

I not forbid such a one who is working miracles in My name, but even if he should give you the smallest thing for My name's sake, and should receive you on account of Me and not just as a human or worldly favor, he shall not lose his reward. The Lord mentions a cup of water because of those who use their own poverty as an excuse. For He says, even if you give something as insignificant as a cup of water, you shall not lose your reward. You will be pleasing to God if you honor one of the little ones, but if you offend a little one, that is, shame him or trip him up for sport, it would be better for you, by comparison, if a millstone were hanged about your neck, for an even worse punishment is in store. He alludes to the real punishment by frightening us with this tangible example.

**43-50. And if thy hand should cause thee to fall, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into gehenna, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot should cause thee to fall, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into gehenna, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye cause thee to fall, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into the gehenna of fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.** Having warned those who cause offense that it will be worse for them than if they were cast into the sea, now the Lord exhorts those to whom offense is given to guard themselves against those who are always ready to offend and to tempt. Whether it be your foot, hand, or eye which causes you to fall, which means, even if it is one of your closest friends or relatives, in close relationship to you either by kinship or by necessity, who causes you to fall, cut him off, that is, reject that friendship or kinship to him. The worm and the fire which punish the sinners are each person's conscience and the memory of the shameful things done in this life, for they consume like the worm and burn like fire. "Everyone shall be salted with fire," that is, shall be tested. Paul also says that all things

shall be tried by fire.<sup>10</sup> And every sacrifice, the Lord says, shall be salted with salt. Here He is quoting from Leviticus, where God said, "And every gift of your sacrifice shall be seasoned with salt."<sup>11</sup> It is good for you to season your sacrifices with the salt of God, which means, do not make offerings that you have not carefully prepared to please God. "Salt" is also what the Lord calls the apostles, and in general, all those with the duty to preserve others from corruption. Just as salt preserves meat, and prevents worms from breeding within it, so do words of teaching, if they are astringent, shrink the fleshliness of carnal men, and prevent the worm that never sleeps from breeding within them. But if the teacher is without salt, that is, if he has no astringent to preserve us from rot, with what shall he be salted, that is, be seasoned? Have salt therefore in yourselves, that is, have the pleasing and preserving grace of the Holy Spirit, so that you may have peace one with another. For he who is bound to his neighbor by love has shrunk his carnal self, and it is he who "has salt", and he is at peace with his brother.

<sup>10</sup> See I Cor. 3:13.

<sup>11</sup> Levit. 2:13