**“Getting Rid of the Burden” The Bible Echo 12, 43.**

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“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” asked Job; and he replied to his own question: “Not one.” {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 1}

All who have ever lived have known themselves sinners, for the law of God speaks that “all the world may become guilty before God.” Romans 3:19. Even the unevangelised heathen, without the written revelation of God, have sufficient trace of the law of God written in their hearts by nature so that they know better than they do, and their consciences bear witness to their guilt. Romans 2:11, 15. {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 2}

How to get rid of the burden has been the problem. Paul’s difficulty has been that of all who have tried to loose the burden themselves: “The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate that I do.” “How to perform that which is good I find not.” Romans 7:14, 15, 18. He was trying to bring a clean thing out of an unclean. But when he found Jesus Christ, he found power that was able to destroy the carnal mind and work the righteousness of God in the life. And the awful burden was gone. Out of the heart renewed came the cleansed life. {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 3}

Luther, toiling on his knees up the so-called holy stairs in Rome, was trying to punish sin out of his flesh; but when he heard the voice speaking, “The just shall live by faith,” he began to learn of a power able to set him free. All that system of penance and punishing of the flesh that has come into Christendom with monkery is based on the idea that there is good in man, and if only he is punished sufficiently the evil will be suppressed and the good remain. True, Jesus said, “If thy hand offend thee, cut it off,” but it was only a striking way of emphasising His teaching that “from within, out of the heart of men” proceeds the evil. The trouble is not with hand, or foot, or tongue, but with the heart, and only the Lord Jesus who can give a new heart can deal with the trouble. The new heart and the new life come with the free forgiveness of sin, and if any weary, heavy-laden one will but confess his helplessness, and choose the life of obedience, the gift is his by the power of God. Professing Christians who still want to be saved in sin and not front sin need this message of life and righteousness by the gift of God, and the myriad souls in darkness who know nothing of a burden-bearing, loving Saviour need it. {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 4}

Rome has no monopoly of penance and self-salvation. It is the religion of human nature. The Hindu, on his pilgrimage to a distant shrine may make his way on hands and knees or rolling over and over along the rough way; but his burden rolls with him. He may hold an arm in one position until shrunken and fixed; but the guilt is in the heart still. A veteran Indian missionary recently told a story of a seeker after liberty that is typical. Many years ago, after a days’ work among the villages, he returned to his tent. Near by it a venerable grey-haired Brahmin was engaged in counting his beads and performing a wearisome service before a shrine. He says:- {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 5}

Much struck by his reverent demeanour and evident earnestness, we watched him through the corded meshes of our tent window; and when he had finished his devotions, and had sat down to rest, we went out and, courteously addressing him, asked him what he sought by these prayers and circumambulations. {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 6}

“Oh, sirs,” said he, in a tone that struck us as one of intense earnestness, “I am seeking to get rid of the burden of sin. All my life I have been seeking it; but each effort that I make is as unsuccessful as the one before, and still the burden is here. My pilgrimages and prayers and penances for sixty years have all been in vain. Alas I know not how my desire can be accomplished.” {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 7}

Then, in answer to our inquiries, he gave us the story of his life. He told us how, in early life, he had been sorely troubled by the thought of his unexpiated sins; that his parents had both died when he was seventeen years of age, leaving him an only child, sole heir of their wealth; that the priests whom he consulted told him that if he would give all his property to endow a temple the burden of sin would be removed. {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 8}

He gave his property, all of it. He endowed a temple; but the burden of sin was no lighter. His mind was not at peace. Obedient to further advice from the priests, his counsellors, he made the pilgrimage on foot all the long way to Benares, the holy city. He spent two years in the precincts of the temples in worship. He spent two years in bathing in the holy Ganges. “But,” said he, “the Ganges water washed the foulness from my skin, not the foulness from my soul, and still the old burden was there, uneased.” He told us how he had gone from thence, on foot, all the way to Rameswaram; begging his food all the two thousand miles; for he had given all his money to the temple, and thence again to Srirangam, and thence to other holy places. He told us how he had spent his whole life in these pilgrimages, and in penances, and in desert wanderings, apart from his kind, living on roots and nuts and jungle fruits, remaining for years at a time in the forest jungles, in the vain search for relief from the burden of sin. {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 9}

“‘And now, sirs,’” said he, ‘my life is almost gone: my hair is thin and white; my eyes are dim; my teeth are gone; my cheeks are sunken; my body is wasted; I am an old, old man; and yet, sirs, the burden of sin is just as heavy as when, a young man, I started in pursuit of deliverance. Oh, sirs, does your Veda tell how I can get rid of this burden and be at peace? Our Vedas have not shown me how.’ {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 10}

“How gladly did we tell him of our gracious “Burden-bearer,” and of His loving call, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” How eagerly did he listen as we told him of Jesus Christ, the God-man, the Saviour of the world, and told him what He had done for our salvation. How gladly did he pore over the Gospels we gave him, and what earnest questions did he ask during the day as to points in their teachings which he did not quite understand. During that night he left and went upon his way, taking the Gospels with him, and we never again saw him. {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 11}

Though so many years have intervened, his earnest, reverent countenance remains photographed on my memory, and I shall look for him up there among the redeemed; for I believe that he was in earnest in seeking deliverance from the burden of sin; in vain, indeed, as he said, through Hinduism; I trust not in vain through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. {BEST October 25, 1897, par. 12}

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