

THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

"Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Matt. 5:13.

Salt is permeating in its character, and is a well known preservative against decay, and is therefore a fitting symbol of the principles of Christianity and those in whose life those principles are exemplified. The character of a child of God is known and read by those of the world who never think of reading God's written revelation, and it is emphatically true, that these living representatives of the principles of Christianity, are the salt of the earth.

If we would see the effect of this salt we have only to consider the difference between the so-called Christian and heathen nations of the world to-day. The superstition and ignorance of the latter impede progress in every direction. Take, for instance, China. In morality her standard is exceedingly low, and the mass of that vast nation seem to have lost those manly traits of character which distinguish the human from the lower orders of being; its system of education is a mere memorizing and inculcating of the old fables and superstitions of the past. These superstitions forbid any advancement in science, philosophy, art, and what is generally called civilization. Railroads and telegraphs can scarcely be constructed because they come in conflict with these old superstitions. Just so it is in India and in every heathen country.

"Yes," we hear many voices say, "this great progress in civilization in Christian nations is due to the influence of the Church;" and by the Church they mean that great organization, or rather union of diverse organizations which the Scriptures term

"Babylon," (Rev. 17:18) – the great development of the "Mystery of Iniquity." But this is a great mistake: Jesus never said, Babylon, or the Mystery of Iniquity is the salt of the earth; but "ye" – the true children of God – "are the salt of the earth."

Let us notice, then, how this salt of the earth has been working. But first, we object to the expression "Christian nations," for there is not a Christian NATION on the face of the earth. If such a nation did exist, it would indeed be the salt of the earth.

What is termed civilization is nothing more than the arrest of those elements of decay which are at work in the human family, and a preservation or salting of the good qualities which have not yet become extinct. And this, in so far as it has progressed, we claim has been done solely through the agency of the children of God, though hindered, not helped, by the great "Mystery of Iniquity." Every truth and principle that has been brought to light from the Divine Revelation, and exemplified in the faith and life of the saints, has made its influence felt to some extent on the world, and the aggregate of that influence is seen in the present development of civilization. Every martyred saint, and every persecuted, despised and rejected faithful one, who bravely defended the truths and principles of Christianity, has done his part in thus salting the earth, although the false or ignorant professors who persecuted them, did so in the name of the Lord, saying, "Let the Lord be glorified." Isa. 66:5.

As thus through the suffering, sacrifice and toil of the faithful few, sufficient truth has dawned upon the world to liberate them from the thralldom of superstition, they have enjoyed a greater degree of liberty. And in that blessed liberty and just to the extent that they have received it, has heart and mind expanded; morality has increased; philanthropic enterprises have been undertaken; and art, science, invention, and every branch of education has flourished.

And yet the nations thus favored are not Christian nations; no, they have only been salted a little with the truths and principles of Christianity, though they do not realize from whence they received them, and generally consider these things as the result of their own wisdom.

This salt has, at least to some extent, penetrated all nations with results corresponding to the amount received. Since these who have been the salt of the earth, have grown up largely under the shadow of the Mystery of Iniquity, that great system has not only persecuted them, but it has claimed as the result of its own working, all the benefits which have accrued to the world as the result of their effort. But the real character of the great Babylon system has ever been to becloud the truth, advance error, promote superstition, fetter thought, and retard progress. Whatever progress the saints have made in gaining a knowledge of the truth has ever been against her strong opposition. Yet God permitted the true and the false, the wheat and the tares to grow together until the harvest. (Matt. 13:28-30.) And now, in the harvest time, the saints, the real salt of the earth, are being separated from the false ones in the Church, and shall soon be exalted to power, and through that power they will be enabled to thoroughly salt all nations. The blessed truths and principles of Christianity shall then permeate not only all nations, but all hearts. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Isa. 11:9.

But there is another important thought in the text under consideration. Jesus inquires: If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? and answers, "It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men." Here is a solemn fact that we should all lay well to heart. That which constitutes the saints, the salt of the earth, is the fact that they have

been salted with the truth, and that truth received permeates their being, affecting their actions, thoughts and words.

But if these who are the salt of the earth lose their savor, (saltiness,) that is if they lose those truths and principles of the gospel wherewith they were salted, wherewith shall they be salted again? There is no other gospel that can salt them, or preserve them from decay, putrefaction and ultimate death. There is no better gospel; there is no grander plan of salvation than that we have learned, and no better teacher and guide into truth than the Comforter we have received, and who has led us in plain paths since first we submitted implicitly to his leading.

Tell us then, if you can, "If the salt have lost its saltiness, wherewith shall it be salted? Jesus said, "It is good for nothing." O, can that be the sad condition of any who once were enlightened and who rejoiced in and were sanctified by the truth? Were such a circumstance not possible, then surely the Master would not have warned of such danger. Let us, therefore, consider well, and beware, and be not too hasty to decide that the solemn warning is unnecessary and called attention to by the mere caprice of a brother who for some selfish end would put the breaks on the wheels of progress.

"It is thenceforth good for nothing." Lord, will it then be worthy of eternal life? Will God perpetuate the existence that is "good for nothing"? NO, it is to be "cast out and trodden under foot" – destroyed. Once esteemed of God as the salt of the earth, afterward "a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction." But while it is possible thus to fall, let us rejoice in the blessed assurance that none can pluck us out of our Father's hand, (John 10:29;) and "He that keepeth Israel shall not slumber" (Ps. 121:4). If the salt loses its savor it will be because we abandon the truth and turn unto fables, and not because

God fails to supply it to his saints with abundant and convincing proof.

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