

The book contains much that is of importance for O.T. study, and cannot be ignored by any school of investigators. Professor Hommel, who long ago established his claim to speak with authority on S. Arabian antiquities, will be universally admitted to have rendered a service by

its publication. Even those who cannot see their way to accept some of his *conclusions* in their bearing on the O.T., will yet feel grateful to him for the many important *facts* he has brought to light.

J. A. SELBIE.

*Maryculter, Aberdeen.*

## The Salt of the Earth.

BY THE REV. JOHN KELMAN, M.A., EDINBURGH.

JESUS did not go far afield for His illustrations. Daily life and its commonest things suggested vivid parables to Him. In several passages we have an interesting example of this. To the Eastern, salt was precious for many reasons. In hot and fainting lands, where appetite fails and eating is often burdensome, that which makes food palatable is almost as important as the food itself. Again, in such lands food soon decays, and the traveller, the besieged, and the solitary dweller in the wilderness, depend wholly through long periods on stores of food laid up, so that salt as a preserving agent is in a second way precious. Tradition, also, had associated salt with all things offered in sacrifice, thus giving it a third and more mysterious preciousness; and they utilized this sacred meaning, by making it the inviolable bond of hospitality to have eaten salt with another as his guest.

It was no small part of the natural wealth of Palestine that it was a land abounding in salt. The Salt Sea, the Salt Desert, and the Phœnician markets on the north-west seaboard kept the land always in good supply.

Here then, in this most common and yet most precious of things, whose many and peculiar uses gave it so unique a popular interest, Christ found something ready to His hand. It may be useful to gather together the various teachings connected with it.

From all the passages cited, this general truth may be gathered, that there is a something in Christianity which renders true Christians different from all other people. What that something is, it is not easy to express in any simple definition. There is a mystic spiritual element in it, for, after all is said, Christianity in its inner forces remains

a mystery. From this point of view we may speak of the spiritual element as the new birth, the work of the Spirit, the touch of God. On the other hand there is an ethical element, not so mysterious, which men call truth to manhood, reality and grit of character. It may be permitted us to combine these two ideas in the phrase 'Spiritual Reality,' which in a general way will answer to the meaning of the various texts. Taking the passages in the order which is followed in this paper, we have Spiritual Reality (1) as it concerns ourselves, (2) as it affects our relations with others, (3) as it determines our approach to God.

1. Mk 9<sup>60</sup>: 'Have salt in yourselves.'—Here we have the simplest reference, the demand for Spiritual Reality within the soul as a necessity of its own religious life.

In this connexion it is instructive to remember the very obvious meaning of 'seasoning.' In Greek and Latin the word 'salt' stood for 'wit,' 'sparkle,' that charm of cleverness or that fine sense of individuality which makes a man good company to himself and to his friends. This was also a Hebrew use of the word; at least we may be sure that some of Christ's hearers must have remembered the curious passage, Job 6<sup>6</sup>, while He spoke such words to them.

In this sense the passage speaks eloquently to those moods of individuals or of times, when a cynical spirit is abroad, when enthusiasms are out of fashion, and to many life seems 'flat, stale, and unprofitable.' There are books and there are persons who have adopted this poverty-stricken view of life, and cultivate a kind of inverted pride in being miserable. And there are but too many who, without adopting it as the teaching of any school, yet fall into a way of regarding life and

feeling about it, which is practically the same thing. Pleasures lose their keen edge as years increase; business becomes routine, when it no longer demands the strain of early ambitions and anxieties; 'a common greyness silvers everything.'

Now that against which our age has rebelled most vigorously is this ennui—this dulness of life. Anything will be forgiven to a man now in certain quarters—any wickedness, any falsehood—so long as he is not dull. Dulness is the one unpardonable sin. And to combat it (for it has crept up on many hearts and threatened them with death), we have much highly-spiced realism in conversation, books, plays. As if representations of horror or of vice were the only things that could be depended on to maintain interest.

Long ago Christ met this need and gave us His own answer to the question whether life can be made interesting enough to be worth living. In His view a man's life need not be stale to him, nor dependent either on such unhealthy stimulus as we have mentioned, nor yet on any foolish heroics or hair-brained optimism. Its interest need not depend on any external sources at all. 'The water that I shall give him shall be *in* him, a well of water springing up into everlasting life'; and that is the teaching of this passage also.

Christ can and does get at the life of men and touch it to healthy interest and brightness. His touch is well named 'a new birth,' 'life from the dead.' Only those who have felt the change know how true such words are. *Character*, instead of being the mere instinctive mass of habits we have found, becomes purpose, individuality. *Duty* is a high calling, a daily vocation, instead of a slavish round. There is a *faith* which is simply believed, but which is dry and dull, and which the believer seldom troubles himself to think over. And there is a faith which is also a fascination. The man without spiritual reality has probably a *Bible* in his house, but it is the least interesting book in the library to him. He has, like everybody else, a number of excellent *principles*, but they are useful to him only for reference. The man who has 'salt in himself,' finds his principles matters of surpassing interest, and spends the strength of his soul in understanding their bearings upon life, and in applying them to life's exigencies and details as these meet him.

These instances serve to show how very much

is implied in this command, 'Have salt in yourselves.' We cannot kindle the heart's fires indeed, nor force life thus to take on an interest. But we can be real in our spiritual life, and we shall find that He whose task it is will freshen the dull spirit to keenness. It is thus far our task—its result is Christ's affair.

2. This, however, is but the beginning of the Christian ideal. No life can be wholly kept within one soul. It must ever tell on the lives around it. So we pass from interest to influence as we hear Christ saying (Mt 5<sup>13</sup>), 'Ye are the salt of the earth.'

This is one of the points of insistence in all true Christian teaching. The temptation of the ancient Greek, the crime of the cultured egoist in all ages, is to be content with a life interesting only to himself. The Christian cannot, dare not, live to himself alone, but must regard all that is in him as his for the sake of others. As salt acts upon what it touches, so from the Christian's soul there should ever be a direct and effective play of action on the surrounding world.

The two texts connect the inner and the outer life in a striking way, by their use of the one word in the two references. That spiritual reality which shows itself within the soul as Interest, acts outwardly as a real force and power—as Influence. This is indeed but the highest application of a general rule. The more interesting to himself a man's life is, the more influence will it exert on others. The enthusiast, the man of one idea, impresses his idea upon others and changes their ideas, in proportion as his own has first taken possession of his own mind and imagination. It is a solemn consideration, but a deeply true one, that the thing which is most interesting to a man, that and that alone is his real influence. There are some people whose real interests are all selfish, yet by some freak of circumstances, unselfish Christian work falls to them to be done. To avoid a quarrel with conscience or to fall in with their surroundings, they try to do it as best they can. But it cannot be done effectively. The salt will tell, and nothing but the salt. They will be seen through, and they will know it and feel themselves failures. The thing we are interested in, eventually that 'will out'; it will be our influence—that and no other thing.

Those who have in themselves the salt of spirituality, are indeed the salt of the earth. There

is an indefinable something about them which the world feels and knows. St. Paul speaks of it as 'the savour of Christ,' and he refers to it when he tells Christians to let their 'conversation be with grace, seasoned with salt.' It indicates a subtle, sometimes unconscious but always unmistakable force of influence for Christ.

This influence will be both bitter and gracious. It will be bitter sometimes. There will be times when the world will find it offensive. Deep in its heart and conscience it will respect it, and will recognize its goodness. Yet the world's taste will not find it pleasant. We are indeed told to 'have salt in ourselves, and be at peace one with another'; *i.e.* while our religious life is to be interesting to ourselves, we are not to insist on everybody seeing everything just as we see it—we are not to become religious bores, thrusting our views offensively on others. Yet, on the other hand, we may as well make up our minds to it that the savour of spiritual reality will often not be welcome. It has a bite, a bitterness in it—'the sharp and austere savour of holiness.' Into the street with its easy morals, into the market with its selfishness, into the world with its slightness and its shams, must the Christian bear this salt of purity and principle and earnestness and reality. Of course this will give offence—the 'offence of the Cross'—to those who live falsely and whose so-called charity is a cloak for sin. And that is as it ought to be. It is by our differences perhaps more than by our conformities that we influence men. It is often good to appeal to men's good nature as congenial spirits; but the highest influence is that which appeals to their sense of truth and smites upon their conscience.

The influence of spiritual reality does not however manifest itself only in provoking opposition. It would be useless if it did. It is a gracious influence, and the world owes its preservation to it. Just as salt preserves the thing that is salted, so does the quiet influence of truly Christian men and women preserve all that is best and worthiest in the world. In the crowd who feel the influence of such lives, there may perhaps be many who resent it; but there will always be some who find it a defence and shelter to them. There are many young, many weak, many who are sorely tempted, many who are anxiously striving to be Christians, but who find it so difficult that they are on the point of giving up the effort. The world, in this

age of ours, is full of such. When these meet with one in whom there is this 'salt' of real Christian character and experience, all that is best in them is confirmed, and they are sent forth into the future with strength and courage which will enable them to realize their ideal life through times when they have to be alone and unsupported. Thus in them faith is preserved—belief in life and trust in Christ; and character is preserved also, and inspiration and hope.

He who imagines he has no influence and can have none, though he knows that he is honestly living the life of Christ's disciple, is widely mistaken. It may be he will never know of anyone whom he has influenced; but the salt cannot but tell, and the day will declare it. At the end he will thank God for some, all undreamed of until then, who have owed the preservation of their faith and character to his unostentatious but real life.

On the large scale of history this preserving power of true Christian life has been exercised more than most of us realize. We have in our own time heard some voices proclaiming that old moralities are dead and done with, and others wailing because they feared it was true. But some public scandal has arisen, and public sentiment, which a hundred years ago would have condoned the offence, has rung out an unequivocal note of condemnation. 'The salt of the earth' has been at work, keeping that part of society which is really most influential clean and wholesome, and cleansing the conscience of the whole nation, more than men knew. So that our greatest novelist has written, 'Those whose aim is at the leadership of the English people know that, however truly based the charges of hypocrisy, soundness of moral fibre runs throughout the country and is the national integrity.' Mr. Kidd, in his *Social Evolution*, has pointed out a similar fact of the greatest significance in regard to the relations of the classes—the fact that it has been conscience rather than constraint that has induced the ruling classes to concede the measures which have strengthened and enlightened the rest. Again we see here how the salt of the earth has been at work, preserving the sentiments of mercy and of justice, and fixing them in society.

Surely this is work worth having to do. It is worth while to gain this influence, though the price of it be self-sacrifice and pain, though it

give offence to a hundred friends, if indeed we may preserve the righteousness, the endeavour after God, the honour and the earnestness and the hope, of even a few souls; and if we can add in the smallest measure to that public influence which is preserving the world.

3. The third reference in which Christ has used this figure is that of sacrifice. It is the essentially religious way of regarding life—the whole life of man, public and private, being taken as a sacrifice perpetually offered up to God. Mk 9<sup>49</sup> reads, 'For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.'

This takes us back to very early times. In all the nations of antiquity salt was used in sacrifices. It is the oldest form of sacrifice, older even than incense. Homer speaks of it as 'divine.' And centuries before Homer Israel used it. It was the emblem of sanctity—the thing which made the offering holy and so fit to be offered.

Christ is here expounding His great doctrine of sacrifice, which St. Paul so often echoed, as when he said, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' This is ideal Christianity; it is the religious way of regarding human life. Sometimes it will be little more than a way of thinking about life. Sometimes, as the context here tells us, it will mean a very real and bitter sacrifice, in which the most precious things will have to be surrendered when they are hindering the spiritual life.

But the point of the text is that in neither case is the sacrifice acceptable except on the condition of spiritual reality. There is no abstract value in self-sacrifice. Many a man has offered a happy life to God day by day, and many a man has made his life unhappy and offered it mutilated and miserable, without attaining to the dignity of a religious act. Sacrifice is not a commercial matter—an exchange of commodities—so much pleasure given up for heaven and God's favour. It is a spiritual act, or it is worse than nothing.

This thought casts a light on the Christian life which may often be terrible, but is always glorious. It is terrible indeed to human nature to find how costly this salt may be—costly in suffering. Salt is for sacrifice, and reality means pain. The interest and the influence of which we have been thinking are under a strange and awful law. All real men will

find an element of pain and loss in their life. So keen will this be that the salt will seem like fire at times—'every sacrifice shall be salted with fire.' At such times the interest of the Christian life can only be maintained by the ruthless quenching of other interests which are fascinating the soul; its influence may bring upon us the hatred of those whose conscience it arouses or whose interests it thwarts.

But then how magnificent is the compensation. The spiritual reality which in such ways costs us dear, raises the whole life to a new consciousness of the worth and dignity of living. Sacrifice, when it is spiritually real, means nothing less than the communion of the Cross, 'the fellowship of Christ's sufferings' when the soul is made 'conformable unto His death.' But in the very act of dying with Christ, men rise to new heights of life. Living on these high spiritual levels, they do not grudge the pain of any sacrifice; nor do the simple details of every day's work and pleasure seem too trifling to dedicate to God. The unreal man finds his costliest offerings ever coming back upon his hands rejected. The real man has attained to a life whose record always is, 'Accepted in the Beloved.'

This also has its public aspect, and the apostle's claim that Christian men are 'priests unto God' has this most striking reference. The Bible, from its story of Sodom downwards, is full of instances in which nations and communities were rendered acceptable by the presence of certain accepted persons in their midst. History since then has offered many further examples. The prosperity of nations has not depended wholly either on commercial enterprise, or success in war, or diplomatic skill. They cannot prosper without a certain element of men who are spiritually real in them. France once killed out such men, and she paid the price; had there been no massacre of St. Bartholomew there would have been no French Revolution. There have been times in our own nation when Church and State were corrupt, but when Christian families and Christian men lived on. While the powers that were seemed bent on wrecking the nation by sensual luxury that might soon have led to ruin, the nation was not wrecked. A future generation saw a new moral tone, a new enthusiasm for goodness, and a fresh, clean life rise from the ashes of the wicked past. The religious interpretation of such facts is this,

that God accepted the national life, and established it, because of that 'salt of the earth' which was in it.

This vicarious element enters into all life, and is conspicuous in many religious ordinances. We see it in Baptism, where parents offer their vows to God for their children; we see it in Prayer, where friend pours out his soul to God for friend. And the law of sacrifice holds in all such cases. Whether such offerings shall be but hollow forms mocking the offerer, or whether they shall be sacramental experiences which shall go forth as effective powers, depends wholly on whether there be or be not in them the element of spiritual reality. In these days many are realizing the demand for vicarious sacrifice made, not only on Christ for all, but on all with Christ. To every man it is given to bear upon himself the sorrow and the need and the sin of the world. It is a high calling this demand for sympathy, for thought, for helpful action. Every serious thinker perceives that it demands unselfishness and self-denial in some form or other. But not every one

has realized that its demand is even more far-reaching and more exacting. It demands spiritual reality. Only he can bear these burdens whose hands are clean and whose heart is pure; only he can take up the weight of other lives upon his heart and conscience whose own religious life is an honest fact.

Thus has a simple figure used by Christ led us to very wide views of the manifold grace of God. Within the soul, it is the secret of interest; towards the outer world, it is the spring of influence; in its Godward aspect, it is the condition of acceptable sacrifice. There is evidently a deep mystery here, and we feel that these are the effects of more than human effort—the touch of the Divine Spirit upon the soul. Yet what can be more healthy, what more human, than the demand here made upon us so far as its practical fulfilment is concerned? In other matters, between man and man, we require sincerity—it is all that God requires. His own condition in the spiritual life is reality; his one demand is 'truth in the inward parts.'

## What have We gained in the Sinaitic Palimpsest?

BY AGNES SMITH LEWIS, M.R.A.S., HON. PHIL. DR. (HALLE-WITTENBERG), CAMBRIDGE.

### II.

#### The Gospel of Mark.

1<sup>1-11</sup> are on a lost leaf.

\*1<sup>21</sup>.—'And they go into Capernaum,' is omitted.

\*1<sup>28</sup>.—'And his fame went abroad through all the region of Galilee, and many followed him.'

1<sup>32, 33, 34</sup>.—'Now when the sun did set, they brought all them that were sick with sore diseases, and all the city were gathered together at his door. And he healed many and cast out many demons, and suffered them not to speak, because they knew him.'

Here we have forty-five words as against sixty in the Revised Version and fifty-nine in the Authorized. Yet we do not miss a single idea.

1<sup>44</sup> to 2<sup>20</sup> is on a lost leaf.

2<sup>27, 28</sup>.—'The Sabbath was created for man. Therefore the Lord of the Sabbath is the Son of

man.' Seventeen words as against twenty-four of the Revised Version.

3<sup>8</sup>.—'And from Idumæa,' is omitted (with the Codex Sinaiticus).

3<sup>11</sup>.—'And they who had plagues of unclean spirits upon them fell down before him' (almost with the Peshitta).

3<sup>15</sup>.—'And to have power to heal the sick and to cast out demons' (with the Codex Alexandrinus and other ancient Greek and Old Latin MSS, and the Peshitta).

\*3<sup>17</sup>.—'Which is, sons of thunder,' is omitted, obviously because 'Beni-Ragshi' needs no interpretation to a Syrian reader. Yet the Peshitta has it, whilst the Curetonian and the Palestinian Syriac are here deficient.

3<sup>18</sup>.—'Simon the Zealot' (with the Peshitta).

3<sup>31</sup> has been only partially deciphered.