

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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Lord, my soul with pleasure springs
When Jesu's name I hear:
And when God the Spirit brings
The word of promise near:
Beauties too, in holiness,
Still delighted I perceive;
Nor have words that can express
The joys Thy precepts give.

Clothed in sanctity and grace,
How sweet it is to see
Those who love Thee as they pass,
Or when they wait on Thee.
Pleasant too to sit and tell
What we owe to love Divine;
Till our bosoms grateful swell,
And eyes begin to shine.

Those the comforts I possess,
Which God shall still increase,
All His ways are pleasantness,
And all His paths are peace.
Nothing Jesus did or spoke,
Henceforth let me ever slight;
For I love His easy yoke,
And find His burden light.

William Cowper (1731-1800)

THE EASY YOKE

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:30

Not only had Jesus just given the greatest invitation: which was "Come unto me," but then He spoke to those who are overwhelmed with weariness, exhaustion and a load of burdens; and He said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly

in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Following the invitation was the instruction to take His “yoke” or “burden” up and thus learn by experience. You are to swap your burdens for His light burden. Literally, Jesus said, it is “the yoke of me.” What an exchange! No, we are to shed the yoke of the world, the flesh, and the devil for the yoke of Christ our Lord. We are now disciples of our Lord. The great Teacher said, “learn of me,” so the great invitation was given by the great Redeemer, and the lack of instruction was supplied by the great Teacher. What do we learn from Him? “I am meek and lowly in heart” and this describes His nature in evidence by His holy life. His “meekness” demonstrated His power under control when He was challenged, He did not strike back. His “lowliness” was greatly demonstrated when He was afflicted and oppressed for He opened not His mouth. Those who take His yoke and learn of Him “shall find rest unto their souls.” Those who come to Him in grace, as His truth expresses, and His yoke embraces, find glorious soul rest.

Peter Waldo, the leader of the Waldensians was a wealthy merchant of Lyons, France. The Lord used the death of a friend of his at a feast to bring him to Christ. He then had the Word of God translated by two erudite scholars into his own language. Thereafter he gave up this world going everywhere following his Lord preaching the claims of Christ using the words, “Look to Jesus! Listen to Jesus! Learn of Jesus!” Thus, the yoke of Christ was willingly shouldered by him.

This leads us to consider our text, “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” What is meant by an “easy” yoke? The word “easy” (*chrestos* is somewhat peculiar) can have the sense of fits well or is a good fit. Thus, the sense suits the practice in that part of the world of fitting each ox with its own yoke so that its neck is not galled by a misfitting yoke which would render the animal useless. Just as an ox was fitted for its own yoke so the child of God who takes Christ’s yoke finds it custom fitted. Thus, it is a pleasant yoke to wear. “Bishop Hammond said that ‘it is a yoke that any man is the better for taking on him; and if he considered it well, he would put it on of his own accord, and prefer it before liberty, or any other service.’ It is ... the reverse of a *galling* yoke. It is *pleasant* and *agreeable*. The part on which it presses takes *kindly* to it” [James Morison].

“My burden is light,” our Lord said. The Lord’s way is the way of pleasantness, and His paths are the way of peace (1 John 5:3; Prov. 3:17). A little boy was helping his father unpack some boxes of dry goods. His father took the pieces of goods from the box and put them on the outstretched arms of the of his son. “Don’t you think you have load enough?” said someone passing by. “Father knows best. He knows how much I ought to carry,” replied the boy. He knew that his father, who loved him, would not give him more than he could carry. And so, it is with our Heavenly Father. Sometimes we think He is putting more on us than we can carry, and we become fretful. Sometimes He adds sorrow to

sorrow until we think we cannot bear the load, but He knows best, and will not give us more than we can bear, for He is a kind and loving Father who doeth all things well.

“I want ... that, whatever yoke and burden there may be connected with Christ, that yoke is easy, and that burden is light. I hope you will not pervert this text as some people do. They misquote it by saying that ‘the yoke of Christianity is easy, and the burden of Christianity is light.’ I am not greatly concerned about the yoke or burden of Christianity; to me, the charm of our text is that, here, we have Christ Himself saying to us, ‘My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’ I want you to have before you, not some impalpable, visionary, imaginary thing, but the very Lord that bought us with His precious blood speaking with those lips which are as lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, and pointing with His pierced hand to the yoke and to the burden which He calls especially His own, and saying, as He said when He was here upon the earth, ‘My yoke is easy, and my burden is light’” [C. H. Spurgeon].

Matthew Henry was writing an account of his father Philip Henry's life. On one occasion his father was preaching on the text, Matthew 11:30, “My yoke is easy;” and insisted upon many things to prove the yoke of Christ an easy yoke, he at last appealed to the experiences of all that had taken on that yoke: “Call now, if there be any that will answer you, and to which of the saints will you turn? Turn to which you will, and they will all agree that they have found wisdom's ways pleasantness, and Christ's commandments not grievous; and (said he) I will here witness for one, who, through grace, has in some poor measure been drawing this yoke now, above thirty years, and I have found it an easy yoke, and like my choice too well to change.”