

and-soul power of the Gospel; but, more than this, they themselves are to be the salt of the earth (John xvii: 23; Gal. ii: 20), by reason of the Christ within them. And they are to become this more and more with their entire personality, with the salt-savoring influence of their walk and conversation; if necessary, with their blood; indeed, with the blessed memory which they leave behind them. What a great mission in these simple words: "Ye are the salt of the earth"! Go, nourish, preserve, consume, until death is swallowed up in victory! How gloriously does the kingdom of God, with these words, break through its Old Testament limitations and begin to be world-embracing!

And this teaching is strengthened by means of the second illustration: "Ye are the light of the world." It shows the same mission, but from another point of view. Let us, then, also consider the attributes of light, in order to discern the vocation of the disciples of Christ.

Its beams penetrate and uncover. It reveals itself, as well as the objects which it illumines. The world, alienated from God, lies in darkness. The light that now penetrates it is Christ, the incarnate Word. But the disciples are bearers of this light. While it shines in the world it reveals not only itself; it also discloses the existing state of darkness. So the disciples are to penetrate the world as shining lights; and, by the revelation of the truth of God, by the illumination of the message of salvation in Christ, they are to uncover all error and self-deception, all the folly and guilt of sin, all the misery and fatal corruption of the world. This is what Christ's word means to say: "Go, enter into all the strongholds of darkness; show to the poor blind world in what awful danger it remains before a holy God and His inevitable judgments! How unyielding the demands of God! How vain and powerless all attempts at self-help! (John iii: 36.) How high and holy the calling of the disciples, and yet how difficult, if the darkness will not suffer itself to be re-

vealed by the light; if men will love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil!" (John iii: 19.)

But again, the light also illuminates and warms. It not only expels the darkness, but it takes its place. If the disciples of Christ are the light of the world, they are not only to reveal the fatal shadows of sin and unbelief, not only to dissipate the mists of doubt and superstition, but likewise to illuminate the heart, so that the light of life may take the place of the darkness of ignorance. The world should not only acknowledge its misery, but should also accept its sole divine deliverance—Christ and His salvation. In the place of error and self-deception, of the moral and religious darkness of the world, there shall arise the distinct recognition of the eternal appointment of Christ's redemption, there shall come sound scriptural views of life and its mission, and, therewith, also, a new and correct insight into the world and the age. "Let your light shine before men," the Lord afterward adds, by way of explanation. Enlighten and warm the hearts of men, in order that not only the hard, icy crust of selfishness may melt away, but that these hearts may revive, that they may turn toward the light of your love to God and man, that they may feel its warm breath and become warm themselves.

There is also something infinitely refreshing and enlivening in light. And this not only for nature, but also for man. How soon a feeling of depression is relieved when a friendly beam breaks through the clouds! Wherever it penetrates it carries refreshing to the weary and heavy-laden with the full comfort of the Gospel. Lay, then, this consolation, with the whole power of eternal life contained therein; lay your love and sympathy, as a soothing balm, upon the wounds of bowed hearts, that they may revive in newness of hope. Oh, what a glorious feature in the high calling of the disciples of Christ!

Such a penetrating and revealing, warming and quickening light was Christ Himself, "that true light which