187 Yoke (*Jugum*)

It is double, the yoke of God and of the devil. The yoke of God is truly light although it seems heavy, just as a burden which of itself is heavy without water becomes light in water, so the yoke of Christ carrying with grace carries and makes light according to Bernard,[[1]](#endnote-1) thus the little bird[[2]](#endnote-2) which without feathers and wings cannot carry itself, the addition of the weight of feathers and wings flies without labor. Wherefore Gregory, *Moralia* 21,[[3]](#endnote-3) bull calves which are ordered to live are put under the yoke which truly are pawned to death in grazing, Zach. 11[:4]: “Feed the flock of the slaughter.”

Again, note that the ox while it is under the yoke does not lift its eyes lightly, so those who are under the yoke of the Lord, 2 Pet. 2[:16]: “The dumb beast used to the yoke, which speaking with man's voice, forbade the folly of the prophet.”

Again, Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana,* book 2, chapter 13,[[4]](#endnote-4) that knowledge of things often raises its neck, unless it is loaded down by the force of the Lord.

¶ Concerning the yoke of the devil, note Judith 5[:24], Achior said to Holophernes, “If there be any iniquity of theirs in the sight of their God … they shall be brought under the yoke of your power.” Thus, it is concerning the devil and concerning us, on account of this Paul says 2 Cor. 6[:14]: “Bear not the yoke with unbelievers.” For because Jeroboam made their yoke heavier, his people withdrew from him, 3 Kings 13[:34]. From this yoke of the devil Christ did not liberate. Therefore, the Apostle says, Gal. 5[:1]: “Stand fast and be not held again under the yoke of bondage.” Wherefore Boethius, *De consolatione* book 2, prose 1,[[5]](#endnote-5) it is necessary to tolerate calmly whatever goes on under fortune’s own ground, when once when once you have submitted your neck to her yoke.

¶ From what has now been said, recollect that the yoke is found to be triple: grace, fault, and penalty. The first is evangelical perfection which is to be carried through like every light thing so that reward may be obtained from thence, Matt. 11[:29]: “Take up my yoke upon you,” etc. Second the yoke is of present misery which must be borne because it dominates lasciviousness of the flesh, just as a chain does a lion, a bridle a horse, Eccli. 33[:27]: “The yoke and the thong bend a stiff neck, and continual labors bow a slave.” [Eccli.] 40[:1]: “A heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, until the day of their burial.” Third the yoke is eternal damnation because the highest work is fleeing that which oppresses in eternity, Osee 11[:7]: “A yoke shall be put upon them together, which shall not be taken off,” namely, the yoke of damnation.

1. Bernard, *Epistolae* 72.2 (PL 182:185): Unde grossescit materia, inde sarcina levigatur; et quantum crescit in massa, tantum decrescit in pondere. Hoc plane in pennis, Christi oneris exprimit similitudinem, quod et ipsae ferunt a quibus feruntur. Quid et de quadriga dicam? Haec nimirum admota jumento, sarcinam quae ab ipso moveri non poterat, auget quidem, portabiliorem facit. Onus oneri additur, et minus onerat. Sic et oneri gravissimo legis accedens quadriga Evangelii, et auxit perfectionem, et difficultatem minuit. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 5.2 (8:294a): Est onus leve et allevians sicut in avibus et sicut in equis quadriga. Nam sicut avis onere alarum volat velocius.... [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Gregory, *Moralia* 21.4.8 (PL 76:193): At contra justus a delectationis transitoriae jucunditate restringitur, quia et nimirum vitulus ad laboris usum vitae deputatus sub jugo retinetur. Negantur electis in hac vita bona terrena, quia et aegris, quibus spes vivendi est, nequaquam a medico cuncta quae appetunt conceduntur. Dantur autem reprobis bona quae in hac vita appetunt, quia et desperatis aegris omne quod desiderant non negatur. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.13.20 (PL 34:45): cum et ipsa rerum scientia saepe cervicem erigat, nisi dominico reprimatur jugo. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Boethius, *Consolatio Philosophiae* 2 prose 1 (PL 63:662): postremo aequo animo toleres oportet quicquid intra fortunae aream geritur cum semel jugo eius colla submiseris. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)