**Would You Be Free from the Burden of Sin?**

*by Harry Osborne*

The Scripture draws a parallel between the taxing effects of burdens borne by the physical man and the effects of the greater burdens often present on the spiritual man. Just like the physical man can be burdened by afflictions to body, mind and circumstances, so can our spiritual man be burdened by numerous factors that would take us away from our focus on the Lord and our eternal destiny. However, the effects of a burdened soul are far worse than the increased difficulty and suffering associated with our physical burdens. The burdens associated with the spiritual man are linked to everlasting consequences.

The Bible teaches us that our sins are heavy burdens upon our soul. David spoke of such saying, *"For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me"* (Psalm 38:4). Other passages refer to sin in the same way. Sin is a burden too heavy for any person to lift from the soul.

But the burden of sin is not always apparent to the sinner or those surrounding the sinner. Sometimes the sinner is deceived by sin (Hebrews 3:13). Some sins are kept secret (Psalm 19:12; 90:8). Some people conceal their sins from others (Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 29:15). Does that change the effect of the sins? No, the wages of sin is still death (Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

However, the Word of God also makes plain the means by which we can find rest from the heavy burden of sin. When we look to Jesus, we find the needed help in taking our sins away. Notice His promise of help:

*"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28-30).

Paul told the Christians to whom he wrote that they were dead spiritually as a result of their sins, but were made alive by the grace of Christ (Ephesians 2:1-10). Salvation is not earned by man. Regardless of what one does, he does not **merit** forgiveness. Man is not strong enough to lift the load of sin himself, but Christ can and will.

Yet, the fact that Christ promises to lift our burden of sin by His grace does not free us from meeting the conditions He commands. Grace does not cease to be *grace* when it is extended **conditionally**.

If a speaker offered a $1000 to each person in the audience who got out of his seat, walked to the front, and took the money from the speaker's hand, would the recipients have earned the $1000 by meeting those conditions? Obviously not, it was still a gift! That gift was conditional, but it was no less a gift.

So it is with Christ and the gift of salvation. He says, "*Come to Me*" and "***Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me***." Those are conditions for us to meet in order for Jesus to lift our burden of sin, but His cleansing is still by grace. In order for us to understand what is entailed in those conditions, we must see what else the Bible says about the subject.

Immediately before He ascended to heaven, Jesus spoke of the conditions upon which He would save us. At that time, He laid down in plain terms how we "come," "learn," and take His "yoke" upon us in obedience. Christ says it this way:

*"And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned"* (Mark 16:15-16).

When we come and learn of Christ through the Gospel and take His yoke in obeying that Gospel, we meet the conditions of Christ and we receive the gift of salvation from our sins. We do not **merit** salvation by meeting those conditions any more than the above people earned $1000 by meeting the speaker's conditions. It is still a gift of grace!

Some today question the conditions of faith and/or baptism set by Jesus as being essential. When one teaches that ***both*** conditions are essential to receive salvation, some accuse that one of teaching that we **merit** salvation by works. Why would they so misrepresent simple, plain, Bible teaching?

If Jesus had said, "He who believes and is baptized will receive $1000," I doubt that anyone would question either condition as essential to receive the $1000. Why do some reject the conditions when something far more valuable, salvation, is at stake?

Jesus' offer still continues as it was originally given. He will lift the load of our sins and give us salvation if we will but respond to Him in obedience to His will, meeting His conditions for gracious pardon.

For every soul burdened down with sin, there is rest in Christ. The dreadful toll of sin can be exchanged for the joy of salvation in all who will obey Him. Though some may doubt it, the conditional offer of rest from the burden of our sins constitutes the only way to salvation offered by the grace of God. Failure to realize that our burden of sin is the root problem for our spiritual ills does not change the effect. That burden of sin and its eternal effect remain until we receive the gracious gift of forgiveness and rest for the soul found in Christ.

The old hymn sums up the solution: “Would you be free from your burden of sin? There’s power in the blood, power in the blood.” Through God’s limitless grace available in the death of Christ we can be released from the burden of sin, but only as we come to meet the blood of Christ. Where does the gospel say the alien sinner meets that blood? *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”* (Romans 6:3-4).