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The Spiritual Condition Is the Most Important Concern for the Aged

The first matter that the elderly person must be clear on is his spiritual state. There are two sorts of men. Two sorts only: converted and unconverted. Old people are no exception to this. Merely to be old is no sign of spirituality: 'The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed' (Isaiah 65:20).

The first question that every aged person has to ask himself is the same question that all men need to ask and to answer, irrespective of age: 'Am I a real Christian?' All that follows in this booklet by way of consolation, comfort and hope for the aged person is entirely reserved for the Christian. How can an elderly person be sure about this matter? 'How can I know that I am a real Christian?'

The primary source of the believer's assurance is by the witness of the Spirit, who takes him to Christ and reminds him of what he is and what he has in his Saviour.¹ The Bible also gives us the marks and evidences of true belief. The elderly person, in common with all men, must look into his life to see if he has these scriptural signs, these evidences and marks of grace.

Jesus said: 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'. Nicodemus could not understand this. 'How can a man be born when he is old?' he asked. Jesus went on: 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, do not marvel that I said to you: "You must be born again"' (John 3:3-7).

¹ See my *Assurance in The New Covenant*.

Every man needs to be born again, regenerated, born of God's Spirit. Until that new birth, he is dead in his sins and he will never enter the kingdom of God. And that is why every aged person must make sure of his spiritual state. That is why this matter is an absolute priority.

What are the evidences of the new birth? Well, when a child is born, there are unmistakable signs of physical life. Similarly, when someone is born again, there are unmistakable signs of spiritual life. What are they? The man who has been born again will 'receive' Christ, he will exercise saving faith in him (John 1:12-13; Acts 16:29-31). He will repent of his sins (Acts 2:37-38; Psalm 51:1-12). He will receive the message of the Bible (Acts 16:14). He will seek to press on in the knowledge of Christ (Philippians 3:12-15). He will seek to live in a holy way, in obedience to God and for his glory (Psalm 119:127-128; John 14:15,23-24). Such are some of the evidences of God's work within. It is most important – vital – to note that these are the evidences, not the causes of regeneration.

The question every elderly person must ask is: 'Do I have these evidences? Do I really trust Christ, and Christ alone for my salvation? Do I turn away from my sin and turn unto God? Do I seek to honour the Lord in all that I do? Do I strive to live to his praise and glory? In short, am I a real Christian?' If the answer is: 'No', then this is the matter that must be resolved, now, at once. Everything else that follows in this booklet is written for the comfort and instruction of the aged Christian. And only for the Christian.