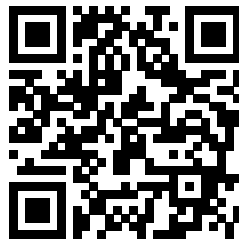


Safety Certainty Enjoyment

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Safety Certainty Enjoyment

What an often repeated question! Let me put it to you; for *traveling* you most certainly are, traveling from *time* into *Eternity*; and who knows how very, very near you may be at this moment to the GREAT TERMINUS?

Let me ask you then, in all kindness, "*Which class are you traveling?*" There are only three. Let me describe them, that you may put yourself to the test as in the presence of "Him with whom we have to do."

- 1st Class -Those who *are saved and know* it.
- 2nd Class -Those who are *not sure of salvation*,

but *anxious* to be sure.

- 3rd Class -Those who are not only *unsaved*,

but *totally unconcerned about it*.

Again I repeat my question, "*Which class are you traveling?*" Oh, the madness of *unconcern*, when eternal issues are at stake! A man came rushing into the railway station and, while scarcely able to gasp for breath, took his seat in one of the carriages just on the point of starting.

"You've run it fine," said a fellow passenger "Yes," he replied, breathing heavily after every two or three words, "but I've saved *four hours*, and that's *well worth running for*."

"Saved four hours!" I couldn't help repeating to myself; "*four hours* well worth that hard struggle! What of Eternity? What of Eternity! Yet are there not thousands of shrewd, farseeing men today, who look sharply enough after their own interests in life, but who seem stone-blind to the Eternity before them? In spite of the infinite love of God to helpless rebels, told out at Calvary; in spite of His pronounced hatred of sin; in spite of the known brevity of man's history here; in spite of the terrors of judgment after death, and of the solemn probability of waking up at last with the unbearable remorse of being on hell's side of a "fixed" gulf, people hurry on to the bitter, bitter end as careless as if there were no God, no death, no judgment, no heaven, no hell! If you are such a person, may God this very moment have mercy on you; and while you read these lines, open your eyes to your most perilous position, standing as you may be on the slippery brink of an endless woe!

Oh, friend, believe it or not, your case is truly desperate! Don't put the thought of Eternity off any longer Remember, that procrastination is like him who deceives you by it, not only a "*thief*" but a "*murderer*." There is much truth in the Spanish saying 'The road of '*By-and-by*' leads to the town of '*Never*'." I beg you, therefore, to travel that road no longer; "*NOW* is the day of Salvation".

"But," says one, "I am *not unconcerned* as to the welfare of my soul. My deep trouble lies wrapped up in another word - UNCERTAINTY I am among the second-class passengers you speak of."

Well, both unconcern and uncertainty are the offspring of one parent - *unbelief*. The first results from unbelief as to the sin and ruin of man, the other from unbelief as to God's sovereign remedy *for* man. It is especially for souls desiring before God to be *fully and unmistakably SURE of their salvation* that these pages are written. I can in a great measure understand your deep soul- trouble, and am assured that the more concerned you are about this all-important matter, the greater will be your thirst, until you *know forcer- tain* that you are really and eternally saved. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses *his own* soul?" The only son of a devoted father is at sea. News comes that his ship has been wrecked on some foreign shore. Who can tell the anguish of suspense in that father's heart until, upon the most reliable authority, he is assured that his boy is safe and sound?

Or, again, you are far from home. The night is dark and wintry, and your way is totally unknown. Standing at a point where two roads diverge, you ask a person walking by for the way to the town you desire to reach, and he tells you he *thinks* that such and such a way is the right one, and *hopes* you will be all right if you take it. Would "*thinks*", and "*hopes*," and "*maybe's*" satisfy you? Surely not. You must have *certainty* about it, or every step you take will increase your anxiety. What wonder, then, that people have sometimes neither been able to eat nor sleep when the eternal safety of the soul has been trembling in the balance!

"To lose your wealth is much,
 To lose your health is more,
 To lose *your soul* is such a loss
 As no man can restore."

Now, there are three things I desire, by the Holy Spirit's help, to make clear to you; and, to put them into Scripture language, they are these:

THE WAY OF SALVATION. Acts 16:17

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION. Luke 1:77

THE JOY OF SALVATION. Psalm 51:12.

We shall, I think, see that, though intimately connected, they each stand on a separate basis; so that it is quite possible for a soul to know the way of Salvation without having the certain *knowledge that he himself is saved*; or, again, *to know that he is saved*, without possessing at all times the joy that ought to accompany that knowledge.

First, then, let me speak briefly of

THE WAY OF SALVATION

THE WAY OF SALVATION

THE WAY OF SALVATION

Please open your Bible, and carefully read Exodus 13:13; there you find these words from the lips of Jehovah: "Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will NOT redeem it, THEN YOU SHALL BREAK ITS NECK. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem."

Now come back with me in thought to a supposed scene of 3,000 years ago. Two men (a priest of God and a poor Israelite) are in a serious conversation. Let us stand by, with their permission, and listen. The gestures of each show deep seriousness about some matter of importance and it is not difficult to see that the subject of conversation is a little donkey that stands trembling beside them.

"I have come to ask," says the poor Israelite, "if there cannot be a merciful exception made in my favor this once. This weak little thing is the firstborn of my donkey, and though I know full well what the law of God says about it, I am hoping that mercy will be shown, and the donkey's life spared. I am only a poor man in Israel, and can't afford to lose the colt."

"But," answers the priest firmly, "the law of the Lord is plain and unmistakable: 'EVERY firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck.' Where is the lamb?"

"Ah, sir, I don't have a lamb!"

"Then go, purchase one, and return, or the donkey's neck must surely be broken. The *lamb* must die, or the donkey must die."

"Alas! Then all my hopes are crushed," he cries, "for I am far too poor to buy a lamb."

While this conversation proceeds, a third person joins them, and after hearing the poor man's tale of sorrow, he turns to him, and says kindly, "Be of good cheer, I can meet your need," And thus he proceeds: "We have in our house, on the hill-top over there, one little lamb, brought up at our very home, which is 'without spot or blemish.' It has never once strayed from home, and stands (and rightly so) in highest favor with all that are in the house. This lamb will I fetch. "And away he hurries up the hill. A little while later you see him gently leading the fair little creature down the slope, and very soon both lamb and donkey are standing side by side.

Then the lamb is bound to the altar, its blood is shed, and the fire consumes it.

The righteous priest now turns to the poor man, and says, "You can freely take your little colt in safety; no broken neck for it now. *The lamb has died in the donkey's stead*, and consequently *the donkey goes righteously free*. Thanks to your friend."

Now, poor troubled soul, can't you see in this, God's own picture of a sinner's salvation? His claims as to your sin demanded "a broken neck", i.e., righteous judgment on your guilty head; the only alternative being the death of a divinely-

approved substitute.

Now *you* could not find the provision to meet your case; but in the Person of His beloved Son, God *Himself* provided the Lamb. "Behold, the *Lamb of God*," said John to his disciples, as his eye fell on that blessed, spotless One, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Onward to Calvary He went, "as a lamb to the slaughter," and there and then He "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). He "*was delivered for our offenses*, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). So that God does not reduce one bit of His righteous, holy claims against sin when He justifies (i.e., clears from all charge of guilt) the ungodly sinner who believes in Jesus (Rom. 3:26). Blessed be God for such a Savior, such a Salvation!

"DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE SON OF GOD?"

"Well," you reply, "I have, as a condemned sinner, found in Him One that I can safely trust.

I do believe in Him."

Then I can tell you that the full value of *His* sacrifice and death, as God estimates it, He makes as good to you as though you had accomplished it all yourself.

Oh, what a wondrous way of salvation is this! Is it not great, and grand, and Godlike, worthy of God Himself - the gratification of His own heart of love, the glory of His precious Son, and the salvation of a sinner, all bound up together? What a bundle of grace and glory! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has so ordered it that His own beloved Son should do all the work, and get all the praise, and that you and I, poor, guilty sinners, believing in Him, should not only get the blessing, but enjoy the blissful company of the Blesser forever and ever: "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" (Ps. 34:3).

But perhaps your eager inquiry may be, "*How is it that since I do really distrust self and self-work, and wholly rely on Christ and Christ's work, that I don't have the full certainty of my salvation?*" You say, "If my feelings warrant my saying that I am saved one day, they are pretty sure to blight every hope the next and I am left like a ship storm-tossed, without any anchorage whatever" Ah, *there* lies your mistake. Did you ever hear of a captain trying to find anchorage by fastening his anchor *inside* the ship? Never *Always outside*.

It may be that you are quite clear that it is Christ's *death alone* that gives SAFETY; but *you think* that it is *what you feel* that gives you CERTAINTY

Now, again, take your Bible; for I wish you to see from God's word how He gives a man

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION

Before you turn to the verse which I shall ask you very carefully to look at, which speaks of HOW a believer is to KNOW that he HAS Eternal Life, let me quote it in the distorted way in which human imagination often puts it. "*These happy feelings* have I given to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." Now open your Bible, and, while you compare this with God's blessed and unchanging Word, may He give you from your very heart to say with David, *I hate the double-minded, but I love Your law* (Ps. 119:113). The verse just mis-quoted is 1 John 5:13, and reads thus in the Bible, "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."

How did the firstborn sons of the thousands of Israel know for certain that they were safe the night of Passover and of Egypt's judgment?

Let us pay a visit to two of their houses, and hear what they have to say.

We have in the first house we enter that they are all shivering with fear and suspense.

What is the secret of all this paleness and trembling? we enquire; and the firstborn son informs us that the angel of death is coming round the land, and that he is not quite certain how matters will stand with him at that solemn moment.

"When the destroying angel has passed our house/" he says, "and the night of judgment is over, then I will know that I am safe; but I can't see how I can be quite sure of it until then. I hear they ARE sure of salvation next door but we think it VERY PRESUMPTUOUS. All I can do is to spend the long, dreary night HOPING for the best."

"Well," we enquire, "but has the God of Israel not provided a way of safety for His people?" "True," he replies, "and we have made use of that way of escape. The blood of the spotless and unblemished first-year lamb has been duly sprinkled with the bunch of hyssop on the lintel and two side-posts, but still we are not fully assured of shelter"

Let us now leave these doubting, troubled ones, and enter next door.

What a striking contrast meets our eye at once! Peace rests in every expression. There they stand, with a belt on their waist, and a staff in their hand, eating the roasted lamb.

What *can* be the meaning of all this tranquility on such a solemn night as this? "Ah," they all say, "we are only waiting for Jehovah's marching orders, and then we will say a last goodbye to the taskmaster's cruel *lash* and all the drudgery of Egypt!"

"But wait! Do you forget that this is the night of Egypt's judgment?"

"We know that very well; but our firstborn son is safe. The blood has been sprinkled according to the wish of our God."

"But so it has been next door," we reply; "but they are all unhappy, because they are all uncertain of safety."

"Ah!" firmly responds the firstborn, "but WE HAVE MORE THAN THE SPRINKLED BLOOD; WE HAVE THE UNERRING WORD OF GOD ABOUT IT. God has said; 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you'. *God rests satisfied with the blood outside, and we rest satisfied with His word inside.*"

The *sprinkled blood* makes us SAFE.

The *spoken word* makes us SURE.

Could anything make us *more safe* than *the sprinkled blood*, or more sure than His spoken Word? *Nothing*, NOTHING.

Now, let me ask you a question. "*Which of these two houses: do you think; was the safer one*"

Do you say number 2, where everyone was so peaceful? No, then, you are wrong.

Both are safe alike.

Their safety depends on what God thinks about *the blood outside*, and *not* on the state of their *feelings inside*.

If you want to be sure of your *own* blessing, don't listen to the unstable testimony of inward emotions, but to the infallible witness of the Word of God.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me HAS everlasting life" (John 6:47).

Let me give you a simple illustration from every day life. A certain farmer in the country, not having sufficient grass for his cattle, applies for a nice piece of pasture land which he hears is to be rented out near his own house. For some time he gets no answer from the landlord. One day a neighbor comes in, and says, "I feel quite sure you will get that field. Don't you remember how that last Christmas he sent you a special present, and that he gave you a kind nod of recognition the other day when he drove past in the carriage?" And with such good sounding words the farmer's mind is filled with confident hopes.

Next day another neighbor meets him, and in the course of conversation he says, "I'm afraid you will stand no chance whatsoever of getting that grass- field. Mr_____ has applied for it, and I'm sure you know what a favorite he is with the Squire - occasionally visits him," etc. And the poor farmer's bright hopes are dashed to the ground and burst like soap bubbles. One day he is hoping, the next day full of perplexing doubts.

A little while later the postman comes, and the farmer's heart beats fast as he breaks the seal of the letter, for he sees by the handwriting that it is from the Squire himself. See his expression change from anxious suspense to undisguised joy as he reads and re-reads that letter.

"It's a settled thing now," he exclaims to his wife. No more doubts and fears about it; "hoped" and "its" are things of the past. "The Squire says the field is mine as long as I want to rent it, on the most easy terms, and *that's enough for me*. I don't care about anyone's opinion now. *His word settles all*."

How many unfortunate people are in a similar condition to that of the poor, troubled farmer - tossed and perplexed by the opinions of others, or the thoughts and feelings of their own treacherous heart; and it is only upon receiving the word of God as *the word of God*, that *certainty* takes the place of doubt and speculation. When God speaks there *must be* certainty, whether He pronounces the damnation of the unbeliever, or the salvation of the believer

"Forever, O Lord, your word is *settled* in heaven" (Ps. 119:89); and to the simple-hearted believer HIS WORD SETTLES ALL.

"Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).

"I need no other argument,

I want no other plea.

It is enough that Jesus died.

And that He died for me"

The believer can add:

"And that God says so"

"But how may I be sure that I have *the right kind of faith*?"

Well, there can only be one answer to that question, which is, "Have you placed your confidence in *the right person*; i.e., *in the blessed Son of God*?"

It is not a question of the amount of your faith, but of *the trustworthiness of the person* you place your confidence in. One man takes hold of Christ, as it were, with a drowning man's grip. Another only touches the hem of His garment; but the sinner who does the former is not a bit safer than the one who does the latter. They have both made the same discovery, that while all of self is totally untrustworthy, they may safely confide *in Christ*, calmly rely on *His Word*, and confidently rest in the eternal efficacy of *His finished work*. That is what is meant by believing in Him. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me HAS everlasting life" (John 6:47).

Make sure of it then, that your confidence is *not* placed in *your works of amendments, your religious observances, your pious feelings* when under religious influences, *your moral training from childhood*, and the like. You may have the *strongest faith* in any or all of these, and perish everlastingly. Don't deceive yourself by any "fair show in the flesh." The *weakest faith in Christ* eternally saves, while the *strongest faith in nothing else* is only the offspring of a *deceived heart*- only the leafy twigs of your enemy's arranging over the pitfall of eternal damnation.

God, in the gospel, simply introduces to you the Lord Jesus Christ, and says: "This is My beloved Son, in whom / am well pleased." "You may," He says, "with all confidence trust *His* heart, though you cannot with impunity trust your own."

Blessed, three times blessed. Lord Jesus, who would not trust You, and praise Your Name?

"I do really believe in Him," said a sad-looking young woman to me one day, "but yet, when asked if I am saved, I don't like to say yes; *for fear I might be telling a He.*" This young woman was a butcher's daughter in a small town in the Mid lands. It happened to be a market-day, and her father had not returned from market yet. So I said, "Now suppose when your father comes home you ask him how many sheep he bought today and he answers '*ten*'. After a while a man comes to the shop, and says, 'How many sheep did your father buy today?' and you reply, 'I don't like to say, for fear I might be telling a lie.'" "But", said the mother (who was standing by at the time), with righteous indignation, "that would be making your *father* the liar."

Now, don't you see that this well-meaning young woman was virtually making Christ out to be a liar, saying, "I do believe in the Son of God, and HE says I have everlasting life, but I don't like to say I have it, *in case that I might be telling a He.*" What daring presumption!

"But," says another, "*how may I be sure that I really do believe?* I have *tried* often enough to believe, and looked *inside myself to see if I had it*, but the more I look at my faith, the less I seem to have."

Ah, friend, you are looking in the wrong direction to find *that* out, and your *trying to believe* only shows that you are on the wrong track.

Let me give you another illustration to explain what I want to convey to you.

You are sitting at your quiet fireside one evening, when a man comes in and tells you that the station- master has been killed that night on the railway.

Now it so happens that this man had long borne the character in the place for being a very dishonest man, and the most daring, notorious liar in the neighborhood.

Do you believe, or even *try to believe*, that man? "Of course not," you exclaim.

"Say, why?"

"Oh, I *know him* too well for that!"

"But tell me how you know that you don't believe him. Is it by looking inside yourself at your faith or feelings?"

"No," you reply *7 think of the man that brings me the message.*"

A little while later a neighbor drops in, and says, "The station-master has been run over by a goods train tonight, and killed on the spot." After he has left, I hear you cautiously say, "Well, I *partly* believe it now; for as far as I remember this man only once in his life deceived me, though I have known him from childhood on."

But again I ask, "Is it by looking at your faith this time that you *know* you partly believe it?"

"No," you repeat, "I am thinking of the character of my informant"

Well, this man has scarcely left your room before a third person enters and brings you the same sad news as the first. But this time you say, "Now, *John*, I believe it. Since YOU tell me, I *can* believe it."

Again I press my question (which is, remember, only the re-echo of your own), "How do you KNOW that you so confidently believe your friend John?"

"Because of who and *what* JOHN is," you reply. "He never *has* deceived me, and I don't think he ever will."

Well, then, just in the same way, *I know that I believe the Gospel*; it is because of the One who brings me the news. "If we receive the witness of *men*, the witness of *God* is greater; for this is the witness of God which *He has testified of His Son*... He who DOES NOT BELIEVE GOD HAS MADE HIM A LIAR, because he has not believed the testimony *that God has given of His Son*" (1 John 5:9-10). "Abraham *believed* God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3).

And anxious person once said to a servant of Christ, "Oh, sir, *I can't believe!*" To which the servant wisely and quietly replied, "Indeed, WHO *is it* that you can't believe?" This broke the spell. He had been looking at faith as an indescribable something he must feel inside himself in order to be sure he was all right for heaven; whereas faith always looks outside to a living Person, and His finished work, and quietly listens to the testimony of a faithful God about both.

It is the *outside look* that brings the *inside peace*. When people turn their face towards the sun *their own shadow*s behind them. You cannot look at yourself and a glorified Christ in heaven at the same moment.

Thus we have seen that the blessed PERSON of God's Son wins my confidence. His FINISHED WORK makes me eternally safe. GOD'S WORD *about those who believe in Him* makes *me* unalterably sure. I find in Christ and His work the *way of Salvation*, and in the Word of God the *knowledge of Salvation*.

"But, if *saved*/" you may say "how is it that I have such a fluctuating experience, so often losing all my joy and comfort, and getting as wretched and downcast as I was

before my conversion?" Well, this brings us to our third point, which is

THE JOY OF SALVATION

THE JOY OF SALVATION

THE JOY OF SALVATION

You will find, in the teaching of Scripture, that while you are *saved by Christ's work and assured by God's word* you are maintained in comfort and joy by the *Holy Spirit* who has come to dwell in every true believer

Now you must bear in mind that every saved person still has "the flesh" inside him, i.e., the evil nature he was born with and which, perhaps, showed itself while still a helpless infant on his mother's lap. The Holy Spirit in the believer resists the flesh and is *grieved* by every activity of it, in motive, word or deed. When he is walking "worthy of the Lord," the Holy Spirit will be producing in his soul His blessed fruits — "love, joy, peace," etc., see Gal. 5:22. When he is walking in a fleshly, worldly way the Spirit is grieved, and these fruits are wanting in greater or less measure.

Let me therefore put it for you who do believe in God's Son:

Christ's Work and Your Salvation stand or fall together.

Your Walk and Your Enjoyment stand or fall together.

When *Christ's work* breaks down (and, blessed 24 by God, it *never, never will*), *your salvation* will break down with it. When your *walk* breaks down (and be watchful, for it *may*), *your enjoyment* will break down with it.

Thus it is said of the early disciples (Acts 9:31), that they were "*walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit*" And again in Acts 13:52: "And the disciples were filled with *joy and with the Holy Spirit*"

My spiritual joy will be in proportion to the spiritual character of my walk after I am saved.

Now do you see your mistake? You have been mixing up *enjoyment and your safety*, two widely different things. *When*, through self-indulgence, loss of temper; worldliness, etc., you grieved the Holy Spirit, and lost your joy, you thought your safety was undermined. But again I repeat it: *Your safety hangs on Christ's work FOR you. Your assurance on God's Word TO you.*

Your enjoyment on not grieving the Holy Spirit IN you.

When, as a believer, you do anything to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, your communion with the Father and the Son is, for the time, practically suspended; and it is only when you judge yourself, and confess your sins, that the joy of communion is restored.

Your child has been guilty of some misdemeanor He shows in his expression the evident mark that something is wrong with him. Half an hour before this he was enjoying a walk with you round the garden, admiring what you admired, enjoying

what you enjoyed. In other words, he was in *communion with you*; his feelings and sympathies were in common with yours.

But now all this is changed, and as a naughty, disobedient child he stands in the corner, the very picture of misery.

Upon regretful confession of his wrongdoing you have assured him of forgiveness; but his pride and self-will keep him sobbing there.

Where is now the joy of half an hour ago? All gone. Why? Because communion between you and him has been interrupted.

What has become of the relationship that existed between you and your son half an hour ago? Is that gone too? Is that severed or interrupted? Surely not.

His relationship depends on his birth.

His communion depends on his behavior.

But a little while later he comes out of the corner with a broken will and a broken heart confessing the whole thing from beginning to end, so that you see he hates the disobedience and naughtiness as much as you do, and you take him in your *arms and cover him with kisses*. His joy is restored because *communion* is restored.

When David sinned so grievously in the matter of Uriah's wife, he did not say, "Restore to me *Your salvation*" but "Restore to me *the joy of Your salvation*" (Ps. 51:12).

But to carry our illustration a little farther. Supposing while your child is in the corner of a room there goes a cry of "*house on fire*" through your whole house, what would happen to him? Would he be left in the corner to be consumed with the burning, falling house? Impossible!

Very probably he would be the very first person you would carry out. Ah, yes, you know right well that the *love of relationship* is one thing, and the *joy of communion* quite another

Now, when the believer sins, communion for the time is interrupted, and joy is lost until, with a broken heart, he comes to the Father and confesses his sins.

Then, taking God at His Word, he knows he is forgiven again; for His Word plainly declares that "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).

Oh, then, fellow believer, always bear these two things in mind: There is nothing as strong as the link of relationship; and nothing as tender as the link of communion.

All the combined power and counsel of earth and Hell cannot separate the former while an impure motive or an idle word will break the latter

If you are troubled with a cloudy half hour get low before God, consider your ways. And when the thief that has *robbed you of your joy* has been detected, drag him at once to the light, confess your sin to God your Father and judge yourself most unsparingly for the unwatchful careless state of soul that allowed the thief to enter unchallenged.

But never, *never*, NEVER, confound your *safety* with your *joy*

Don't imagine, however that the judgment of God falls the least bit more leniently on the believer's sin than on the unbeliever's. He does not have two ways of dealing judicially with sin, and He could no more pass by the believer's sin without judging it, than He could pass by the sins of a rejecter of His precious Son. But there is this great difference between the two, that the believer's sins were *all* known to God, and all laid upon His own provided Lamb when He hung on the cross at Calvary, and that there and then, once and forever, the great "*criminal question*" of his guilt was raised and settled, judgment falling on the blessed Substitute in the believer's stead, "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24).

The Christ-rejecter must bear *his own sins* in his own person in the lake of fire forever. But, when a genuine believer fails, the "*criminal question*" of sin *cannot be raised against* him, the Judge Himself having settled that once for all on the cross; but the *communion question is raised within him* by the Holy Spirit as often as he grieves the Spirit.

Allow me, in conclusion, to give you another illustration. It is a beautiful moonlight night. The moon is at full, and shining in more than ordinary silver brightness. A man is gazing intently down a deep, still well, where he sees the moon reflected, and thus remarks to a friendly bystander: "How beautifully fair and round she is tonight! How quietly and majestically she rides along!" He has just finished speaking when suddenly his friend drops a small pebble into the well, and he now exclaims, "Now the moon is all broken to pieces, and the fragments are shaken together in the greatest disorder!"

"What gross absurdity!" is the astonished response of his companion. "*Look up, man!* The moon hasn't changed one bit. *It is the condition of the well that reflects the moon that has changed.*"

Apply the simple figure yourself. Your heart is the well. When there is no allowance of evil the blessed Spirit of God takes of the glories and preciousness of Christ, and reveals them to you for your comfort and joy. But the moment a wrong motive is cherished in the heart, or an idle word escapes the lips unjudged, the Holy Spirit begins to disturb the well, your happy experiences are smashed to pieces, and you are all restless and disturbed inside, until in brokenness of spirit before God you confess your sin (the disturbing thing) and thus get restored once more to the calm, sweet joy of communion.

But when your heart is all disturbed, do I need to ask, *Has Christ's work changed?* No, no. Then your *Salvation* is not altered.

Has God's Word changed? Surely not. Then the certainty of your Salvation has

received no shock.

Then, what has changed? It's the action of the Holy Spirit in you that has changed, and instead of taking of the glories of Christ, and filling your heart with the sense of His worthiness. He is grieved at having to turn aside from this delightful job to fill you with the sense of your sin and *unworthiness*.

He takes from you your present comfort and joy until you judge and resist the evil thing that He judges and resists. When this is done communion with God is restored again.

The Lord makes us to be increasingly jealous over ourselves, so that we don't grieve "the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

However weak your faith may be, rest assured of this, that the blessed One who has won your confidence will never change.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and FOREVER" (Heb. 13:8).

The work He has accomplished will never change.

"Whatever God *does*, it shall be forever Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it" (Eccl. 3:14).

The *word* He has spoken will never change. "The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures FOREVER" (1 Pet. 1:24-25).

Thus the object of my trust the foundation of my safety, and the ground of my certainty, are equally ETERNALLY UNALTERABLE.

"My love is oft-times low.

My joy still ebbs and flows;

But peace with Him remains the same.

No change Jehovah knows.

I change, He changes not;

God's Christ can never die;

His love, not mine, the resting-place.

His truth, not mine, the tie"

Once more, let me ask, "WHICH CLASS ARE YOU TRAVELING?" Turn your heart to God, I beg you, and answer that question to *Him*.

"Let *God be true but every man a liar*" (Rom. 3:4). "He who has received His testimony has certified that *God is true*" (John 3:33).

May the joyful assurance of possessing this "great salvation" be yours, now and "till He comes."

George Cutting