

1-1-1937

## Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

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### Recommended Citation

Behnken, J. W. (1937) "Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 8 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol8/iss1/5>

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## Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

### New Year's Day

ROM. 8, 24—32

The turning of the years is becoming ever more deeply significant. It trembles with importance. Chaotic conditions (political, economic, social, moral, religious) are so alarming that Christians are reminded of Christ's description in Matt. 24 and Luke 21. Will conditions improve or get worse? Is there any hope for us or any encouragement as we enter the new year? Yes indeed. In fact, only Christians may enter the new year with genuine assurance.

#### We Enter the New Year with Fullest Confidence

1. *God has implanted hope into our hearts.*
2. *We have the Spirit of God, who pleads for us.*
3. *God will direct all things for our good.*

#### 1

The apostle had directed the attention of his readers to the sufferings of this present time, Rom. 8, 18. Sin had ushered bitterest woe and misery into this world. Even "the creature" suffered on account of it, v. 20. But God had enkindled within them "an expectation" for "deliverance," vv. 18—22. These dreadful conditions certainly do not leave the Christian untouched. They affect him. They become a matter of deep concern. But God has implanted a very definite hope into our hearts. Though at present we "groan within ourselves" and conditions seem to forbid every thought of the blessedness expressed in vv. 14—17, yet we Christians have a very definite hope, which prompts conscious "waiting for the adoption," v. 23.

The apostle enters boldly upon the very nature of hope. Hope is not consummation; it is not final realization; but it is a definite conviction that that which it hopes will be realized, and it engenders confident and patient waiting, vv. 24, 25. This becomes all the more positive when we contemplate the reality of the forgiveness, peace with God, etc., which we now enjoy as a foretaste of eternal life. "The glory which shall be revealed in us" belongs to us even now. Only the full use of it is a matter of the future. Our hope embodies not merely "deliverance," but the full use and enjoyment of "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

A people with such hope in their hearts are in a position to face the uncertain future with fullest confidence.

#### 2

God has been so considerate of our welfare that He does not permit us to face the dreadful situation alone. "Likewise the Spirit helpeth," etc., v. 26. The Spirit of God within us is affected by all



which would blur our vision and blast our hope. He realizes also our weakness to cope with the situation and comes to our rescue. It should fill us with confidence to know that the Spirit is taking hold of the tasks with us and is strengthening us. Note that the apostle mentions, "We know not what we should pray for," etc., v. 26, as our weakness. Cf. Matt. 20, 22. God does not mean that we have no conception at all of the temporal and also of the spiritual needs which drive us to prayer. Is. 26, 16; Hos. 5, 15. He speaks here of our final "deliverance." We have no adequate conception of this and cannot find words for it. Prevailing conditions becloud our understanding to such an extent that we do not know what to pray "as we ought." Here the Spirit enters and prays from within us, v. 26. He also intercedes for us, v. 27. He knows what to pray. His prayer is God-pleasing and acceptable, v. 27.

What wonderful assurance! How confidently we may enter the new year because the Spirit of God pleads with us and for us for our glorification! After all, this is the thing which counts; this is the matter of paramount importance in life.

## 3

V. 28. No Christian should doubt that God is in control of all things. Christ reminded His Church of this in connection with her great tasks, Matt. 28, 18. God guides and directs "all things," Ps. 33, 13—15; Acts 17, 25. 27. 28; Col. 1, 17. This embodies the thought that God is in control of the very things which would deprive us of "deliverance."

God directs all things to "work together" to focus upon, to serve, to further the welfare of, His people. We may not see it, but He does. He can turn suffering, sorrow, etc., unto good. Cf. Rom. 5, 3—5.

The apostle comes to the thought of our predestination, vv. 28. 29. (In this connection we should not treat this doctrine fully, but point out the comfort which it contains as we stand upon the threshold of a new year which augurs all manner of dangers.) We are God's chosen people. He called us unto eternal life. He will lead us safely through to the end.

Again, the apostle refers to the sacrifice which God made for us, vv. 31—34. We are His redeemed people. We have forgiveness through Christ. We have our Redeemer for us. Nothing can be against us. If our heavenly Father gave us His Son and delivered Him up for us, He will surely lead us through all dangers unto our eternal glorification.

What wonderful encouragement for us as individuals, as congregations, as a Synod! Surely we may enter the year 1937 with fullest confidence. With such confidence let us continue the tasks which He has assigned.

J. W. BEHNKEN.



**Sunday after New Year**

JAS. 4, 13—17

Two days ago we crossed the threshold of the new year in the name of Jesus, with the Word of God and prayer. But even now our hearts are beginning to quail. Future dark. Ominous clouds lowering on the horizon (press dispatches, etc.). No man knows what the present year holds in store for the world, our country, ourselves. Moreover, the status of our spiritual life and the deceitfulness of our own hearts give rise to many a well-founded fear. As we look out into the unknown future, we feel dreadfully weak and in need of a strong, unfailing support.

**Let Us Day by Day Walk Close with God**

1. *Trustfully committing ourselves to His fatherly hand;*
2. *Cheerfully dedicating our lives to His service.*

**1**

*Life is uncertain.* We do not know what shall be on the morrow. We cannot look even one moment ahead. V. 14 a.

The *wrong attitude* of the worldly man over against the future: Leaving God out of his computations, he plans not only days, but years ahead; acts as though he knew the span of his days, as though he might live on earth for ever. V. 13.

We Christians often discover ourselves in such an attitude toward the future. We drift into the ways of the world. But this is not only foolish and dangerous, but even definitely sinful. Vv. 14 a. 16.

The *correct attitude*: Recognize the uncertainty of life. Walk close with God. Commit all that you are and all that you have to His fatherly hand. "If the Lord will," v. 15.

After all, our days are in His hand. He is the Lord of life and death, of joy and sorrow, of plenty and want. Our experiences will be what He wants them to be.

Moreover, we may trustfully commit ourselves to His guardian care, for He is our Father in Christ Jesus. He loves us. He knoweth our frame. He sees our every need. Our bodies and our souls are safe as long as we walk close with Him. (Elaboration and practical, personal application.)

**2**

*Life is short.* At the very best it can last but a few years, Ps. 90, 9. 10. Even as a vapor, which vanisheth away, v. 14 b. The very brevity of life is an incentive to make the best of it while it lasts, to invest its days and years profitably.

The *sinful reaction* of the world to this challenge: Let us buy and sell and get gain, v. 13 b. Temporal gain is the supreme aim



of the worldly-minded man; the amassing of wealth, the mere acquisition of knowledge, the building up of a reputation, the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. This is the substance of the world's plans for the present year.

We Christians often make our plans in the same way. Seek success and joy in the same achievements. Become worldly-minded. But this is not only foolish and dangerous, but even definitely sinful. Vv. 14 b. 16.

**The God-pleasing reaction:** doing the will of God in every respect and cheerfully dedicating our lives to His service. By walking close with God day by day, by doing what He would have us do and avoiding everything that He forbids, we invest our lives profitably and eventually reap great gain. And that not only in the life to come, but even here on earth. (Elaboration and practical, personal application.)

Hymn 171, 2. 4.

E. J. FRIEDRICH.

### Epiphany

2 Cor. 4, 3—6

**Epiphany.** The festival of light. Is. 60, 1—6. Having stood at Bethlehem's manger, we are now gathered at a "sunrise" service to see the dazzling "Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." Our text states: —

#### "God hath Shined in Our Hearts"

1. *God is the Source of light.*
2. *God shines in our hearts.*
3. *Why God has shined only in our hearts.*

#### 1

a) The term *light* may designate natural, physical light such as the illumination or radiance proceeding from the sun or from a lamp. The word is also used to describe human intelligence, wisdom, knowledge. In our text, however, it is employed to designate spiritual light, our entire spiritual life, such as enlightenment, regeneration, faith, sanctification, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." The spiritual light, which distinguishes us as Christians from the children of the world, is "the light of life," John 8, 12; and makes us "the children of light," John 12, 36. "We walk in the light as He is in the light," 1 John 1, 7.

b) The source of all light is God, "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness." Text, v. 6; Gen. 1, 3. No scientist has yet solved the mystery of physical light. In God are hid all the treasures of truth and knowledge, of wisdom and understanding. There is no spiritual light or life without Him. "The Lord is my



Light and my Salvation," Ps. 21. "God is Light," 1 John 1, 5; John 1, 4. In God is bound up all the spiritual light that His Church on earth and its countless members ever possessed. Without the light that is in God there is absolute outer spiritual darkness and doom. God dwells "in the light which no man hath seen nor can see," 1 Tim. 6, 16.

## 2

God, however, has divulged and manifested that light in which He dwells and which is His very essence. There is an epiphany of that glory. "God hath shined in our hearts to give the light."

a) God has revealed the glory of His light through His Son. "God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," v. 6, "who is the Image of God," v. 4. "Light is come into the world," John 3, 19. "Thy Light is come . . . risen upon thee," Is. 60, 1; 9, 2; Luke 2, 32; John 12, 35. If we want to know God, we should study Jesus Christ, His Son. He is called "the Image of God." Jesus says: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," John 14, 9; 12, 45; Heb. 1, 3; Col. 1, 15; 2, 9. Follow Christ through His life of humility, and even there you will get glimpses of divine glory, of omnipotence in His astounding miracles, of grace when He deals with publicans and prodigals and sinners, of mercy when He heals the lepers, of love when the Good Shepherd seeks the lost sheep and lays down His life for them. The inscription on the face of Jesus Christ which reflects the love of God is John 3, 16. Jesus is "the clearest manifestation of God to His creatures."

b) God also shines in our hearts through the Gospel of Christ. St. Paul refers to this revelation of God as "our Gospel," "the glorious Gospel of Christ." The contents of the Gospel are: "We preach Christ Jesus the Lord," v. 5. 1 Cor. 1, 23; 2, 2; Jer. 23, 6. This is that "more sure Word of Prophecy," "a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the Day-star arise in your hearts," 2 Pet. 1, 19.

This Gospel actually gives light, shines in our hearts, enlightens, regenerates, us. The efficacy of the Gospel. The same creative omnipotence, Gen. 1, 3; cp. text, v. 6. Eph. 1, 19 f.; 2, 10; Rom. 1, 16 f. God has laid down in nature the power of lightning and thunder, of gravitation that binds the universe and holds it within its boundary, of the sun's rays that give light and life to the created world. The Gospel is the power of God to create spiritual light and life in the dark human soul and to impart the light of eternal salvation.

Thus God shines into our hearts through Jesus Christ, His Son, who is God's image, and through "the light of the glorious Gospel."



## 3

If that is the case, if the Gospel is such an indispensable blessing, if it has such glorious illuminating power, why do so many reject it? How is it that "God hath shined in *our* hearts" only? Why is the Gospel "hid to them that are lost"? V. 3. That was the question on the lips of the Christians at Corinth, the Paris of that day. They wondered, Are the brainy leaders of the synagog, the brilliant philosophers in the schools, without light? If so, why? Why is it hid to the millions who are perishing?

God wants all to come to His light, to faith, to salvation, Is. 60. There is no predestination to spiritual darkness.

Neither can we find any fault with the light. The Gospel is efficacious, no matter into whose heart it shines.

Neither was the natural spiritual darkness less dense in "our" hearts than in the hearts of the unconverted unbelievers. That we are believers is due entirely to God's grace.

Then why? God tells us why, v. 4. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." It is not that the unbeliever is too smart, intelligent, wise, but because a satanic power is keeping him in spiritual ignorance and darkness. The midday sun is blazing forth in all its glory, but these dupes do not see it. Eph. 2, 2; 6, 12; Luke 8, 12; 2 Thess. 2, 9—12; 1 Kings 22, 19—23; 2 Tim. 2, 26; Rev. 12, 12.

This fact should serve us as a warning. God working through means can be resisted. (Luther, St. L. Ed., XVIII, 1794.) There is no irresistible grace, Hos. 13, 9; Acts 7, 51. (Pieper, *Christl. Dogmatik*, II, 31.) Those who insist on a militant attitude over against the grace of God and sit in judgment over God's ways and persistently criticize His holy Word will be doomed to a blinded mind and to outer darkness, Is. 6, 9, 10; Acts 28, 25—27; Rom. 1, 21, 22, 28; 9, 31—33; 10, 21; 11, 7—10; Matt. 13, 13—15; John 3, 19. Let us beware. The same sun that gives life to one tree may blast another that refuses to grow, Matt. 23, 37; Acts 7, 51; 1 Pet. 5, 8.

The fact that God has enlightened us should be a powerful incentive to share our glorious light with others.

"The keeper of the lighthouse at Calais was boasting of the brightness of his lantern, which can be seen ten leagues at sea, when a visitor said to him, "What if one of the lights would chance to go out?" "Never,—impossible!" he cried, horrified at the bare thought. "Sir," said he, pointing to the ocean, "yonder, where nothing can be seen, there are ships going by to all parts of the world. If tonight one of my burners went out, within six months would come a letter, perhaps from India, perhaps from America, perhaps from some place I never heard of, saying that in such a night, at such an hour, the light of Calais burned dim, the watchman neglected his post, and vessels were in danger. Ah, sir! sometimes in the dark nights, in stormy weather, I look out to sea and feel as if the eyes of the whole world were looking at my light. Go out? burn dim? Never!"

Phil. 2, 15; Eph. 5, 8.

H. W. BARTELS.



**First Sunday after Epiphany**

2 COR. 6, 14—7, 1

The history of the Church relates a number of incidents of large groups of Christians leaving their homes and country, separating themselves from all their former surroundings, in order to be able to worship according to their conscience. The Saxon emigration in 1838 is an example. These accounts impress us with the hardships attendant upon such a separation.—But our text speaks of another kind of separation that Christians must experience and which is harder than the above-mentioned; harder because the things from which Christians are to separate themselves are still always before their eyes.

**"Be Ye Separate!"**

1. *From whom?*    2. *In what way?*    3. *For what reason?*

**1**

Vv. 14, 17. Unbelievers are people who are not as God wants them to be in faith and in life. God wants people to realize their sinfulness, Ps. 51, 17; Is. 66, 2; to accept Jesus as their Redeemer and to believe that all their sins are forgiven, Acts 4, 12; 16, 31; Rom. 5, 1; and to live in accordance with their faith, Col. 2, 6; Phil. 1, 27. Those who are different are unbelievers, whether they live in India or America and whether they are black or white. We are surrounded by unbelievers. They betray their unbelief by their words and by their actions. They are not unbelievers because their fancied superior intellect cannot understand and accept the teachings of Christ; they are unbelievers because they do not want to bow their proud hearts under the truth of God's Word, Acts 7, 51, and do not want to conform their lives to the will of God, Matt. 19, 22. From these unbelievers comes that great mass of lies and wickedness and ungodliness and filth that fills the world. They produce things like evolution, salacious literature and pictures, and the false view of life that is prevalent today. From the unbelievers and what they produce Christians must be separate.

**2**

In what way? Christians cannot emigrate to a country where there are no unbelievers. We must have business dealings and social contacts with them. But note v. 14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together." Oxen yoked together pulled the same burden; one helped the other; they had a common task. In the Old Testament two animals of different kinds were not to be yoked together. Applied to believers, this means that they should in no way help the unbelievers in the promotion of their false teachings and ungodly living. There are practical applications of this principle in our



worship and in our daily lives. We cannot worship with those who deny Christ. We cannot aid in the promulgation of false religion. We cannot be lodge-members. We cannot adopt as our own many of the current opinions held by men. We must be different from unbelievers. Our interests, our aims, our amusements, our conversation, must be different. We must dare to be separate.

## 3

For what reason? It may often appear to be disadvantageous. We may lose friends or opportunities for gain. But regardless of consequences, the separation must be upheld. Vv. 14—16 enumerate cogent reasons for the separation. This is a series of diametrically opposite concepts. Note the growing force of the contrasts, culminating with the trenchant conclusion in v. 15 b. Then comes the reenforcement in v. 16: certainly, there can be no agreement, or oneness of purpose, between a temple for idols and a temple for God. And Christians are God's temple; the Holy Ghost dwells in them, 1 Cor. 3, 16; what connection can they have with unbelief?

These are reasons enough to heed, v. 17. But there is another reason, v. 18. This is a wonderful promise made by God. Think of what it means to be children of God; what advantages in life and what a glorious inheritance in death! This promise is made to those who heed the precept in v. 17. This promise is so glorious that it will move the Christian to use his life for a perfect service of God, 7, 1.

Let us be separate from unbelievers; God commands it and promises us His grace for time and eternity if we shall heed His commandment.

FREDERIC NIEDNER.

### Second Sunday after Epiphany

1 Cor. 2, 6—16

The Corinthians had been won for Christ by the simple preaching of the Gospel. 1 Cor. 2, 1—5. However, living still in the atmosphere of ancient Greece, charged with pride and conceit of carnal wisdom and oratory, they were still susceptible to the glamor of such wisdom and in danger of losing their appreciation of Paul's simple preaching.

Paul as a true pastor hastens to point out to them that the Gospel, while indeed not a worldly wisdom, yet is truly wisdom of an infinitely higher type and value, viz., the wisdom of God.

Human reason, learning, science, etc., are made much of in our day. We have no fault to find with this, nor do we wish to disparage true human learning. However, all too often human reason leaves its legitimate province and intrudes into the realm of spiritual things, presuming to master the infinite God and His



holy Word. Christians today are susceptible to the lure of science and, like the Corinthians, in danger of losing their appreciation of the simple Gospel, thus imperiling their salvation. Our text tells us also that—

### **Our Gospel Is the Wisdom of God**

1. *It is divinely conceived;*
2. *It is divinely revealed.*

#### **1**

A) Preaching the Gospel, Paul insists: "We speak the wisdom of God," v. 7. *Wisdom* is here to be understood in an objective sense, God's entire plan of salvation, reflecting indeed transcendent wisdom. God's plan of salvation through Christ is the very heart, the sum and substance, of the Gospel.

B) Preaching this Gospel, Paul indeed spoke divine wisdom.

a) No wisdom of this world nor of the princes of this world, v. 6; leaders in human thought and endeavor could never have devised a plan to harmonize God's holiness and justice with His compassionate saving love for sinners. Human reason ever since the Fall gropes and stumbles about in the dark in its proposals and attempts to bring about peace between God and man. Paganism, ancient and modern, hideous and hopeless, demonstrates the futility of man's wisdom to solve the problem of the sinner's salvation.

b) Redemption of the race through Christ was ordained by God before the world unto our glory, v. 7. Only in His infinite divine love and wisdom could that adorable plan have originated which St. Paul describes 2 Cor. 5, 19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And again: "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Also Is. 53; John 3, 16; Rom. 3, 22—25. This wisdom of God has its roots in eternity, "before the world," and stretches forward "unto our glory," our final salvation in heaven. In contrast to ever-changing, wavering human wisdom it is eternally immutable. Because it is the wisdom of God, it is wisdom in the fullest sense, true science, absolute truth, which alone can and does satisfy the human heart and mind.

C) *Application.*—God forbid that our Gospel, the wisdom of God, ever become commonplace to us! Rather, the more we faithfully ponder it, the more adorable may it be to us, ever more filling our hearts with peace and joy!

#### **2**

A) Human wisdom is wholly unable to know, to perceive, and to understand the wisdom of God.

a) No mode of human perception is adequate to fathom the



depths of God's love, to know and to understand the wondrous plan of salvation, v. 9. Were man dependent upon such human modes of perception, the mystery of God's wisdom must remain forever hidden.

b) Limited, as it is, through sin even in the realm of natural things, in spiritual things human reason is totally blind, so blind that the adorable wisdom of God is foolishness to it, v. 14.

c) The crowning evidence of natural man's utter inability of himself to know the mystery of God's saving love in Christ is presented in the crucifixion of the Lord of Glory, v. 8. This deed is evidence of inconceivable blindness and wickedness.

Hence even in this age of vaunted, and in many respects real, enlightenment there are still the same follies, the same blind groping in spiritual things, obtaining ever since the Fall.

B) Only the Spirit of God can and does reveal to us the wisdom of God, v. 10—12.

a) Only the Spirit of God can do this. He is God Himself, cosource with the Father and the Son of the wisdom of God, v. 11. Paul cites an analogy. The Spirit of God knows what is in God, His inmost thoughts and purposes, as a man alone knows his own inmost thoughts.

b) The Holy Spirit does reveal the wisdom of God to us, giving us the living knowledge of faith, v. 12 (the spirit of the world is "that principle which controls the world in its thought and volition, selfish curiosity, alienated from God," Lange, *Commentary*). Rightly do we confess in the words of Luther: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me."

c) The Holy Spirit reveals to us the wisdom of God by means of the inspired Gospel. Thus the Corinthians had been enlightened. We have the inspired record of Paul's Gospel-preaching, v. 13. We have the entire Word of God, verbally inspired, the Word in which the spiritual thoughts are connected with, and clothed in, spiritual words, i. e., in words furnished the holy writers by the Holy Ghost (*didaktōi*). The inspired Gospel is a power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1, 16, the means whereby the Spirit of God Himself brings us to a living, happy understanding of God's wondrous love in Christ. Only so is God's wisdom revealed.

C) *Application*.—Rest assured, dear Christian, over and against the fallibility and uncertainty of human wisdom that your knowledge of your Savior is divinely wrought. In life, in death, you may rely upon it and join the great apostle in the joyful declarations of divine assurance "I know whom I have believed," 2 Tim. 1, 12. Cp. Rom. 8, 38, 39. Therefore Hymn 122, 4.

AUG. F. BERNTHAL.



## Septuagesima Sunday

PHIL. 1, 27—2, 4

We should be *walking* Christians, not merely *talking* Christians.

**Illustration:** A relative of Robert Ingersoll, Aunt Sarah, was a devoted Bible student and a beautiful Christian. One day she received by mail a package which, upon opening, proved to be a copy of one of Ingersoll's books, an attack on the Bible. On the fly-leaf were written these words over Ingersoll's signature: "If all Christians had lived like Aunt Sarah, perhaps this book would never have been written." (Quoted from *Christian Herald* in *Pearls for Preachers*, Hart, p. 89.)

Not only our fellow-man demands of us Christians that our *walk* be consistent with our *talk*; God Himself demands that. In text before us.

We are again nearing Lenten season. The good custom of meditating upon the sufferings of Jesus should lead us to a thorough-going self-examination. Is our conduct as Christians at all in keeping with the earnestness and devotedness with which Jesus lived and labored and languished for our salvation? We boast of the Gospel of Christ as our one and only and certain guarantee of salvation.

### Are We Living Up to What is Required of Adherents of the Gospel of Christ?

1. Paul emphasizes the importance of living up to what is required of adherents of the Gospel of Christ.

A. In the foregoing verses Paul had expressed the hope of soon being delivered from prison and seeing the Philippians again, to their mutual joy.

B. Now he leads over to a matter far more important.

1. "Whether I come and see you" — he hopes that will be soon.
2. "Or else be absent" — it is possible that his seeing them will be delayed for a while.

3. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ."

a. His coming or not coming in the final analysis was not the thing that really mattered.

b. The thing that really mattered was that they would live up to the Gospel. "Only" (*monon*) — the one all-important thing. "Behave yourselves as citizens" (*politeuesthe*) — let your manner of life be (Lenski). "As it becometh" (*axios*) — worthy, fitting, corresponding to, as the price of an article corresponding to the value of the article. "The Gospel of Christ." As they professed to adhere to the Gospel, every one had a right to expect of them to adopt the standard of right and wrong of the Author of the Gospel.



(A citizen is expected to live up to the principles of his political hero.) But it is not only good form to live up to the Gospel of Jesus; we actually owe it to Jesus. Immense price paid for our redemption. (Elaborate.) In view of that price we actually owe it to Jesus to live as He would have us live. By paying our debt and releasing us from damnation, Jesus laid upon us another debt — the obligation to live according to His will.

C. Should we refrain from emphasizing the importance of leading a Christian life lest we or others ultimately base our hope of heaven on what *we* do rather than on what *Christ* has done for us? Not if we always bear in mind that a life of service to God is but a feeble effort to thank God for His immense gift of saving us by grace, a gift which can never be paid for in all eternity. It is significant that just that apostle (Paul) who is so explicit and emphatic in stating that we are saved by grace alone is also so emphatic in urging that they who have been saved by grace now live up to the Gospel with consistent Christian conduct. How much the Christian conduct of his spiritual children meant to Paul is further illustrated by his remark later in the text: "Fulfil ye my joy." Paul's very joy and satisfaction as a pastor depended on the conduct of those in his flock. How we conduct ourselves after accepting the free grace of God in Christ is, then, not a matter of choice, of doing as we please. Living up to the Gospel is a solemn obligation.

2. *Paul mentions several duties which, among others, adherents of Christ should bear in mind in their effort to live up to the requirements of the Gospel of Christ.*

A. He mentions first steadfast loyalty to the Gospel.

1. "That ye stand fast, . . . striving together for the faith of the Gospel." "Faith" — creed, truth, doctrine (*fides quae creditur*). "Strive together" (*synathlountes*), strive together as in athletic contests. Thus the apostle first pleads for confessional firmness. That is basic for consistent Christian conduct. Doctrinal compromise is not a God-pleasing "broad-mindedness."

2. The Philippians are urged to be steadfast in spite of opposition.

a. "In nothing terrified" (*ptyromenoi*), shying, startled, terrified, as a horse (Lenski).

b. "To them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation." "Token of perdition" may mean a forerunner of the perdition of your enemies or, to your enemies it appears that you will perish (enemies feel certain you will perish through their opposition). But to God's children the opposition of enemies is a proof that God is keeping His Word, that things are coming to pass as He has predicted; hence it is an indication that God will



ultimately keep His further promise of saving them altogether. God is greater than our worst enemy; let that console us.

3. Suffering for Christ's sake should be considered a gift of God's grace (*echaristhe*, it is given). When Christians are made to suffer because of loyalty to God, that is no sign that God has gone back on them. That is to be expected, part of the bargain of being a Christian. It is therefore to be considered an honor, a badge showing that we belong to God. Acts 5, 41. "Conflict which ye saw in me," etc. Paul and Silas had been shamefully mistreated on their first visit to Philippi, Acts 16. When we suffer for Christ's sake, we experience what God's faithful children have always experienced. Not a reason for turning traitor. Rather a reason to be reassured of God's favor—His predictions are coming true.

4. It is said that there was once a monk who prayed much that he might have the marks of the Lord upon his hands and feet. A vision was given him in which he was shown a mark upon the Lord's body that the world had forgotten. It was the mark upon the shoulder, and the monk learned that he could have the marks on the hands and feet only if he first had the mark upon the shoulder (cross-bearing). (A. E. Gregory, *Pearls for Preachers*, p. 28.)

B. Paul next mentions "likemindedness," chap. 2, 2. All should have the same interests. Created by the Holy Spirit. Not carnal, but spiritual. A division of interests will result in outward divisions, disharmony.

C. Finally Paul mentions unselfishness.

1. V. 3. Let nothing be done to nurse pride. Let each one be concerned about honoring others rather than himself. Is this admonition needed?

2. V. 4. Love others as we love ourselves. Seek the gain of others as devotedly as we seek our own. What a heaven on earth it would be if this ideal could be realized!

**Conclusion.**— Do you have difficulties at times to think of sins because of which you need a Savior? Here is a sure cure: Prayerfully study those passages of Scripture (such as the text before us) in which God tells us what He really expects of His children. That will drive all Pharisaism out of us; that will prove to us how far we are from what we ought to be, how direly we need a Savior. Let us prepare ourselves for the Lenten season in this way. Christ and His cross will appear to us more glorious than ever. Our hearts will experience anew "the joy of salvation." Within us will be born a new sense of gratitude to God, which will impel us, by the grace of God, to strive for the ideal of living up to the Gospel of Christ.

RUDOLPH PRANGE.



**Sexagesima Sunday****PHIL. 1, 12—21**

"For me to live is Christ." Pregnant words of Paul. His definition, Gal. 2, 20; Phil. 3, 7—11. Christ, the Savior, was the one who lived in Paul and the one for whom Paul lived. His one purpose in life and in death was to make his Savior glorious and great in the eyes of men, to magnify Him. This is the burden of our text.

**Magnifying Christ****This is done —**

1. *By doing His work with sincerity and with joy;*
2. *By suffering tribulation for His sake with courage and with boldness;*
3. *By facing death with the assurance that to die is gain.*

**1**

Vv. 12—18. Paul was in prison because he had preached the Gospel. The Philippians, concerned about his person and about the progress of the Gospel, had communicated with him through Epaphroditus, chap. 4, 18. Our text a part of Paul's answer. Though a prisoner, he is mindful of the fact that he is set for the defense of the Gospel. Circumstances seemingly would prevent his preaching Christ; yet he is bending the circumstances and making them serve the Gospel. His bonds in Christ are manifest, and thereby Christ is becoming known in the city. Paul's testimony is inciting others to speak the Word more boldly; some indeed not sincerely, but others of love. Nevertheless, Christ is being preached, and therein Paul rejoices. He will continue to do the Lord's work with joy, knowing that thus he is magnifying Christ.

We, too, magnify Christ by doing His work with sincerity and with joy. To do Christ's work means to bring the Gospel to lost and condemned mankind. This work is our privilege and duty (John 17, 17—20, Acts 1, 8, Matt. 28, 29, 1 Pet. 2, 9) and is done by supporting the work of our congregation and of our Synod. Such work we are to do with sincerity, i. e., whole-heartedly, earnestly, with all our resources. Use all opportunities to further Christ's kingdom (e. g., publicity, radio, etc.). If conditions (e. g., depression) seemingly are unfavorable, make them serve the Gospel (e. g., added leisure of our people can be devoted to church-work). Cf. Acts 8, 1—13; 2 Cor. 8, 1—5. Christ's work should be done with joy, and we are to rejoice that Christ is being preached. Are we unwilling workers, grudging givers, 2 Cor. 9, 7? Does our zeal provoke others? Do we know enough about our Church to cause



us to rejoice over its work? Do we inquire about the progress of the Gospel as the Philippians did? (Church-papers.) Are we magnifying Christ by doing His work with sincerity and with joy?

## 2

Vv. 19, 20. Paul magnified Christ by preaching the Gospel. This aroused the opposition of the Jews, causing his imprisonment; cf. Acts 21, 27 ff. Even while he is a prisoner in Rome, false brethren seek to add afflictions to his bonds by preaching Christ of contention, not sincerely, v. 12. However, Paul's courage and boldness have not forsaken him. He is certain that this, i. e., his bonds and afflictions, is in God's hands and must turn to his salvation, i. e., welfare. Indeed, this is his earnest expectation and hope. He knows that he will be ashamed, i. e., disappointed, in nothing. And in this conviction he is sustained through the prayers of the Philippians and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. His courage and his boldness in his present trials and tribulations will serve to magnify Christ.

Magnifying Christ causes tribulations to come over us; cf. Phil. 1, 28, 29; 1 John 3, 13; Acts 14, 32. Illustrate. We should not be dismayed, but bear such trials with courage, knowing that we are suffering for Christ's sake and that such tribulations serve our welfare. Rom. 5, 3—5; 8, 28; Heb. 12, 11, 12. Obstacles and difficulties ought not to create in us a spirit of defeatism; we should rather face them boldly. Acts 8, 1—4; 11, 19; 21, 13. Such courage and boldness come through prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Acts 1, 8 a, Phil. 4, 13, Acts 16, 25, 26, Matt. 21, 22. Are we easily disheartened and soon discouraged? Do we lack the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ? Are we remiss in prayer? Do we magnify Christ by suffering for His sake afflictions and tribulations with courage and with boldness?

## 3

Vv. 20 b. 21. Paul magnified Christ in his body by doing the Lord's work and by suffering for His sake. He will magnify Him also by his death. He faces death with the assurance that to die is gain. For him to live is Christ. Since his life is a thing different from what men ordinarily call life, his death also is different. To die (*apothanein*, aor., the single, momentary act of dying) will transfer him into a heavenly state of existence in eternal glory, where he will be completely and forever with his Savior. Thus death will be his gain. By proclaiming this assurance he strengthens the faith of his brethren and attracts the attention of those who do not live unto Christ to the Gospel, thereby magnifying Christ.



We magnify Christ if we face death with the assurance that to die is gain. Death is inevitable, Ps. 39, 4; 90, 12; Heb. 9, 37. However, Christ being our Life, death has no terrors for us, Rom. 5, 1; 8, 35—39. 1 Cor. 15, 55. 57. Death leads to gain beyond, gain immediate, Phil. 1, 23; Rev. 14, 13, incalculable, 1 Cor. 2, 9, everlasting, 1 Thess. 4, 17. Such an attitude towards death is a powerful testimony to the greatness and grace of our Savior Jesus Christ. Is the present life the only life we have? Are we afraid to die? Is Christ our life? Do we magnify Christ by facing death with the assurance that to die is gain?

**Conclusion.**—God give us grace that Christ always be magnified in our body, whether it be by life or by death!

WALTER A. BAEPLER.

## Miscellanea

### Are Changes Needed in Christianity?

Under this heading the *Watchman-Examiner* offers the following editorial:—

"The weather changes, fashions change, systems of thought and customs of society change, people change. Many people are saying that Christianity, or at least the proclamation of it, must undergo a radical change before it will make any appeal to this sophisticated, skeptical age.

"In other words, according to these critics, the type of Christian preaching that has stood the test for nineteen hundred years makes no appeal to our age. Instead of preaching 'a plan of salvation,' the modern preacher must seek 'to enhance our understanding of life and thereby increase our enjoyment.' He must not 'harangue' his congregation with the story of the cross of Christ as the only atonement for sin. In a word, the 'propagandist' of yesterday must be the 'artist' and 'philosopher' of tomorrow if he expects to be heard.

"It goes without saying that the minister of the Gospel should have an acquaintance with the best that our age has to offer in science, philosophy, literature, art, music, and the like, as well as in theology. He should welcome truth wherever it is found and should seek to use it in the broadening and the deepening of his ministry. This does not mean, however, that he should substitute 'the wisdom of this world' for 'the foolishness of preaching.' Paul did not do it, and yet he knew Greek philosophy in all its ways and by-ways. Indeed, when he stood before a Greek audience, he 'determined not to know anything . . . save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.'

"Shall the preacher of today change his message? That is, shall he substitute something else for the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Athanasius, Chrysostom, Augustine, Savonarola, Luther, Calvin, John Knox, all realized that the preaching of the Gospel of Christ was the world's only hope. They covered many centuries. Jesus as the Savior of the world