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## *Crowning the Year with Goodness*

“Thou crownest the year with thy goodness”—Psa. 65:11.

What an appropriate Scripture to meditate upon as we look back upon the year just closed! It is fitting that the Lord's people should continually keep trace of the mercies and blessings they enjoy—otherwise the pressure of the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches would so crowd in upon our minds and hearts as to cover from our observations and ultimately choke up completely the springs of divine grace, which, kept open, minister continually to our joy and refreshment in the holy spirit.

To this end it is appropriate that we have a daily review of the blessings we enjoy—that every evening we call to mind the privileges enjoyed, the providences which have guided our way, and the blessings, both temporal and spiritual, which have come to us; some of them in common with the world in general and others of a special kind, known to and appreciated by those only who know the Shepherd and are known of Him—who hear His voice and to whom the rod and staff, His chastenings and guidance, are continually a comfort and joy.

It is appropriate, too, that we take weekly reviews, looking at the same mercies and blessings from a still broader standpoint of observation, reminding us of the rest into which we have entered through faith in the precious blood, and also of the rest that remains for the people of God, whereof God has given us assurance in that on the first day of the week He raised up Jesus from the dead—Heb.4:3,9.

But it is with special appropriateness that at the close of the still larger cycle of a year we should take a still broader and more comprehensive view of our experiences, looking circumspectly at the way we have travelled and considering well which

have been the steps which hindered progress, and which have been proper steps in the footprints of Jesus, bringing us nearer to the goal—the “mark” to which we must surely attain if we would be accounted worthy of a share in the promised kingdom.

A year may seem a longer or a shorter period, according to the circumstances. To the mind of childhood it is a very long period, while to more developed minds, filled with the activities of life, it seems much shorter—speeding all too rapidly to permit the accomplishment of all the things desired to be achieved. Then again, the year will seem proportionately long as it has contained draughts of bitter experiences or sufferings, mental or physical—proportionately short, as it has contained joys and pleasures which seem to slip away all too quickly. To a certain extent such experiences are common to all mankind; yet the Christian, especially if he has been for some time in the school of Christ and is somewhat developed both in knowledge and in grace, has a larger capacity than others for grasping and appreciating life; because, no matter how unsound his natural mind may have been, he has now “the mind of Christ”, “the spirit of a sound mind”, which is far better able than the natural mind to estimate matters at their true worth.

Such an advanced Christian looks back through the year and recalls life's storms as well as its sunshine, its sorrows as well as its joys, its tears as well as its smiles, and sorrows not as others who have no hope (but who, instead, have a vague fear and dread of the future, both of present life and that which is to come). His troubles have been divested of their fearful features, and minimized by the spirit of a sound mind, and the instructions of God's Word, which assures all such that the trials, difficulties and adversities of life, rightly accepted as lessons, are blessings in disguise—

which will work out "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" in the life to come—2 Cor.4:16, 17.

He will perceive too, that his joys have been of a purer and a more solid kind than any he ever knew before he was begotten of the holy spirit. They have not had commingled with them the bitterness of envy, malice and hatred, but have been unalloyed; because they have not been rejoicings in iniquity, but rejoicings in the truth. Moreover, they have been much more numerous than ever before; because he not only is able to joy in the Lord, joy in His Word, joy in the holy spirit, joy in fellowship with brethren of like precious faith, but by the grace of God he has been enabled additionally to joy in tribulation also—not because he loved tribulation, but because he loved the patience, the experience, the character, which God assures us are a fruitage which all tribulations must yield us under His providence, if we are rightly exercised thereby—James 1:3, 4; Rom.5:3.

Of whom are all these things true? Not of every man, surely, for alas! we know many who have no such experience—the world that lieth in darkness knows not God. Nor are these experiences true of all people of intelligence—nominally Christians. Surely but comparatively few of those who profess the name of Christ enjoy these precious experiences, or will be able to look back upon the year with satisfaction of this kind, realizing that God has crowned the year with His goodness! Many who cannot rejoice in the goodness which we have enumerated foregoing, will nevertheless return thanks for temporal good things and mercies, and strive to peer into the darkness with which an insufficient knowledge and an insufficient faith enshrouds the trials and difficulties of life, which to them are incomprehensible and sources of no joy, and generally of little advantage. Because they have not taken the necessary step of full consecration to the Lord, to bring them under His protecting care and under the enlightening influence of His Word through His spirit; or, having taken the step of consecration, they have not been performing their vows, but seeking to serve both God and Mammon, they are not pleasing either, and not receiving satisfactory blessing from either.

The class which can and does look back through the year from the standpoint that we have described—the class which looking back can see that God's goodness has crowned every feature of life throughout the year, is the "little flock", the true Church, whose names are written in heaven—the Body of Christ, the Bride Class. They are described by the Prophet in preceding verses of this Psalm. They are the true Zion, which shall

shortly be set up, filled with divine glory, the joy of the whole earth, and the divine channel of blessing to all the families of mankind; "For out of Zion shall go the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."—Hear the Prophet:—

"Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion:  
And unto thee shall the vow be performed.  
O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all  
flesh come!  
Iniquities prevail against me: as for my  
transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.  
Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and  
causest to approach unto thee.  
That he may dwell in thy courts.  
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy  
house,  
The holy place of thy temple."

Here we have a description of the elect Church, of which Christ is the Head, and all the faithful royal priests who, now fulfilling their vows of sacrifice, are companions in the sufferings of Christ, as by and by they shall be His companions also in the glory that shall be revealed—Rom. 8:17, 18. They are God's choice, or His "elect", for, as the Apostle informs us, God has predestinated that this class whom He will choose shall all be copies of His Son—Rom. 8:29. They shall dwell in His house—they will be members of the great temple which the Lord God is building of spiritual stones in and through which He will bless the world with a knowledge of Himself and His grace—1 Pet. 2:4-8.

Is it any wonder that these can rejoice in spirit, saying, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits"? "He hath put a new song into my mouth, even the lovingkindness of our God." Is it any wonder that these looking back can see in the year that is past that which has blessed and rejoiced them in every sense of the word has been of divine goodness, and that thus God has crowned the whole year with His favour toward them? These can say with faithful Joshua—"Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake"—Joshua 23:14.

These are assured by their Lord that in the Father's house are many mansions, many conditions, suitable to the many kinds of His intelligent creatures; nevertheless there was no mansion for them, because they were to be a new creation, "partakers of the divine nature", and hence it would be necessary for Him to go away and "prepare a place for them"—a heavenly condition. These, knowing they must be prepared for the place, as well as the place be prepared for them, are enabled to rejoice under every blow of the hammer of discipline, because they realize that it is a part of the Master's work in their preparation to fill the place to which they have been called in the Father's house—which will be the

place of God's temple, in which they are to be living stones—1 Pet. 2:5.

And if the experiences and sentiments of this "little flock" are beyond the understanding of the natural man, his neighbours and friends, is it any wonder? Despised and rejected of men, they are nevertheless God's royal priesthood; "as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold they live"—a life more abundant. In all these things they have cause to rejoice, realizing that the path in which they tread has in it the footprints of Him who redeemed them and became the leader and forerunner of this priesthood. The world knows us not, even as it knew Him not.

As we thus review the leadings of divine providence during the year that is past, let God's goodness and mercy stimulate our faith and confidence in Him as respects the New Year now with us. A proper retrospect on the part of a proper child of God will enable him not only to render thanks for the past, but to look up and lift up his head, realizing that our deliverance is nearer than when we first believed; and that He that began a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it, if we will but continue to submit our wills, our lives, our all, to His wisdom and loving care—Rom. 13:11; Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 5:5, 6.

### *Daily Service*

**T**he Lord's business is His people's vocation.

"Vocation" is the term that describes the special business of any person, while the word "avocation" describes an occasional business. The Apostle Paul's vocation was that of a minister of the truth, while his avocation or occasional employment, when necessary to provide things honest and decent in the sight of God and men, was tentmaking. Similarly all of the Lord's people should consider that their vocation or calling is of God, and relates to the special or spiritual ministry in which He privileges us to engage as fellow-servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to provide the necessities of life it is necessary that we should also have some earthly employment; but this we should always regard, not as our vocation, not as our chief business in life, but merely as our avocation or temporary engagement incidentally necessary to our chief or principal business.

The question should now properly be in the minds of all who realize themselves as consecrated to the Lord, members of the Royal Priesthood: To what extent am I fulfilling my present priestly office and performing daily as I have opportunity my appointed work of sacrifice?

Too many, under the false teachings of Babylon,

both in word and custom have come to consider that worldly gain, honour, ease and general self-preservation constitute the reasonable service of the Lord's people. Sacrificers are looked upon as deluded fanatics, especially in proportion as the sacrificing is done for the truth's sake, in the interest of spiritual things. We are, however, not to be taught of the world, nor by a cold worldly-wise churchianity; but we are to hearken to the voice of the good Shepherd, to hear His Word, to learn of Him, if we would be prepared by Him, in the school of Christ, for the glorious things promised us as His joint-heirs in the future. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him."

We can see how the Apostle, even though finding it necessary at times to engage in the business of tentmaking, might be considered as a priest, whose time, energy and talents were all sacrificed to the Lord, and given freely in serving His people, in doing good unto all men as he had opportunity, especially unto the household of faith; but how can others who have not the opportunity, not the talents, nor the open door for such special service as his, be sacrificing priests, when as a matter of necessity nearly all of their time must be given to their various employments, which Providence seems to have opened before them as their avocations? When it is necessary to spend nearly all of eight to twelve hours per day in the service of our avocations, how can such consider or serve the interests of their vocations, the priesthood?

The Lord has very graciously made arrangements for this very condition. He assures us in His Word that it is not the amount we shall accomplish in His cause, but the spirit, the desire and the effort which is manifested, that in His estimation would indicate the degree of self-sacrifice. He graciously declares that if our hearts be given to Him, whatsoever we may have need to do, may be done as unto the Lord, and will be accepted by Him. From this standpoint we can see that the work which the Apostle Paul did in his avocation passed to his credit as a part of his vocation, just as much as the other part of his time which he spent in more congenial methods of proclaiming the Gospel. Similarly, we can see that those working at their different occupations, if at heart fully consecrated, would be seeking to do their work as unto the Lord. If they are careful to use all other opportunities for proclaiming the truth, for serving the brethren, for doing good unto all men, the improvement of the few opportunities coming to them and their willingness to sacrifice personal taste and conveniences for the service of the truth and for the brethren, would be counted by the Lord as a full sacrifice, because such a disposition in respect of little things would imply an equal faithfulness in the presence of larger opportunities.

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## Convention News

**W**ith thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for His blessings throughout the four-day Christmas Convention in Melbourne, this brief review of the gatherings is presented at this time. The attendance was very good throughout, with brethren being gladly welcomed from South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland. Our Polish Australian brethren also joined in the gatherings, and contributed helpfully during the various sessions.

During the four days two Bible Studies were conducted, 16 addresses were delivered by the brethren, also there were Fellowship and Testimony meetings, a Hymn session and informal fellowship completed a helpful program.

Following the opening praise and prayer, and a brief address of welcome, the first Bible Study on Ephesians 3:17-21 provided a very helpful presentation of the Apostle Paul's prayer of exhortation to the Ephesian Church, and to all Christians since. The real consecrated Christian life was so very well revealed from this Scriptural passage, made possible to all faithful followers of the Master through the indwelling of the power of God.

On the last day of Convention another Bible Study was conducted on Hebrews 12:1-4. This beautiful passage of Scripture was most helpful to review, as the Apostle presented the examples of the faithful Patriarchs of past ages as a "cloud of witnesses"—martyrs—to encourage the Hebrew Christians, and all God's people since, to "run with patience the race set before them." "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith", not only of Christians, but of all God's people of past, present and future ages, was seen as absolutely essential for true discipleship, and was the main lesson of verses 2 to 4. By Jesus delighting to do His Father's will, to redeem fallen humanity from death, was seen as the main "joy set before him", enabling our Lord to "endure the cross, and despise the shame", resulting in His exaltation "to the right hand of the throne of God." The exhortation to "consider Jesus who endured such contradiction of sinners" was seen as the greatest stimulus to our faith "lest we be wearied and faint

in our minds." It is required that we prove faithful unto death "striving against sin."

During these Bible Studies and for the Testimony and other meetings as required, the use of a roving microphone was of very great help in conveying the thoughts of each contributor to the brethren generally. The supplying of the loud-speaker equipment was also greatly appreciated. The varied subjects chosen for addresses by the brethren proved very helpful, and were as follows—"The Danger of Spiritual Pride"; "God Himself shall be . . . their God—Rev. 21:3"; "The King's Daughter, The Bride"; "Lessons from the Life of Joseph"; "Faith's Foundation"; "Growing into the Lord's Likeness"; "The Presence of the Lord"; "Diligence and Peace—2 Pet. 3:14"; "Israel: To whom (pertaineth)—Rom. 9:4"; "Song of Solomon—Chapter 4"; "Thy Word is Truth—John 17:17"; "Looking Unto Jesus—Heb. 12:2"; "The Walls of Jericho"; "The Glory of God's Will" and "His Burden is Light."

Numerous greetings with assurance of prayers upon the Convention and Christian love were received from Classes and brethren throughout Australia and from overseas, all of which were much appreciated. To all who thus kindly remembered us, and to brethren everywhere, the Christian love from the assembled brethren with the Scriptural message in Eph. 3:17-19, is sent to all.

The Praise and Testimony session provided an opportunity for a number of the brethren to express their thankfulness to the Lord for His overruling in enabling them to attend the Convention, and appreciation for His many blessings throughout the past year, as well as assistance through difficult experiences. The Hymns We Love session was also much enjoyed again this year, as were all the hymns throughout the Convention with the accompaniment of piano, violin and 'cello. The Sisters who contributed with the music added greatly to the enjoyment of praise to the Lord. Likewise, the labours of the Sisters in providing refreshments each day was greatly appreciated, this also being a service as unto the Lord.

The closing address was followed by the usual Love Feast during which the brethren bade each other farewell, while singing—"Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." "God be with you till we meet again" was sung as a parting hymn, and the concluding prayer of thankfulness to God for all His blessings and with request for His oversight and care of all His dear people everywhere, brought the helpful Melbourne Convention for 1983 to a close.

## *His Burden is Light*

(Convention Address)

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”  
—Matt. 11:28-30.

**T**hese words of our Saviour are surely among the richest and loveliest of His recorded sayings. What wonderful blessings and promises they hold out to all who hear His gracious invitation—come to me—find rest—learn of me—take my yoke—my yoke is easy and my burden light.

In the first place, they were addressed by Jesus to His Jewish hearers; they were in bondage to the Law and in addition grievously burdened by oppressive religious leaders who bound heavy burdens on their backs in the form of multitudinous man-made rules and ordinances.

But one writer on these verses has well said—“We who are Gentiles by nature were never under the yoke of the Law, yet in another way we have had a great burden which we were unable to bear—the burden of sin and death. Adam first came under this burden which has brought so great a curse upon the world. We have all borne the weight of sin and its evil accompaniments. So our Master’s words of hope and comfort have brought joy and refreshing to our hearts also, and we have found His offered rest—rest in Him, our true Yokefellow. All who are heavy laden, who appreciate the nature and bitterness of sin, and are striving against it—all these are invited to take His yoke upon them and learn of Him. They are assured that His yoke is easy—for the Lord is able to bear for us all that we lack ability to bear. The Master’s burden is light if accepted in sincerity and in truth, and only those who so receive it can become yokefellows with Him.”

This is the blessed invitation of Jesus—to come and find rest from our own heavy burdens, to take His yoke upon us, assured that His yoke is easy and His burden light. But on the face of it, to be called upon to bear any burden, whether heavy or comparatively light seems hardly a cause for joy. Nevertheless, viewed rightly, we shall see that the Master can and does give real rest and peace to all who labour and are heavy laden and who come to Him. To all who are weighed down with life’s burdens, its difficulties, anxieties, weaknesses or losses, He gives sure relief, not necessarily by removal of the burden, but by His supporting strength and by the grace to see our Heavenly Father’s hand in all the experiences of life.

For all those trials and testings which are part and parcel of the cost of Christian discipleship, He has promised His aid, for we are yoked with Him. By our own personal consecration to follow Him, we have undertaken to bear these willingly for His sake, and we have for our reassurance His two-fold promise—“my yoke is easy and my burden is light”. The yoke immediately assures us that we are not left to bear the burden alone, and so with the ever-present help and strength of our great Yokefellow, the burden—His burden—will surely be light.

The apostle Paul, speaking of his so great and varied experiences for his Lord, could speak of all that he had undergone as a “light affliction”. If we too can rightly accept our own position in His service, if we can accept the burden which He sees is fitting for each one of us, we shall be able to give similar testimony at the end of the way.

And there is also the privilege of helping others of the Lord’s people along the way. “Bear ye one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ”—Gal. 6:2. It is because our Saviour Himself so loved us that He gave Himself for us, and throughout our lives He ever stands beside us as He promised—“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age”—Matt. 28:20. His commandment to His first disciples comes down to us—“Love one another as I have loved you”—John 13:34. It is in such love alone that we have the responsibility, the privilege, to be concerned and to support one another in whatever way we are able.

It is interesting to note in Gal. 6:5, the apostle’s message to each believer is—“Every man shall bear his own burden.” This at first seems to be in contradiction to his earlier exhortation to bear one another’s burdens, but here the apostle is stressing that each one of us alone can attend to and perform his or her allotted call and service. We cannot rely on others, but must each work out our own salvation, mindful of course that it is God who is working in us His good pleasure—Phil. 2:12, 13. In these two verses in Gal. 6, two different words are translated “burden.” “Bear ye one another’s burdens”—these are the heavy weights, the strong pressures, that press down upon and threaten to overwhelm the bearer. With such burdens, we are to help one another, though we need great wisdom, the wisdom from above to determine just how we may best do so. “Every man shall bear his own burden”—this is the appointed loading, the suitably determined portion, placed upon each bearer, which in the Saviour’s strength he will be able to carry cheerfully and trustfully. No one else can bear this for us nor can we bear another’s, but the same loving Saviour stands by to help each one.

First in each believer's experience is the rest from the labouring and heavy laden condition. It was recognition of our need for a Saviour that brought us to Him, and as we came to trust and accept Him personally, then it was that our burden of sin and death was lifted from us. Bunyan pictures this as a great physical burden laid on Christian's shoulders which rolled away as he lifted up his eyes to the cross, and which he saw no more. Still today, the burden of guilt is laid on many a heart, but sorrowfully men and women seek relief elsewhere than in Jesus whose promise to the heavy laden still stands—"I will give you rest." God's Word is very clear—"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"—Rom. 3:23—and it is only God's remedy, provided in His Son, which can ease the burden of sin and guilt.

It is possible to recognize that the price of our sins has been fully paid and yet have an abiding sense of guilt. Closely associated with this is the burden of recrimination for past failures and omissions. How important it is that we learn the lessons of such experiences, but it is also vital that they not be stumbling stones to hinder progress. Rather they are to be stepping stones to higher, better things. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us"—Psalm 103:12. So wrote the Psalmist long ago, and if God can do this, surely we should follow the apostle Paul in his stand—"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"—Phil. 3:13, 14. Paul himself had regrets for his past misguided endeavours, and there are no doubt many things, great or small, that we are all sorry for. But the lesson is clear that they must not impede the onward, upward course. "Let us lay aside every weight" says the apostle in Heb. 12:1, and such burdens as these our Saviour can gently take from us and in their place give His rest.

One of the greatest of life's burdens, and one which Christians can succumb to is the burden of anxiety. A message seen from time to time on way-side pulpits reads—"Why pray when you can worry?" No, the wording is not a mistake, the message is one that we all sometimes need to make us think. "Why pray when you can worry?" The Word of God has the complete answer—"Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you"—1 Pet. 5:7. Here the apostle is speaking to us specifically of the anxieties and obsessive cares of life, which if we harbour them, will take over and obstruct Christian growth. All of us, whatever our sphere of activity in personal, business, family or church life, have responsibilities and duties which must be carried out. But our Father knows about these also, and His care over His children does not

cover only some aspects of life. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths"—Prov. 3:6. These words of the wise man come down to us in this age also. "In all thy ways"—yes, all our lives are to be lived as in His service and so we can surely trust our Father to overrule in every experience and emergency.

If all these are in His hands, there will be no room for anxious care. The hymn writer asks us—"Why should this anxious load weigh down thy weary mind?"—why indeed! Then he answers—"Haste to thy heavenly Father's throne and sweet refreshment find." The Psalmist long ago also knew this privilege, as we read in Psalm 55:22—"Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Even if every friend should forsake the Christian, he is never alone for the promise still stands—"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"—Heb. 13:5. So we may safely leave the burden of anxious care to Him who loves us, and know the rest our Saviour has promised to replace this heavy burden also.

And there are other burdens—disappointments, bereavements, sorrows, loneliness. Here God's Word speaks lovingly to us if we can only hear and heed. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble"—2 Cor. 1:3, 4. Our Father is the God of **all** comfort and while sorrow and grief are natural human expressions, His loving arms can gently sustain each of His children, not permitting even these burdens to weigh down and overcome them. We note that His comfort is given us not for our own blessing only, but that we may be a blessing to others and help them with their burdens.

We may well rejoice in the assurance that those heavy burdens which might otherwise overwhelm us may safely be left with our Saviour whose promise to the labouring and heavy laden is still—"Come unto me . . . find rest unto your souls." Even in the darkest hour we may "cast our burdens on the Lord and bear a song away." But there still remains those experiences, trials and testings, that come upon God's people in one way or another. These are permitted for their growth in grace and character development, and are to be willingly accepted as part of the terms of discipleship in Christ, who has invited them to take His yoke upon them, and whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light.

As we have already noted, the yoke speaks of a shared load. The yoke links two working together, usually oxen, but in the Christian's case, the yoke-

fellow is Jesus Himself, and further, the yoke is taken on by each disciple voluntarily. The yoke is easy, it does not chafe, but rather fits comfortably, picturing firstly the loving care of Jesus for His own, and secondly the willing acceptance by each one of the conditions of discipleship. None is pressed into His service, each is invited to present his or her body as a living sacrifice, to be used for His glory. Nevertheless, when we consider the intense trials of many down the age, and even in troubled lands today, can we still be sure that His yoke truly is easy and His burden light?

The first and foremost reason for such confidence is the fact that is **His** yoke and **His** burden. His yoke is not imposed on anyone, but rather it is His gracious invitation to us to take His yoke upon us. It is He who loved us and gave Himself for us, who extends this invitation, and assures us that the burden is light. Again, His yoke is willingly taken on, not as an obligation or duty, but as a grand privilege, making the bearing of it a joy. Further, we have His Word that no trial will be too great—"No temptation (test or trial) hath taken you but such as is common to man. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"—1 Cor. 10:13.

Here, we see that the promise is not removal of the test or trial, but rather the way is opened for the Christian to pass through it. Our Master prayed—"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one"—John 17:15. We are not promised to be kept from trial but through trial, and the assurance given to the apostle comes down to us—"my grace is sufficient for thee"—for every part of life's experience. So not only is it Christ's burden, gladly accepted and borne, yoked with Him, but our Father's sufficiency of grace for whatever it may mean by way of trials, testings, worldly disfavour, privations, maybe persecutions for Jesus' sake.

The lightness of the burden is also related by the apostle to the reward of faithfulness—"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"—2 Cor. 4:17. And again—"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"—Rom. 8:18. We read of Jesus Himself that—"for the joy set before him (He) endured the cross despising the shame"—and so He urges us also to—"run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus"—Heb. 12:1, 2. And what a hope is set before us—"We shall be like him; and see him as he is"—1 John 3:2. Such a hope, such a prospect, cannot but make the burden light.

Each one of us can be sure that Christ's burden will be such as will fit us for His service. For many it has meant severe trial, suffering and persecution, but all have had the assurance of His abiding presence and strength, and the guidance of the holy spirit in every trial. Whatever the future holds for us, His promise still holds good, and we shall know, as did the apostle, that in the darkest hour—"The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me"—2 Tim. 4:17. He is the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother through each and every trial.

It should be our privilege and joy to bear all such experiences for His name, recalling the witness of Peter and John, who after being imprisoned and beaten, were able to rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. In such a spirit of submission, those things which would otherwise be burdensome, will also for us be light. For we will bear them conscious of His presence and strength, and as we look to Him, we will know that, whatever tribulations we meet, we can in all these things be "more than conquerors through him who loved us"—Rom. 8:37.

But there is one further part of Jesus' invitation—"learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." The apostle in Phil. 2:5 exhorts us to "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." This is the mind of humble, submissive obedience to our heavenly Father. To learn of Jesus, to be His pupil, is to have a gentle and humble-minded Teacher, who is never impatient with those who are slow to learn, and never intolerant with those who stumble. As we learn these lessons of character from Him, and only as we do so, shall we find the real rest to our souls, rest from our own heavy burdens, and rest in Him who is our true Yokefellow.

With such blessings for ourselves, is there anything we can do to help others who may be struggling under heavy burdens, mindful of the apostle's exhortation based on Jesus' own commandment of love for one another? Direct help may sometimes be the immediate need, but this requires great care and circumspection, remembering the apostle's warning elsewhere against interference in other's affairs. The great essential is surely earnest prayer for guidance that God's will be made clear, and that whatever is done or not done, be overruled by Him, who works all things together for good to them that love Him, and are called according to His purpose. The greatest and surest area for help must always be the ministry of prayer, coupled with humble demonstration of Christian love and sympathy, and the encouragement to greater trust in God and His sure Word. Sacrifice may be needed to avoid stumbling another follower of the Master. Above all else, the

key to helping others must remain selfless, compassionate, all-embracing love. This is the great healer of those who are hurt or downcast, and Peter instructs us—"above all things have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover a multitude of faults"—1 Peter 4:8.

We are truly a richly blessed people to know and appreciate the promises of God's Word, not only for the future, grand as are all His eternal plans and purposes, but even here and now. His invitation to us is to come to Him and find rest, to take His yoke and learn of Him. How fully have we each responded? Have we allowed Him to lift from our hearts **all** those crippling burdens which would weigh us down? Have we taken to ourselves the invitation to cast **all** our anxious care upon Him who cares for us? Have we gladly taken the Master's yoke upon us, realizing that daily He walks beside us as our great Yokefellow? Are we rejoicing in His blessed assurance to us—"take my yoke upon you—for my yoke is easy and my burden is light?" In faith and in His strength, may we each find this gloriously true in the coming year.

## Threescore Years and Ten

**H**ow often do we hear people say, on reaching the age of seventy years that they have reached the "allotted span" of life, and that thereafter they are living on "borrowed time." The translation of Psa. 90 from the Amplified Version, with footnote on verse 10 is of much interest, and is worthy of attentive examination. The verses and quotation are as follows:

"LORD, You have been our dwelling place and our refuge in all generations (says Moses). Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed and given birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting You are God. You turn man back to dust and corruption, and say, Return O sons of the earthborn (to the earth)! For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night—2 Pet. 3:8. You carry away (these disobedient people, doomed to die within forty years) as with a flood; they are as a sleep (vague and forgotten as soon as gone). In the morning they are like grass which grows up: In the morning it flourishes and springs up; in the evening it is mown down and withers. For we (the Israelites in the wilderness) are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled, overwhelmed and frightened away. Our iniquities, our secret heart and its sins (which we would so like to conceal even from ourselves) You have set in the (revealing) light of Your countenance. For all our days (out here in this wilderness, says Moses) are passed

away in Your wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told (for we adults know we are doomed to die soon, without reaching Canaan)—Num. 14:26-35. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, or even if by reason of strength fourscore years, yet is their pride (in additional years) only labor and sorrow; for it is soon gone, and we fly away."

The quotation on verse 10 reads—This Psalm is credited to Moses, who is interceding with God to remove the curse which made it necessary for every Israelite over twenty years of age (when they rebelled against God at Kadesh-barnea) to die before reaching the Promised Land—Num. 14:26-35. Moses says most of them are dying at **seventy years**. This number has often been mistaken as a set span of life for all mankind. It was not intended to refer to any one except those Israelites under the curse during that particular forty years. Seventy years never has been the average span of life for humanity. When Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes had reached 130 years—Gen. 47:9, he complained that he had not attained to the years of his immediate ancestors. In fact, Moses himself lived to be 120, Aaron 123, Miriam several years older, and Joshua 110; while in the Millennium a person dying at 100 will still be a child—Isa. 65:20.

### "A LITTLE WHILE"

"A little while" for patient vigil keeping,  
To face the stern, to wrestle with the strong;  
"A little while" to sow the seed with weeping,  
Then bind the sheaves and sing the harvest song.  
"A little while" to keep the oil from failing,  
"A little while" faith's flickering lamp to trim;  
And then the Bridegroom's coming footsteps hailing  
We'll haste to meet Him with the bridal hymn.  
And He who is Himself the Gift and Giver,  
The future glory and the present smile,  
With the bright promise of the glad "forever,"  
Will light the shadows of the "little while".  
Jane Fox Crewdson.

### Passover Memorial, 1984

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Sunday, 15th April. It is the privilege of the Lord's people to observe this memorial at this season "in remembrance of Christ."

### Memorial Services

**Melbourne**—Sunday, 15th April, at 6 p.m., at Glenferrie State School, Manningtree Rd., Hawthorn—Wattle Rd. building.

**Adelaide**—Sunday, 15th April, at 6.15 p.m., at M.U. Hall (2nd floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide.

### Melbourne Class New Address

The Melbourne Class now meets at Glenferrie State School, Manningtree Rd., Hawthorn, in building near Wattle Rd. Sunday services are at 11.30 a.m., and 2.30 p.m., to which all interested people are invited for Undenominational study of the Bible.