

A walk with Mr O (9)

What do I do about my doubts?

Mr O, last time we met you helped me with a spiritual problem. Can we now talk about another one?

Of course. Tell me about it as clearly as you can.

Well, almost everybody around me is an unbeliever. Is it really likely that they are all wrong and that I am one of a select few who are right? Sometimes I think that Christianity might just be a massive con trick which I have been deceived into believing.

Will it be any comfort to you to know that I sometimes have the same thought? This has been true of me throughout my Christian life.

I didn't expect to hear that, Mr O! I never knew that preachers like you had any doubts. You all speak with such authority. You come across as people who are completely sure.

There is no contradiction between being sure and having doubts. We are made sure of the truth of the gospel by the Holy Spirit's secret work within our souls - He has enlightened our intellectual faculties and re-directed our wills. Our doubts are caused by the devil's attack on that work of the Spirit. But, as you will have noticed, Satan's attacks come and go. Our convictions, although sometimes seriously unsettled, remain. We keep coming back to them. We can't give them up.

Yes, all right, but shouldn't we have convincing answers to the intellectual objections to the Christian faith that are so often presented to us?

Let me tell you about the experiences of two men that I know. The first one, a young minister, was so troubled by doubts that he took time out to address them. He felt that he needed an answer to every argument that unbelievers put before him, so he dropped everything and sat down to read *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell and *Does God Believe in Atheists?* by John Blanchard – two modern books that reveal the complete intellectual integrity of the Christian faith.

I've read both those books and I think that they are wonderful. They show that being a Christian doesn't mean committing intellectual suicide. But, Mr O, they haven't stopped me having doubts.

And I wouldn't expect them to! There is nothing irrational about being a Christian. The Christian faith is plainly defensible intellectually. But doubt is not primarily an intellectual problem. It goes deeper than that. It as an attack by 'the father of lies' on what is going on in the depths of the soul.

My young minister friend didn't recognise that, and because he saw some flaws in the authors' arguments he walked out on the Christian faith and has never returned to it. It appears that he had built his initial faith on human arguments, and therefore, of course, he was at the mercy of apparently stronger human arguments.

Tell me then, Mr O, about your other friend. Did he have a better experience.

My second friend, now retired, is an internationally respected scientist who, for as long as I have known him, has lived a Bible-believing, Christ-loving, cross-proclaiming life. But he went through a serious attack of doubt when he was a student. Let me quote what he wrote to me recently:

"When I first came to university in 1966 I was hit in the very first term by a module on 'Evolution', and the lecturer was a very ardent evolutionist. This caused me to ask many questions relating to the seeming 'facts' of evolution (as being taught) and the conflict with what I had been taught and understood of the Biblical record. Quite honestly I floundered with doubts about the veracity of Scripture for several months and struggled to get answers.

"A well-known minister came to the university to conduct a C.U. mission and I spoke with him after a meeting. In his extremely wise way he simply said, 'Go away and read John's Gospel. When you come to 20:31 ('These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God') ask yourself, 'Do I believe?'.

"I did that, and my doubts on that issue were settled by seeing the person of the Lord Jesus. The lesson I hope that I have learned over these many years is 'Look to Jesus'."

Thanks, Mr O. There's nothing more to say, is there?
