

IS YOUR SACRIFICE SALTED?

"For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." – MARK 9:49.

There are few, if any, words in the Bible that have a wider range of symbolism than the word salt. It is used as a symbol for fidelity, friendship, incorruption, barrenness, perpetual desolation, preservation, etc.

Most every one knows that salt will quickly penetrate vegetable and animal matter; it has the remarkable quality of diffusing itself through the mass, and prevents animal matter from becoming putrid and offensive to the smell.

If we were obliged to consider the above Scripture from an orthodox standpoint, we should rather let it alone than to have anything to say about it; but considered in connection and in harmony with the rules of the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus," as seen by the light of the rising sun, we see that which is intensely interesting, and which should engage our careful thought and earnest attention, and which should incite us to the greatest diligence to make our calling and election sure.

In order to get the connection of the subject complete we must go back to the 43d verse. We there find that Jesus had been teaching the disciples the necessity of separating themselves from everything which should hinder them from meeting the requirements of the law of life, no matter how dear or valuable that object might be. We need only refer to these verses for the connection, as Bro. Smith in the May TOWER, under the head "Eternal Torment," very interestingly treats these verses, to which we refer the readers of this article.

Jesus is not now speaking to the multitude, but to the little company, to those whom he had chosen, for he says, "He that is not against us is on our part, for whosoever shall give you a cup of cold water to drink in my name," etc. Now, these are the same persons referred to by the words "thy hand, thy foot," etc., (verses 43,45 and 47). It is better to cut off half of the offending powers which these organs symbolize, than to retain twice the number to make your destruction complete (for we understand Gehenna, translated hell here, to symbolize complete destruction); "for every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

We must not fail to notice the intimate connection between the 49th verse and the former verses by the little word "for," which shows the relation of the statements to each other.

Take the first clause of verses 43,45 and 47, and connect them with the first clause of the 49th verse, reading, for illustration, as though that between the clauses were in parenthesis.

We then read thus: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off": "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." As God will not accept of a divided heart, nor of divided service, if a part of your powers, symbolized by "hand," "foot," etc., cause you to offend (see margin and R.V.), it would be much better for you to cut it off and to have a single one (for they must be one as to harmony) to enter into life with, than to have two working in opposition, and resulting in utter destruction. "For every one shall be salted with fire."

That this expression is used to describe the condition of the one who should obey the injunction here, to cut off and separate from all offending things, is evident, not only from the connection of the passage to what precedes it, but from a kindred passage in Luke 14:34. In this passage several of the oldest and best manuscripts (among which are the Sinaitic and Vatican) insert after

the word salt, the word then. With this thought in mind, let us read the 34th and 35th verses of the 14th chapter of Luke. "So, likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt, then, is good; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?"

This "forsaking all," in order to be a disciple of Christ, we understand to be the salt of fiery trial and separation with which "every one," especially those who will be disciples of Christ, who will follow him fully, "shall be salted"; but it "is good," if the salt have not lost its savor, its strength.

If you are clinging to the world, and worldly ways, and worldly thoughts, and worldly associations, or to a worldly church organization, or to anything that is foreign to the word and spirit of Christ, if such things are at all pleasing to you so that you feel an affinity for them, feel as though you would like to abide there, that you feel more at home there, then the salt is losing, if it has not already lost, its savor.

"Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath (will not submit to be 'salted with fire'), he cannot be my disciple."

The Master was so salted, and "it is enough that the disciple be as his Master." It is as though he had said, every one who will follow me, must go through the fiery trial of amputation, must have the dross of base desire consumed, must allow the separating work of the Word to have its course with him, even though it "pierce to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit (separating worldly life from divine life), of the joints and marrow." If you lose your worldly and sectarian life, if they are bound up together, you have lost that which is gain, for "he who will save his life, shall lose it."

If there is a single ligament or nerve through which affinity with the world, with falsities or evil of any sort, is kept up, let "the

sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," divide asunder; and while this painful work is going on, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as (in so far as) ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

You are not undergoing these as a means of your reconciliation to God, for you were reconciled, to God by the death of his Son" (not sons); but after "being reconciled, you are saved by his life," which lives and thrives in you after the offending part has been (legally) cut off.

Now, after this obnoxious and corrupting part has been separated and taken away, let us observe the Apostle's exhortation, and "present our bodies (now reckoned, perfect human) a living sacrifice"; but when presenting them, let us remember that in the type, SALT was required to be offered with the sacrifice. "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (Lev. 2:13). Here it is, doubtless, used as a type of, and in the text under consideration, as the symbol of fidelity, loyalty and incorruption.

When we present our bodies as a sacrifice, though it be a living sacrifice, it is understood that it is consecrated to death; it is thenceforth counted ("reckoned") dead indeed unto the world. Let, then, the salt of fidelity and loyalty be sprinkled well over it and diffused well through it; let that fidelity keep watch over it; that no unclean birds of prey may swoop down upon it, nor wild beasts of passion carry it off. Let it lay there before God, so well salted that it shall not become corrupt before him and a stench in his nostrils. While it is so kept, it is a "holy" sacrifice. It is not a lame lamb, nor a blind one, that we are offering by faith unto him, but it is one that meets the requirements of his holy law, and is holy and acceptable unto God.

Christ Jesus gave himself for us "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." It was sweet-smelling, because it was well salted with fidelity, he being "faithful to him that appointed him." Let us also be faithful to him that appointed us.

But if we become careless and neglect the salt, the sacrifice, which otherwise would have been acceptable, will become offensive unto him on account of corruption (unfaithfulness), then, instead of receiving a blessing, we should receive a curse (Mal. 1:14).

Let us be glad that we are permitted to see the radiant symbolism of God's Word; and may we not only submit to, but volunteer to be "salted with fire," then we shall be prepared to offer an acceptable sacrifice that shall be "salted with salt."

Thus saith the Lord, "I will bring the third part (not necessarily one-third) through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God (Zech. 13:9).

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