith hath equal right to the promises as the strongest. And, therefore, let not our souls be discouraged for weakness."-Nature and Royalties of Faith, by Samuel Bolton, D.D., of Christ's College, Cambridge. 1657

11. "A man may be in the favour of God, in the state of grace, a justified man before God, and yet want the sensible assurance of his salvation, and of the favour of God in Christ.

"A man may have saving grace in him, and not perceive it himself; a man may have true justifying faith in him, and not have the use and operation of it, so far as to work in him a comfortable assurance of his reconciliation with God. Nay, I will say more: a man may be in the state of grace, and have true justifying faith in him, and yet be so far from sensible assurance of it in himself, as in his own sense and feeling he may seem to be assured of the contrary. Job was certainly in this case when he cried unto God, 'Wherefore bidest Thou Thy face, and boldest me for Thine enemy?' (Job xiii. 24.)

"The weakest faith will justify. If thou canst receive Christ and rest upon Him, even with the weakest faith, it will serve thy turn.-Take heed thou think not it is the strength of thy faith that justifieth thee. No, no: it is Christ and His perfect righteousness which thy faith receiveth and resteth upon that doth it. He that hath the feeblest and weakest hand may receive an alms, and apply a sovereign plaster to his wound, as well as he that hath the strongest, and receive as much good by it too."-Lectures upon the fifty-first Psalm, preached at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, by Arthur Hildersam, Minister of Jesus Christ. 1642.

12. "There are some who are true believers and yet weak in faith. They do indeed receive Christ and free grace, but it is with a shaking hand. They have, as divines say, the faith of adherence: they will stick to Christ, as theirs; but they want the faith of evidence,-they cannot see themselves as His. They are believers, but of little faith. They hope that Christ will not cast them off, but are not sure that He will take them up."-Sips of Sweetness, or Consolation for Weak Believers, by John Durant, Preacher in Canterbury Cathedral. 1649.

13. "The act of faith is to apply Christ to the soul; and this the weakest faith can do as well as the strongest, if it be true. A child can hold a staff as well, though not so strongly, as a man. The prisoner through a hole sees the sun, though not so perfectly as they in the open air. They that saw the brazen serpent, though a great way off, yet were healed.

"The least faith is as precious to the believer's soul as Peter's or Paul's faith was to themselves, for it lays hold upon Christ and brings eternal salvation."-An Exposition of the Second Epistle General of Peter, by the Rev Thomas Adams, Rector of St. Gregory's, London. 1633.

14. "Many of God's dear children for a long time may remain very doubtful as to their present and eternal condition, and know not what to conclude, whether they shall be damned, or whether they shall be saved. There are believers of several growths in the Church of God,-fathers, young men, children, and babes; and as in most families there are more babes and children than grown men, so in the Church of God there are more weak, doubting Christians than strong ones, grown up to a full assurance. A babe may be born, and yet not know it; so a man may be born again, and yet not be sure of it.

"We make a difference betwixt saving faith, as such, and a full persuasion of the heart. Some of those that shall be saved may not be certain that they shall be saved; for the promise is made to the grace of faith, and not to the evidence of it, to faith as true, and not to faith as strong. They may be sure of heaven, and yet in their own sense not assured of heaven."-Sermons by Rev. Thomas Doolittle, of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, and sometime Rector of St. Alphage, London, in the Morning Exercises, at Cripplegate. 1661.

15. "I find not salvation put upon the strength of faith, but the truth of faith; not upon the brightest degree, but upon any degree of faith. It is not said, If you have such a degree of faith you shall be justified and saved; but simply believing is required. The lowest degree of true faith wilt do it; as Romans x. 9: 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' The thief upon the cross had not attained to such high degrees of faith: he by one act, and that of a weak faith, was justified and saved. (Luke xxiii. 42.)"-Exposition of the Prophet Ezekiel, by William Greenhill, Rector of Stepney, London, and Chaplain to the Dukes of York and Gloucester. 1650.

16. "Weak faith is true faith,-as precious, though not so great, as strong faith,-the same Holy Ghost the Author, the same Gospel the instrument.

"If it never proves great, yet weak faith shall save, for it interests us in Christ, and makes Him and all His benefits ours. For it is not the strength of our faith that saves, but truth of our faith; nor weakness of our faith that condemns, but the want of faith,-for the least faith layeth 'hold on Christ, and so will save us. Neither are we saved by the worth or quantity of our faith, but by Christ, who is laid hold on by a weak faith as well as a strong. Just as a weak hand that can put meat into the mouth, shall feed and nourish the body as well as if it were a strong hand; seeing the body is not nourished by the strength of the hand, but by the goodness of the meat."-The Doctrine of Faith, by John Rogers, Preacher of God's Word at Dedham, in Essex. 1634.

17. "Though your grace be never so weak, yet if ye have truth of grace, you have as great a share in the righteousness of Christ for your justification as the strong Christian hath. You have as much of Christ imputed to you as any other."-Sermons by William Bridge, formerly Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and Pastor of the Church of Christ, in Great Yarmouth. 1648.

18. "It is confessed weak faith hath as much peace with God, through Christ, as another hath by strong faith, but not so much bosom peace.

"Weak faith will as surely land the Christian in heaven as strong faith, for it is impossible the least dram of true grace should perish, being all incorruptible seed; but the weak, doubting Christian is not like to have so pleasant a voyage thither as another with strong faith. Though all in the ship come safe to shore, yet he that is all the way sea-sick hath not so comfortable a voyage as he that is strong and healthful."-The Christian in complete Armour, by William Gurnall, sometime Minister at Lavenham, Suffolk. 1680.

19. "A man may have true grace that hath not the assurance of the love and favour of God, or the remission of his sins, and salvation of his soul. A man may be God's, and yet he not know it; his estate may be good, and yet he not see it; he may be in a safe condition, when he is not in a comfortable position. All may be well with him in the court of glory, when he would give a thousand worlds that all were but well in the court of conscience.

"Assurance is requisite to the well-being of a Christian, but not to the being; it is requisite to the consolation of a Christian, but not to the salvation of a Christian; it is requisite to the well-being of grace, but not to the mere being of grace. Though a man cannot be saved without faith, yet he may be saved without assurance. God hath in sunny places of the Scripture declared that without faith there is no salvation; but God hath not in any one place of Scripture declared that without assurance there is no salvation."-Heaven on Earth, by Thomas Brooks, Preacher of the Gospel at St. Margaret's, Fish Street Hill, London. 1654

20. "We must distinguish between weakness of faith and nullity. A weak faith is true. The bruised reed is but weak, yet it is such as Christ will not break. Though thy faith be but weak, yet be not discouraged. A weak faith may receive a strong Christ: a weak hand can tie the knot in marriage as well as a strong; a weak eye might have seen the brazen serpent. The promise is not made to strong faith, but to true. The promise doth not say, Whosoever hath a giant faith that can remove mountains, that can stop the mouth of lions, shall be saved; but whosoever believes, be his faith never so small.

"You may have the water of the Spirit poured on you in sanctification, though not the oil of gladness in assurance; there may be faith of adherence, and not of evidence; there may be life in the root where there is no fruit in the branches, and faith in the heart where no fruit of assurance."-A Body of Divinity, by Thomas Watson, formerly Minister of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, London. 1660.

21. "There is a weak faith, which yet is true; and although it be weak, yet, because it is true, it shall not be rejected of Christ.

"Faith is not created perfect at the first, as Adam was, but is like a man in the ordinary course of nature, who is first an infant, then a child, then a youth, then a man.

"Some utterly reject all weak ones, and tax all weakness in faith with hypocrisy. Certainly these are either proud or cruel men.

"Some comfort and establish those who are weak, saying, 'Be quiet: thou hast faith and grace enough and art good enough; thou needest no more, neither must thou be too righteous.' (Eccles. vii. 16.) These are soft, but not safe, cushions; these are fawning flatterers, and not faithful friends.

"Some comfort and exhort, saying, 'Be of good cheer: He who hath begun a good work will also finish it in you; therefore pray that His grace may abound in you; yea, do not sit still, but go forward, and march on in the way of the Lord.' (Heb. vi. 1.) Now this is the safest and best course."-Questions, Observations, etc., upon the

Gospel according to St. Matthew, by Richard Ward, sometime Student at Cambridge, and Preacher of the Gospel in London. 1640.

22. "Be not discouraged if it doth not yet appear to you that you were given by the Father to the Son. It may be, though you do not see it. Many of the given do not for a long time know it; yea, I see no great danger in saying that not a few of the given to the Son may be in darkness, and doubts and fears about it, till the last and brightest day declares it, and till the last sentence proclaims it.

"If therefore any of you be in the dark about your own election, be not discouraged; it may be, though you do not know it."-Sermon on the Lord's Prayer, by Robert Traill, Minister of the Gospel in London, and sometime at Cranbrook Kent. 1690.

23. "Some rob themselves of their own comfort by placing saving faith in full assurance. Faith, and sense of faith, are two distinct and separable mercies; you may have truly received Christ, and not receive the knowledge or assurance of it. Some there be that say, 'Thou art our God,' of whom God never said, You are my people; these have no authority to be called the sons of God: others there are, of whom God saith, 'These are my people,' yet they dare not call God 'their God;' these have authority to be called the Sons of God, yet know it not. They have received Christ, that is their safety; but they have not yet received the knowledge and assurance of it, that is their trouble....The father owns his child in the cradle, who yet knows him not to be his father."-Method of grace, by John Flavel, Minister of the Gospel at Dartmouth, Devon. 1680.

24. "The faith necessary and sufficient for our salvation is not assurance. Its tendency, doubtless, is to produce that lively expectation of the Divine favour which will issue in a full confidence. But the confidence is not itself the faith of which we speak, nor is it necessarily included in it: nay, it is a totally distinct thing.

"Assurance will generally accompany a high degree of faith. But there are sincere persons who are endued with only small measures of grace, or in whom the exercise of that grace may be greatly obstructed. When such defects or hindrances prevail, many fears and distresses may be expected to arise."-The Christian System, by the Rev. Thomas Robinson, Vicar of St. Mary's, Leicester. 1795.

25. "Assurance is not essential to the being of faith. It is a strong faith; but we read likewise of a weak faith, little faith, faith like a grain of mustard seed. True saving faith in Jesus Christ is only distinguishable by its different degrees; but in every degree, and in every subject, it is universally of the same kind."-Sermons, by the Rev. John Newton, sometime Vicar of Olney, and Rector of St. Mary's. Woolnoth, London. 1767.

26. "There is no reason why weak believers should conclude against themselves. Weak faith unites as really with Christ as strong faith,-as the least bud in the vine is drawing sap and life from the root, no less than the strongest branch. Weak believers therefore have abundant cause to be thankful; and while they reach after growth in grace, ought not to overlook what they have already received."-Letter of Rev. Henry Venn. 1784.

27. "Salvation, and the joy of salvation, are not always contemporaneous; the latter does not always accompany the former in present experience.

"A sick man may be under a process of recovery and yet be in doubt concerning the restoration of his health. Pain and weakness may cause him to hesitate. A child may be heir to his estate or kingdom, and yet derive no joy from the prospect of his future inheritance. He may be unable to trace his genealogy, or to read his title deeds, and the testament of his father; or with a capacity of reading them he may be unable to understand their import, and his guardian may for a time deem it right to suffer him to remain in ignorance. But his ignorance does not affect the validity of his title.

"Personal assurance of salvation is not necessarily connected with faith. They are not essentially the same. Every believer might indeed infer, from the effect produced in his own heart, his own safety and privileges; but many who truly believe are unskilful in the word of righteousness, and fail of drawing the conclusion from Scriptural premises which they would be justified in drawing"-Lectures on the Fifty-first Psalm, by the Rev. Thomas Biddulph, Minister of St. James's, Bristol. 1830,

7 "He that believeth on Jesus shall never be confounded. Never was any; neither shall you, if you believe. It was a great word of faith spoken by a dying man, who had been converted in a singular way, betwixt his condemnation and execution: his last words were these, spoken with a mighty shout,-'Never man perished with his face towards Christ Jesus.'-Traill.

8 "The greatest thing that we can desire, next to the glory of God, is our own salvation; and, the sweetest thing we can desire is the assurance of our salvation. In this life we cannot get higher than to be assured of that

which in the next life is to be enjoyed. All saints shall enjoy a heaven when they leave this earth; some saints enjoy a heaven while they are here on earth.”-Joseph Caryl.

9 “It was a saying of Bishop Latimer to Ridley, “When I live in a settled and steadfast assurance about the state of my soul, methinks then I am as bold as a lion. I can laugh at all trouble: no affliction daunts me. But when I am eclipsed in my comforts, I am of so fearful a spirit, that I could run into a very mouse-hole.”-Quoted by Christopher Love. 1653.

“Assurance will assist us in all duties; it will arm us against all temptations; it will answer all objections; it will sustain us in all conditions into which the saddest of times can bring us. ‘If God be for us, who can be against us?’-Bishop Reynolds on Hosea xiv. 1642.

“We cannot come amiss to him that hath assurance: God is his. Hath he lost a friend?-His Father lives. Hath he lost an only child? God hath given him His only Son. Hath he scarcity of bread?-God hath given him the finest of the wheat, the bread of life.-Are his comforts gone?-he hath a Comforter. Doth he meet with storms?-he knows where to put in for harbour.-God is his portion, and heaven is his haven.”-Thomas Watson. 1662

10 These were John Bradford’s words in prison, shortly before his execution. “I have no request to make. If Queen Mary gives me my life, I will thank her; if she will banish me, I will thank her; if she will burn me, I will thank her; if she will condemn me to perpetual imprisonment, I will thank her.”

This was Rutherford’s experience, when banished to Aberdeen. ‘How blind are my adversaries, who sent me to a banqueting house, and not to a prison or a place of exile.’ “My prison is a palace to me, and Christ’s banqueting house.”-Letters.

11 These were the last words of Hugh Mackail on the scaffold at Edinburgh, 1666. “Now I begin my intercourse with God, which shall never be broken off. Farewell, father and mother, friends and relations; farewell, the world and all its delights; farewell, meat and drinks; farewell, sun, moon, and stars. Welcome, God and Father; welcome, sweet Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant; welcome, blessed Spirit of grace and God of all consolation; welcome, glory; welcome, eternal life; welcome, death. O Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit; for Thou hast redeemed my soul, O Lord God of truth.”

12 These were Rutherford’s words on his death bed. “O that all my brethren did know what a Master I have served, and what I have this day! I shall sleep in Christ, and when I awake, I shall be satisfied with his likeness.” 1661.

These were Baxter’s words on his death bed. “I bless God I have a well-grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within.” Towards the close he was asked how he did? The answer was, “Almost well.” 1691.

13 The least degree of faith takes away the sting of death, because it takes away guilt; but the full assurance of faith breaks the very teeth and jaws of death, by taking away the fear and dread of it.”-Fairclough’s Sermon in the Morning Exercises.

14 “Assurance would make us active and lively in God’s service; it would excite prayer, quicken obedience. Faith would make us walk, but assurance would make us run; we should think we could never do enough for God. Assurance would be as wings to the bird, as weights to the clock, to set all the wheels of obedience a-running.”-Thomas Watson.

“Assurance will make a man fervent, constant, and abundant in the work of the Lord. When the assured Christian hath done one work, he is calling out for another. What is next, Lord, says the assured soul: what is next? An assured Christian will put his hand to any work, he will put his neck in any yoke for Christ; he never thinks he hath done enough, he always thinks he hath done too little, and when he hath done all he can, he sits down, saying, I am an unprofitable servant.” -Thomas Brooks.

15 “The true assurance of salvation, which the Spirit of God hath wrought in any heart, hath that force to restrain a man from looseness of life, and to knit his heart in love and obedience to God, as nothing else hath in all the world. It is certainly either the want of faith and assurance of God’s love, or a false and carnal assurance of it, that is the true cause of all the licentiousness that reigns in the world.”-Hildersam on 51st Psalm.

“None walk so evenly with God as they who are assured of the love of God. Faith is the mother of obedience, and sureness of trust makes way for strictness of life. When men are loose from Christ, they are loose in point of duty, and their floating belief is soon discovered in their inconstancy and unevenness of walking. We do not

with alacrity engage in that of the success of which we are doubtful: and therefore when we know not whether God will accept us or not, when we are off and on in point of trust, we are just so in the course of our lives, and serve God by fits and starts. It is the slander of the world to think assurance an idle doctrine."-Manton's Exposition of James. 1660.

"Who is more obliged, or who feels the obligation to observance more cogently,-the son who knows his near relation, and knows his father loves him, or the servant that hath great reason to doubt it? Fear is a weak and impotent principle in comparison of love. Terrors may awaken; love enlivens. Terrors may 'almost persuade;' love over-persuades. Sure am I that a believer's knowledge that his Beloved is his, and he is his Beloved's (Cant. vi. 3), is found by experience to lay the most strong and cogent obligations upon him to loyalty and faithfulness to the Lord Jesus. For as to him that believes Christ is precious (1 Peter ii. 7), so to him that knows he believes Christ is so much the more precious, even the 'chiefest of ten thousand.'" (Cant. v. 10)-Fairclough's Sermon in Morning Exercises. 1660.

"Is it necessary that men should be kept in continual dread of damnation, in order to render them circumspect and ensure their attention to duty? Will not the well-grounded expectation of heaven prove far more efficacious? Love is the noblest and strongest principle of obedience: nor can it be but that a sense of God's love to us will increase our desire to please Him."-Robinson's Christian System.

16 "That which breeds so much perplexity is, that we would invert God's order. 'If I knew,' say some, 'that the promise belonged to me, and Christ was a Saviour to me, I could believe:' that is to say, I would first see, and then believe. But the true method is just the contrary: 'I had fainted,' says David, 'unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord.' He believed it first, and saw it afterwards."-Archbishop Leighton.

"It is a weak and ignorant, but common, thought of Christians, that they ought not to look for heaven, nor trust Christ for eternal glory, till they be well advanced in holiness and meetness for it. But as the first sanctification of our natures flows from our faith and trust in Christ for acceptance, so our further sanctification and meetness for glory flows from the renewed and repeated exercise of faith on Him."-Traill.

17The Westminster Confession of Faith gives an admirable account of justification. "Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other Evangelical obedience, to them, as their righteousness: but by imputing the obedience and righteousness of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith."

18"Whose fault is it that thy interest in Christ is not put out of question? Were Christians more in self-examination, more close in walking with God; and if they had more near communion with God, and were more in acting of faith, this shameful darkness and doubting would quickly vanish."-Traill

"A lazy Christian shall always want four things: viz., comfort, content, confidence, and assurance. God hath made a separation between joy and idleness, between assurance and laziness, and therefore it is impossible for thee to bring these together, that God hath put so far asunder."-Thomas Brooks.

"Are you in depths and doubts, staggering and uncertain, not knowing what is your condition, nor whether you have any interest in the forgiveness that is of God? Are you tossed up and down between hopes and fears, and want peace consolation, and establishment? Why lie you upon your faces? Get up: watch, pray, fast, meditate, offer violence to your lusts and corruptions; fear not, startle not at their crying to be spared; press unto the throne of grace by prayer, supplications, importunities, restless requests: this is the way to take the kingdom of God. These things are not peace, are not assurance; but they are part of the means God hath appointed for the attainment of them."-Owen on the 130th Psalm.

19 "Wouldest thou have thy hope strong?-Then keep thy conscience pure. Thou canst not defile one without weakening the other. The godly person that is loose and careless in his holy walking will soon find his hope languishing. All sin disposeth the soul that tampers with it to trembling fears and shakings of heart."-Gurnall

"One great and too common cause of distress is the secret maintaining some known sin. It puts out the eye of the soul, or dimmeth it and stupifies it, that it can neither see nor feel its own condition. But especially it provoketh God to withdraw Himself, His comforts, and the assistance of His Spirit."-Baxter's Saints' Rest.

"The stars which have least circuit are nearest the pole; and men whose hearts are least entangled with the world are always nearest to God, and to the assurance of His favour. Worldly Christians, remember this. You and the world must part, or else assurance and your souls will never meet."-Thomas Brooks.

20 "They are doubly miserable that have neither Heaven nor earth, temporals nor eternal, made sure to them in changing times."-Thomas Brooks.

21 "None have assurance at all times. As in a walk that is shaded with trees and checkered with light and shadow, some tracks and paths in it are dark, and others are sunshine: such is usually the life of the most assured Christian."-Bishop Hopkins.

"It is very suspicious that that person is a hypocrite that is always in the same frame, let him pretend it to be never so good."-Traill.

1 John 5:12 Commentary <> 1 John 5:14 Commentary