



HOW MAY I
BE SURE?

BY
INGLIS FLEMING.



G. MORRISH,
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HOW MAY I BE SURE ?

HOW may I be sure that it is all right with me as to my soul's eternal welfare? How may I know that my sins are forgiven?

Such questions as these are constantly being asked by those who have found out that they are sinners before God, and who long to be at rest in His presence.

Many people, young and old, have been helped in this matter by the simple gospel story told out in Isaiah liii. 6 and Acts xiii. 37-9.

Let us look at these verses together, and as we do so may God give light and blessing upon them.

The prophet Isaiah and the apostle Paul both speak of the same GREAT PERSON, the SON OF GOD, the mighty Creator and Upholder of all things.

It was He alone who could bring us salvation and blessing. And to do this He must suffer for us upon the cross.

Have you thought of this? Why was Christ forsaken by God when upon the cross? Why did He suffer such untold

sorrows there? It was not for Himself, was it? No! indeed He never sinned. He never turned aside to do His own will or to go His own way even for an instant, and yet, as our first verse tells us, "He was wounded," "He was bruised," "The chastisement . . . was upon Him."

Why was this, then? The answer is simple. It was for us, for you, for me.

He was wounded. Why? For our transgressions.

He was bruised. Why? For our iniquities.

He was chastised. Why? That we might have peace, and as a blessed result "With His stripes" "We are healed."

Do you not see that Christ's wounding and our healing go together?

The three things—wounding, bruising, chastising—were known by Him, once, that the one thing—healing—might be known by us now and for ever.

The *past* for the Son of God was the wounding, bruising, chastising, and the *present* for the believer is the healing.

Thus it stands so simply in that glorious verse. He was wounded that

we might be healed, and we are healed because He was wounded.

The first four words and the last three words put together give the story: "But He *was* WOUNDED . . . we *are* HEALED." The two little sentences answer to one another like one blade of a pair of scissors answers to the other blade; one would be of little use without the other. Was Christ wounded for us? Then we are healed by Him. The two are joined together. God righteously heals us now because He righteously wounded Christ when He was on the cross.

Let me use a simple illustration, so that the very youngest reader may understand. A little girl, whom we will call Carrie, is naughty at table, and is told by her father to go and stand outside the dining-room door for five minutes as a punishment. With tears in her eyes she obeys. Just as she closes the door upon herself, her brother Robert, who knows that his father is a man of his word and will not let Carrie off unless the punishment is borne, says, "Father, may I take Carrie's place,

and be counted naughty instead of Carrie?"

The father permits this.

Now suppose the housemaid comes downstairs and sees Robert outside the door. She says to herself, "Ah, Master Robert has been up to his tricks again!" and then, going into the kitchen, she says to the cook, "What do you think I saw just now? Master Robert is standing outside the dining-room door; you may be sure he has been doing wrong, or he would not be there." Now what a mistake she is making. Robert is there for no fault of his own, but out of love to Carrie. He has taken her place and is bearing her punishment. Carrie has done the wrong and Robert suffers in her stead.

Now Christ was "outside the door" for us that we might be inside the door with Him in the Father's house for ever. He came into the world that He might save us, and to do this He took our place and suffered in our stead.

As men looked upon Him they thought Him stricken of God, smitten and afflicted because of something He must have done;

but we know that He was sinless, spotless, stainless, and that He was there for us.

Now all that work is done. He who was delivered for our offences has been raised again that we might be justified, that is, that we might be made righteous before God.

As Acts xiii. 37 states,

“God raised Him from the dead,”

and it could not be otherwise. Such was the glory of the Son of God, that if He went into death for us He could not remain there.

He had said, when on the cross,

“It is finished,”

and the empty grave in Joseph's garden, where they buried Him, tells the same tale—“It is finished”—for He who died for our sins is risen again.

Do you know that Christ is *risen* for you? For you He died, for you He rose, for you He lives in glory at the right hand of God. Yes, the throne of God echoes back those words of blessing and repeats, “It is finished.” That Christ is there shows that everything that was

needed was done by Him when He suffered on the tree. When there, as we have seen, a holy sin-hating God dealt in righteous judgment with His holy sin-bearing Son, but now that same holy sin-hating God has crowned Him with glory and honour.

So His own words on the cross show that the work "is finished"; that He is risen shows "it is finished"; and that He is glorified in heaven shows "it is finished."

What more do you want to make it plain to you?

Now from the glory where He sits God sends the message of blessing to man—"BE IT KNOWN UNTO YOU THEREFORE" (that is because Christ has died and has been raised again) "THAT THROUGH THIS MAN IS PREACHED UNTO YOU THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

Look well at this sentence, dear anxious reader. Every word of it is important.

"Be it *known* unto you." God Himself, by His servant, makes the announcement. It is something to be *known*; not something to be felt, or experienced, or real-

ised, but something to be known by us because it is made known by God Himself. Happy feelings, experiences, and realisations all have their place, but this knowledge comes first. Now what is to be known ?

“ That through this man,”

through Christ, the Son of God. Not through you—you are not great enough ; not through some prince, or pope, or priest, or preacher—not one of these is great enough ; not through an angel or archangel—they are not great enough. No, indeed, only through the Son of God could the blessing come to you. Keep your eye upon Him then. Look not to yourself or any other sinner for the blessing. Look to Christ risen and at God’s right hand in heaven ; and look to Him alone, for through Him only

*“ Is preached unto you the forgiveness
of sins.”*

Is this the very thing you stand in need of and desire to know ? Well, then, believe the tidings. The full and final forgiveness of your sins is made known

through Him. It is wholly on account of who He is and what He has done that this great pardon is thus preached to you.

But perhaps you say, "I believe all you have said, I believe Christ is the only Saviour, I believe He died for our sins, I believe God raised Him again and that He is in heaven, because all His work to put away sin is done, and I believe that pardon is preached. However, I do not know whether it is mine or not, I do not know whether I am pardoned, I do not yet know whether I am right as to my soul's eternal welfare."

Let us go on, then, to the next verse, and ponder its blessed words with earnest attention—

"And by Him all that believe are justified from all things"

from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Notice especially four things—

1. The right Person.
2. The right people.
3. The right blessing.
4. The right amount.

1. *The right Person.* “By *Him*”—the blessed risen Son of God. As we have seen, no other person was great enough to gain the blessing for us. No words can express this too strongly. By *Him* the blessing comes—by *Him* alone. *Not* by works of righteousness of ours. *Not* by bitter tears which we have shed. *Not* by earnest prayers which we have uttered. *Not* by agonising feelings which we have known. *Not* by long penances which we have performed. *Not* by our being baptised or confirmed, or partaking of the Lord’s Supper. *Not* by Mary, the mother of our Lord, blessed as she was. *Not* by apostles or saints. By none of these, nor by all of these together, but “by *Him* all that believe are justified from all things.”

2. *The right people.* “All that believe.” These are the right people. They take their place as guilty sinners before God, owning that they have no goodness, or merit, or title at all, and simply believe the good news which God sends them concerning His Son. Are you among this people? Do you say, “But my faith”

is so small and so weak"? Well, that is a little matter if your faith is in the right Person. He is not small. He is great enough for God's glory, and great enough for your blessing. Your faith may grow, your Saviour never will.

Someone said to an aged woman who enjoyed perfect peace, "Oh! but you are a woman of such great faith." "No," she responded, "I am a woman of little faith, but I have a great Saviour."

The least bit of faith in that great Saviour is salvation. The person we may call "Strong Faith" is among the "all that believe," and the one we may call "Weak Faith" is among them too. "Much Faith" is among them and so is "Little Faith."

It is not the amount of faith I have, but the *Person* in whom I believe, which is so important.

Can you not believe the blessed God? He cannot lie. He cannot deny Himself. Why should you doubt Him? He gave His Son for you. He dealt with Him in righteous judgment at the cross for you; He has raised Him from the dead

for you ; and now He sends the message of forgiveness to you.

Do not look at your faith to see if it is the right kind of faith, but look at the One whom God has given to be your Saviour. Is He not the right Saviour for you? The right people are those who believe in the right Person, and "by Him all that believe are justified from all things."

3. *The right blessing.* "Are justified from all things." They *are* justified *now*, and they are privileged to know it on the authority of the Word of God. He speaks the word. Faith receives it because He speaks it, and rests upon it with fearless confidence. If He says, "All that believe are justified," Simple Faith takes Him at His word, and making it personal says, "I who believe am justified, and I know it simply because He says it."

But what is it to be justified? It is to be accounted righteous by God. God reckons every believer clear of every charge in His sight, and He is just in doing this, because all the righteous

claims of His throne have found their full answer at the cross. Then God righteously judged His Son. Now God righteously justifies the believer on Him. As Romans v. 10 shows, we are *Now* justified by Christ's *blood*. The just foundation of the blessing is in the precious blood of Christ. Not in it *and* something else, but in it *alone*. To seek to add anything to it would be to cast a slur upon its value, and to dishonour the Son of God.

And mark well that the time for the blessing to be enjoyed is *now*. "All who believe *are* justified." We do not fear the coming wrath, for He who died for us is alive again, and will not suffer us to come into the judgment which is to fall upon the world of the ungodly. "By Him all that believe *are* justified from all things."

4. *The right amount.* "From all things." Nothing remains to be gone into, for everything has been gone into already. Nothing remains to be settled, for everything has been entirely and eternally settled in the cross of our Lord

Jesus Christ, and "all who believe are justified *from all things*" as a result.

"Though the restless foe accuses,
Sins recounting like a flood,
Every charge our God refuses:
Christ has answered with His blood."

Devil, demon, or man may rake up this or that charge against us, but they can never rake up a charge which has not been already settled to God's complete satisfaction.

So if the enemy tempts you by pressing home upon you the question, "What about your many sins?" answer him by pressing home upon him another question, "What about my mighty Saviour?" and add, "If my sins had been ten thousand times more than they were, and ten thousand times worse than they were, my Saviour's precious blood would have blotted them out, and I, as a believer upon Him, should still be justified *from all things*."

Then, further, "from *all things*" takes in not only all that which I have done—my sins—but all that which I am in myself as a sinner.

Now it may be that some reader of these pages is troubled because of what he discovers in himself. Perhaps he is saying, "I do believe that the Lord Jesus bore my sins, and that they are forgiven; but how is it that I find such horrible thoughts passing through my mind and such horrible wishes springing up in my heart? I hate these thoughts and wishes, but they make me wonder at times whether I have not made a great blunder, and whether I am not a hypocrite after all. How can I be a child of God and have such desires and reasonings?"

Blessed, indeed, it is to know that in Christ's death God took into account all that we were as well as all that we had done, and that "all who believe" are seen "in Christ." All that they were was judged and set aside in the death of Christ, and they are seen by God in all the acceptance of Christ risen from the dead. They are made "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6).

As I close I would warn any who are seeking to be justified in any other way

than by Christ. You cannot be justified by the law of Moses. The law of Moses can only condemn the sinner. Cursing, not blessing, is connected with it. Judgment, not justification, must be the portion of every sinner who seeks to gain righteousness by it. What can be clearer than the solemn words, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" ? (Gal. iii. 10). My reader, you and I are both cursed by the law as sinners. Thank God, Christ receives such sinners. He died for such sinners. He blesses such sinners. I have come to Him. You may come to Him just as you are, just where you are, and just now. Then, believing the good news, you will be among the all who believe, who are

Justified from all things,

and be set free in conscience so as to serve God until the Lord Jesus Christ calls you to meet Him and be with Him for ever.