

—whether strength or comfort be needed—is to come unto his Son. *Heavy laden.* Overstrained, worn-out people. The laborers have had too much of active toil, the heavy laden too much of passive toil. *I will give you rest.* Other "masters" enjoin legal burdens "grievous to be borne;" other "lords" demand labor; I, "your Lord and Master," give rest.

29. *Take my yoke upon you.* The Jews referred to the Mosaic law, with its annexed traditions, as a yoke; but our Lord's doctrine and leadership were *easy and light*. Laws hard to obey, sinful habits, heart sorrows, anxieties, sickness—these are some of humanity's burdens; but the only burden our Lord

gives is companionship with him, and that brings comfort and peace. *Learn of me.* As teacher and example. *Meek and lowly in heart.* Dr. Robertson says that three causes produce unrest in men—suspicion of God, inward discord, and dissatisfaction with outward circumstances; for all these meekness is the cure. *Ye shall find rest unto your souls.* Such abounding peace within that pressure from without is unfelt.

30. *My yoke is easy.* Pleasing, wholesome. *My burden is light.* It harmonizes with the deepest needs of all human beings. What is our Lord's burden—the law he places upon men? Love to God and to fellow-men. Such love produces peace and rest.

CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

CIVIC JUDGMENT.

Here are cases of civic judgment. Cities are reproached and their punishment predicted as if they were persons. The Old Testament is full of this. Cities, whole nations, were arraigned, warned, punished. So Egypt, so Nineveh, so Samaria, so Jerusalem, so Babylon. It is continued in the New Testament. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum—not simply the individuals composing their population, but the cities themselves—were to have a day of judgment. So, also, Jerusalem. Jesus foretold its utter overthrow. (Read the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew.) The Book of Revelation thunders with warnings and judgments against cities and nations. Nothing is more certain, therefore, than that God judges not simply individual men and women, but communities and peoples—certain, not merely by the teachings of the Scriptures, but indubitably certain by the record of history, written in blood and tears.

DOUBLE ACCOUNTABILITY.

A man, therefore, is responsible, not simply for his own personal sins, but also for the sins of the community of which he is a member, the nation of which he is a citizen. His private personality is merged in the public personality, and he will suffer for the sins of his city, of his country, of his times. For his private sins he must give private and personal account to God, and his punishment be partly in this life and partly in the life to come. As an individual he will continue to exist after death, and so may be reckoned

with after death. But cities and nations only exist in time, and must be dealt with in time. If punished at all, they must be punished here. Hence for them God's court is always in session. And in God's civic judgments all the members of the community are involved. Whether we will or not, we must bear vicarious responsibility and endure vicarious suffering. We are members of the body politic, and must suffer with the body politic if it goes wrong. And the innocent will suffer with the guilty. It seems a hard law, but apparently in no other way can God teach us the great truth that we are our brothers' keepers. By this stern law God is showing us that we cannot afford to be indifferent to public righteousness.

ESSENCE AND DEGREE OF PUBLIC SIN.

The essence of all public sin, as of all personal sin, is unbelief. A city that deliberately, by force of public opinion and popular vote, sanctions evil is atheistic. It denies God; it does not believe in the reality and the authority of God. No matter how many churches it may have, or what pious proclamations on set occasions it may issue, it is blind to God. It was a national atheism, in spite of the fact that we called ourselves a Christian nation, that fostered and protected slavery. And it is only because we believe very feebly and faintly in God that we are now sharing profits with the rum traffic. Jesus Christ now is walking our streets, and we recognize him but little better than they did in Capernaum. And the degree of public