

vocation. And now, what do they furnish us in answer to our first question?

Salt is intended to nourish, preserve and consume. It is an article of food, and therefore it must nourish. Like the salt of the earth, the disciples of the Lord have, as the object of their calling, to nourish the earth spiritually, and to increase its life. Sin absorbs the life of the world. The disciples are to nourish and fructify it; they are to strengthen the vanishing life of the world, and to insure it a more lasting endurance. And by what means? I answer, through the nourishing and sanctifying life-power of the Word. As Christ is the bread that cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world, so the disciples, as bearers of the Word, are the salt of the earth. As the natural salt is everywhere needed for the physical life of the earth, so the Gospel for the spiritual life. And as our material food is rendered palatable by the savor which salt imparts, so the earth becomes agreeable and useful to Him who created it, when it is permeated by the salt and the leaven of the word, the truth, the spirit and the life of Christ. Let us, then, enter into the life of the people with the message of the revealed kingdom, of the manifested grace and friendship of God, as a new and internally regenerating divine life-power, destined to impart vitality to individuals and whole nations.

Again, salt is intended to preserve life against corruption. Just as we use salt to prevent corruption, so the Lord would strew His disciples as salt-grains into the sin-poisoned and decaying life of man in order to impede and arrest the spiritual corruption, already far advanced. What destructive influences from serving the dead letter, of self-righteousness, of a hating partisanship, consumed the Judaism of Christ's times! And to-day? Not to mention the decaying life of Judaism and Heathenism, how much of spiritual, moral, and social corruption is there in Christianity, in all classes of our German people! The admonition, "Ye are the salt of the earth," appeals to us as if say-

ing: "Enter into this decay, already begun, with the message of salvation in Christ!" Enter into the vast hospital of this world, into the strife of parties, into the increasing want and despair, like the fresh and free mountain air, refreshing the heart and imparting new life. Let the words of peace be poured out, as a stream, into the world: "Be ye reconciled unto God." "Turn unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth." And contend against all the prevailing misery with the salt of earnest, friendly admonition, with the energetic example of a holy walk and conversation, with an unselfish love that seeketh not its own. Oh, what a high, immeasurable calling!

Again, salt has also a consuming power. There is something sharp, biting and aggressive in it. It works in a penetrating and purifying manner. The arrow of truth, piercing a mass of corruption, will inflict a painful wound. Hence the disciples of Christ must attack evil with the sharp and penetrating arrows of the Word, with the corrective influence of their godly walk and conversation. Salt, applied to a wound, causes a burning pain; so the Christian, with the testimony of his word and act, is often laid upon the wounds of the world, in order that it may feel its misery and become painfully aware of its departure from a state of moral health. The truth that cannot wound has no power to heal. The bee that has no sting can give no honey.

Such a power, for purification, was Jesus Christ. With every word, every look, every step, by which He glorified the Father, streams of life went out from Him. By His shed blood and resurrection He conquered sin and death, and thus made it possible for His disciples and their savor of salt to overcome and to heal the evil of the world. But only because He lives in them with His power by the Holy Spirit, *em* they work as the salt of the earth. And not only are they to have salt within themselves (Mark ix: 50), not only are they to contend with energy against all destructive influences, aided by the life-