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## Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

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Matthäus den Löwen, Lukas den Stier, Johannes den Adler zugesellt. Sie tragen in ihren Evangelien gleichsam den Wagen Gottes, auf dem die Herrlichkeit des Herrn in der Gestalt des Menschensohnes, dem sie lobpreisend ihre Ehre geben, thront. Matthäus schildert den Menschen, Markus den Löwen aus dem Stamme Juda, Lukas den starken Helden, mächtig in Worten und Taten. Diese drei Geschöpfe, Mensch, Löwe, Stier, weilen auf der Erde. Johannes aber schwingt sich wie ein Adler empor über die Nebel der menschlichen und irdischen Gebrechlichkeit und schaut mit scharfem Auge und festen Blickes das Licht der unwandelbaren Wahrheit; und als dieser Adler ertveift er sich nicht nur in seiner Offenbarung, sondern auch in seinem Evangelium und seinen Briefen, wo er aufsteigt zu den Höhen, in denen Gott selber wohnt, sich aufschwingt über diese Erde und die Tiefen der Gottheit erspäht, ja im reinen Äther des Himmels sich wiegt und schwebt.“<sup>8)</sup>

Wir können diese Gedanken mit Fug und Recht überhaupt auf die Prediger des Evangeliums anwenden. Die vierfache Tiergestalt der Cherubim zeigt an, daß die Evangelisten und ebenso deren Nachfolger im Predigtamt die Klarheit des Menschenverstandes, die Kraft des Löwenmutes, die unermüdlige Geduld der Stieresarbeit und die Begeisterung des Adlerflugs zu ihrem Verufe bedürfen. Und Louis Harms, der neben seiner Bedeutung als volkstümlicher Prediger und hervorragender Missionsmann auch keineswegs als ein tüchtiger, gründlicher Theolog unterschätzt werden darf, macht dazu diese Bemerkung: „Es ist äußerst heilsam, daß ein jeder Evangelist sich oft in diesem vierfachen Bilde spiegelt, ob er diese Klarheit, diesen Mut, diese Arbeitsamkeit und diese Begeisterung besitze und sie recht ernstlich von Gott erbitte; denn sie sind unumgänglich notwendig für den Verufe eines Evangelisten. Wer kann lehren ohne Klarheit? Wer kann kämpfen ohne Mut? Wer kann ernten ohne Arbeit? Wer kann beten ohne Begeisterung? Und das alles soll doch der rechte Evangelist.“<sup>9)</sup> L. Fürbringer

## Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

### Laetare Sunday

2 Cor. 7, 4—10

On the basis of the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians picture briefly the conditions which had caused the apostle to reprimand the congregation so severely. His worry and anxiety as to the reception of the letter was relieved by the arrival of Titus, v. 7. Filled with joy at this happy turn of events, he writes the words of our text.

Bound by the command of God, 2 Tim. 4, 2; Titus 1, 13, and by

8) S. 9. 10.

9) Biblische Einleitung, S. 148.

the call you have issued to me, I, too, have the duty to correct you, individually and as a congregation, again and again. This correction on the part of the pastor is often misunderstood. It will be profitable to receive enlightenment on this important matter.

### **The Pastor Correcting the Flock Entrusted to His Spiritual Care**

1. *The spirit in which he corrects*
2. *The purpose he has in mind when he corrects*
3. *His joy when the correction produces blessed results*

#### 1

The apostle admits that he made the Corinthians sorry, v. 8. He had used some strong language, and there was a severe tone in his correcting, e. g., 1 Cor. 5, 1—5. To be sure, he was aware of the fact that he was dealing with Christians. Therefore he did not address them as Christ had spoken to the Pharisees and scribes, who were hardened and stubborn, Matt. 23, 13—39. A faithful pastor will always bear this distinction in mind. Nevertheless he was intensely serious in his correction. Sin and doctrinal error dare never be painted in favorable colors, but must be branded as poison for the soul. Furthermore, not only must sin in general be reproved, but also particular sins which the shepherd finds in his flock.

This correction on the part of Paul did not arise from a feeling of superiority or from envy or revenge. Such an attitude is indeed common where a man is not governed by the Holy Spirit, but by his flesh. The Old Adam would like to make the Christian believe that his pastor is actuated by such sinful motives in correcting and tries to make the correction ineffective by pointing to weaknesses in the pastor or his family. Paul was, and every true pastor is, filled with a different spirit. Paul shows this in chap. 2, 4. True love for the souls forces the pastor to speak and correct when he would rather be silent. He feels correcting as a painful duty; he does it with much affliction and anguish of heart. When the result of this correction was still in doubt, Paul for a time did repent, vv. 5. 8. These worries and misgivings indeed were useless outcroppings of his poor human nature, but they did show his intense concern about the spiritual welfare of his dear Corinthians.

Before God I can assure you that my correction proceeds from the same spirit, from hatred of sin and a sincere love for you and concern for your souls.

#### 2

Because Paul loved his spiritual children, he did not shrink from inflicting sorrow upon them; for only by sorrow could the purpose be accomplished which he had in mind. Sin is inseparably

connected with sorrow since it is the transgression of God's holy Law. Even in this world the sinner quite often comes to regret his sin and to feel sorrow. But we dare not put any stock in the common opinion that our sorrow can make our sins undone. According to our text much of the sorrow over sin is a sorrow that worketh death, v. 10.

The apostle calls this sorrow the sorrow of the world. This is a sorrow which leaves God out of the picture and views sin merely from a selfish point of view. Sin is regretted, not because God has been offended, but because of the consequences the sinner has to suffer. The sorrow is often very acute, also the remorse, as the examples of Saul, Cain, and Judas show. But in this remorse there is no conviction of the real nature of sin as a rebellion against God, Ps. 51, 4, and above all nothing according to the good and gracious will of God, who will have all men to be saved, 1 Tim. 2, 4. Therefore this sorrow "works out," produces, death. Even the most sincere regret of this nature cannot atone for a single sin and cannot stave off the awful consequence of sin, death.

If the apostle had remained silent about the sins at Corinth, sorrow finally would have come upon the Corinthians. But it would have been, at least for many of them, a mere sorrow of the world. This he wished to prevent by leading them to a godly sorrow, vv. 8—10. This grief is a fruit of faith, a good work pleasing to God. Not what sin is in our sight, but what it is in God's sight, determines the estimate of the penitent. The awful nature of sin produces deep grief and sorrow. There is no painless, griefless repentance. But the sorrow is but for a season, v. 8; it works repentance, v. 10; faith apprehends the forgiveness of sins secured by Jesus Christ. Thus the sinner has the assurance that his sins are not counted against him, Rom. 8, 1. 33. This is exemplified in the cases of David, Peter, and the malefactor.

The sorrow thus works toward salvation. This is the final goal for which the apostle is striving, v. 10. Nobody will regret the painful, crushing, humiliating grief of true godly sorrow in view of this grand purpose. Therefore the apostle does not regret having made the Corinthians sorry, v. 8, and is sure they have received damage in nothing, v. 9.

Similarly the pastor, in correcting his parishioners, has only their salvation in mind. This can be gained solely by way of true repentance. Therefore he pleads, admonishes, corrects, in order that the whole life of each parishioner may be a continuous repentance.

## 3

The desired result was gained in Corinth. The Corinthians submitted to the admonition of their pastor. They earnestly desired and longed to have him in their midst and to hear his approval; they rued ("mourning") their ever having become disaffected and having given him reason for reproof; their fervent mind induced zealous effort to meet the Christian requirements laid down by him, v. 7.

What are Paul's sentiments now? Far be it from him to gloat over the humiliating grief they had experienced or publicly to shame those who have transgressed, but have repented. His heart is filled with great joy, vv. 4. 6. 7. 9. Forgotten are his cares and anxiety. Even the member guilty of an infamous sin is not to despair, but is to be assured of forgiveness, 2 Cor. 2, 5—11.

I assure you that Paul's sentiments are my own. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, should I feel differently? Should I still bear a grudge? God forbid! What has happened is forgiven and forgotten.

May the Lord grant that in this important part of my pastoral work I may ever be found a faithful servant and a true guide on the way to salvation! May the Holy Spirit fill your hearts with true meekness, so that you will receive my correction in the spirit in which it is given, that we all may obtain the desired result, the salvation of our souls.

PAUL F. KOEHNKE

### Judica Sunday

1 PET. 1, 17—25

When a preacher considers well who it is that he must address in his sermon, the thought is almost overwhelming. For you are the elect of God, foreordained unto faith and sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Praise be to God, who has bestowed such mercy upon you! He has begotten you again unto a life of hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Pet. 1, 4. 5. May this your great destination ever be before your eyes and make you rejoice, even though and even while you may be distressed and oppressed in manifold trials. These serve only to purify your faith that you may be found true at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Of Jesus Christ indeed. In Him centers all your faith and all your love. You have never seen Him, but He it is in whom you rejoice, and He it is that gives strength and comfort and direction to your life. The very angels desire to look into those rich blessings which the Holy Spirit has revealed to you in Holy Scripture.

O you of high and noble calling, set your eyes upon your home on high and walk resolutely onward, vv. 1—16.

**Let Me Admonish You to Serve God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in Holy Fear and in Unshaken Faith and in Sincere Love Toward Your Brethren**

**1**

Serve God in fear. "We should fear, love," etc. First Commandment. Prov. 1, 7. There is no true worship of the high and exalted God on the part of sinful and mortal man without fear. Even the Christian, who has experienced the wonderful love of God, fears Him, Ps. 119, 120; Prov. 14, 26; not indeed in the slavish and abject manner of the guilty, who reject Jesus. But also the child of God fears his Father. The thought that by sinning he might lose his Father's love fills him with dread.

It is certain that God will judge the world in righteousness, *i. e.*, without respect of persons. The Jew will not be preferred to the Gentile merely because he is a Jew, nor the church-member to the unchurched merely because he professes to be a Christian. We must be found true.

Hence you will want to walk in fear lest any hypocrisy be found in you as you sojourn here below. You are a stranger and a pilgrim here. Do not deny your heavenly birth. Travelers in foreign lands are easily tempted and are in much greater peril there than at home. O you child of God, as you call upon your Father in heaven, watch that you be found sincere and true.

**2**

And, O you Christians, rejoice in your sure salvation, with unshaken confidence in Jesus Christ, your Redeemer. Remember the great price which was paid for your redemption. Not v. 18a, but v. 19. Jesus Christ is that spotless Lamb of God that bore your sin.

Sin involves guilt, and guilt makes peace and bliss impossible. God placed all your guilt upon Jesus, and He took all your guilt upon Himself. He said: I did it, I did it; I take all responsibility upon Myself.

And sin has terrific power to rule you. By sinful tradition of wrong-doing handed down to you from long generations, by education, training, and the example of others, but also by the force of habit it fastens an inescapable hold upon you.

From all this you have been delivered by this loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His was not merely a spontaneous or accidental death, but it was foreordained from all eternity, v. 20; Acts 2, 23; 4, 27, 28. And it has been revealed and declared unto you in God's holy Word. It was declared from the beginning in the word of the

prophets, but is now fully revealed in Jesus Christ in this last era of the world.

All this is for *you*, believing child of God. What is your faith but this realization, this assurance, that God sent His Son and that the Son freely died to save you, *you*. In this faith now come confidently to God in prayer. Confidently, for God Himself raised up Christ from the dead and by that resurrection proved before all the world that His work of redemption was acceptable to Him; and therefore you know that you, too, are redeemed.

O you Christians, rejoice in your sure salvation, in unshaken confidence in Jesus Christ, your Redeemer! Live that confidence, prove that confidence, in a life that is plainly delivered from sin's terrible dominion.

### 3

And in the strength of God the Holy Ghost now love your brethren sincerely.

Being the children of God, you are obedient, v. 14. You have sanctified, purified, cleansed, your souls in obedience to the truth. In this true sanctification dedicate yourselves to unfeigned love, love of the brethren. Love them with a pure heart, fervently.

You did this when first you became Christians. Remember those days of first Christian love. You cleansed your heart diligently of all impure emotions. That purification must go on as long as you live. Selfishness, self-seeking, self-pride, egotism, continually obtrudes. The love of the brethren so easily becomes a mere phrase. See that your love of the brethren is sincere, that you desire their welfare with a pure heart, fervently.

Surely you realize how difficult this is by reason of your sinful disposition. God must work this love in you. He wrought it in you when He regenerated you. Live that life. This love energizes, it impels toward action. Selfishness is a denial of it.

Renew yourself in this life continually by going back to its source. You were born again, not of some earthly seed, which is in itself corruptible and mortal and vain, but of the very Word of God, which is incorruptible and lives and abides forever.

Consider well the divine power of that living Word of God, John 6, 63. The paper and the ink of the book may soon perish as well as the voice now proclaiming the Word, but its message is eternal and more powerfully alive than lightning. Let the life-giving seed of the Word of God fall into your heart regularly that it may transform you into its nature and give you of its life and power, a life of true, pure, clean, loving service. H. M. ZORN

**Palm Sunday**

HEB. 12, 1—6

When speaking of the way which leads to eternal life and heaven, Jesus declares: "Few there be that find it."

What a serious word: "Few there be that find it"! The same truth Jesus expressed when He said: "Many be called, but few chosen."

And why is it that so few finally gain heaven, eternal life? We could speak of a number of causes; but for the present let us limit ourselves to the one suggested by our text. So many who believed "for a while" grow weary, lose their first love, give way to sleep, and finally become castaways. That is a danger which confronts us also, 1 Cor. 10, 12. Therefore we have the admonition of the text:—

**"Let Us Run with Patience the Race that is Set before Us"**

Therefore,

1. *Away with all that would impede us!*
2. *Let us keep our eyes upon Jesus*

## 1

When we become Christians, we set out upon the race of which our text speaks. We have become followers of Christ, who wish to arrive there where He is in glory. Everything must now give the right of way to this one purpose, Matt. 6, 33; Ps. 27, 4; Phil. 3, 13. Away therefore with all that would impede us!

a) There is sin in general. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 John 1, 8. We may grow less and less sensitive to this evil. Beware: "Sin lieth at the door," Gen. 4, 7. "Watch and pray," Matt. 26, 41. "Simon, Simon," etc., Luke 22, 31.

What is the sin which besets you? Is the love of money growing in your heart? Are you gradually becoming a lover of pleasure? Is unbelief and doubt threatening to occupy your soul? Away with it! Think of Cain, Korah, Pharaoh, Eli, Saul, Judas, Pilate, Agrippa, Demas. Hymn 379, 1. 2. Away with sin!

b) Our text mentions "every weight," which refers to something that may not be sinful in itself, but may nevertheless interfere with our running the race so that we "may obtain the prize." We may become so deeply engrossed in our business, in our education, in our associations, friends, or family as to grow less attentive to the most important thing, the race which we are to win. We may become drowsy and disinterested, sleepy and careless. That is



a weight which keeps us from seeking first the kingdom of God. If anything hinders us in the race, then *away with it!* Phil. 3, 7. 8.

What do men sacrifice to their idols! Napoleon: his wife and family. Edward of England: his throne and crown. Eve: Paradise. Many a man: health and life for pleasure or money. We have the true God. Should we not say: Ps. 73, 25. 26? Remember: Matt. 5, 29; Luke 9, 23—25.

That is what the saints of old, that "cloud of witnesses" of whom the text speaks, did: Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, Esther. Rev. 2, 10. Hymn 376, 2.

That is no easy matter. Our own strength will never accomplish it; therefore our text calls upon us to—

## 2

Keep our eyes upon Jesus.

a) He is the Author of our faith. By His suffering and death He purchased for us the pardon of our sins. (Explanation of Second Article.) By this Gospel He creates faith in His redemption in our heart. Without Him and His atonement there could be no saving faith. And without His Gospel our hearts would remain dark and cold. His Word kindles within us the first spark of faith, Rom. 10, 17; Luke 24, 32; and He is not only the Author, but also the Finisher of our faith, Heb. 12, 2.

Whenever, therefore, we grow weak in faith or cold and impatient, let us look to Him whose blood cleanseth us from all unrighteousness, John 1, 29; 1 John 1, 9.

b) By looking to Jesus, we shall not only receive pardon for our shortcomings, but also *strength* to continue in the race. Therefore keep your eyes upon Jesus.

See how *patiently* He ran His race. He was patient with His disciples, with His enemies, with sinners, with ignorance, with contradiction, with misunderstanding, with unbelief. Patient in suffering. As a lamb He was led to the slaughter, vv. 3. 4.

What is our suffering or endurance compared with His! V. 4.

c) Let us look upon Him and see that He bore our punishment and curse, whereas we only bear the loving chastisement of children of God, vv. 5. 6.

d) Let us look to see Him set down at the right hand of the throne of God. There He will receive us also, John 16, 22; 14, 3.

Come, then, let us run the race as the saints of old ran it. Let us not be weary, let us not faint or grow impatient, but say: Hymn 376, 3. 4.

M. SOMMER

**Maundy Thursday**

1 Cor. 10, 16, 17

The Lord's Supper is inseparably connected with the Passion of our Savior. Not only was it instituted the night in which Jesus was betrayed, the night preceding His death on the cross, as the apostle expressly states, but it is the means of conveying to us the blessings of His work, which reached its consummation on the cross. That is why He speaks the precious words "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins," given beautiful emphasis in Luther's Small Catechism. It is proper that we Christians observe not only Good Friday, the anniversary of our Lord's crucifixion, but likewise the day before, Maundy Thursday, the anniversary of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Our text is one of the important passages of the New Testament in which this Sacrament is spoken of, giving us information of its nature. We here are furnished an answer to the question:—

**Why Is the Lord's Supper Justly Called Holy Communion?**

1. *Because in this Sacrament is communicated to us the blood and body of our Lord*
2. *Because all of us who partake of the Sacrament enter anew into communion with each other*

## 1

Paul in this section warns the Christians in Corinth to beware of participation in the idolatrous meals of the heathen, meals held in honor of false divinities. That participation in religious meals is a matter of great importance and consequence he illustrates by pointing to the meal instituted by Christ Himself. It is clear that this is not something that can be treated with indifference.

He first speaks of the cup, calling it "the cup of blessing which we bless." When the Lord's Supper was observed by the early Christians, words of blessing were spoken, setting this meal apart from all other meals, a thing which we do today by calling upon God, speaking the Lord's Prayer, and repeating the words of institution. (That Paul first speaks of the cup may be due to the custom of the Passover meal, where the cup was partaken of before the eating of the Passover lamb.)

Paul now points to the holy, blessed mystery which confronts us in the Lord's Supper. His two questions, as the form indicates, require an affirmative answer. When the cup containing wine is given to the communicants, it is the communion of the blood of Christ; that is, the cup makes the communicants partakers of the blood of Christ. In other words, a communion is established by the cup between the communicants and the blood of the Savior. Like-

wise, when the bread is distributed (the breaking is merely for the purpose of distribution) and given to the communicants, a communion is established between them and the body of Christ; when they receive the bread, they likewise receive the body of our Lord.

There is nothing said here about a change of the wine into the blood of Christ and of the bread into the body of Christ. Wine remains wine and bread, bread. The apostle speaks of the bread as being actually present. The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation must hence be rejected.

At the same time the apostle very clearly teaches that the body and blood of Christ are given to the communicants. There is nothing said here about a symbolical significance which any of the terms used might be conceived to have. Hence the Reformed teaching, which denies the Real Presence, must also be rejected.

The only Scriptural teaching is that of the Lutheran Church, which declares that in the Sacrament bread and wine and likewise the body and blood of Christ are actually present and received by the communicants, though Christ's body and blood cannot be seen or tasted. There are many who refuse to accept this teaching. Why? They cannot understand how Jesus can give us His body and blood. To us, too, this is incomprehensible; but since the doctrine is clearly taught, we accept it.

What an amazing kindness of our Lord to give us the body He offered for us and the blood He shed for us! Instead of criticizing and caviling, let us adore His great love. At the same time let us not approach this holy meal without earnest self-examination.

## 2

There is a second communion effected in the Lord's Supper. The exact rendering of v. 17a is: "Because there is one bread, we, the many, are one body." Since all who partake of the Lord's Supper have eaten of the bread of the Lord's Table, they form one body.

Observe that it is only because Christ's body is given with the bread that this eating can have such unifying force. All communicants have received one and the same heavenly element. Now they actually are joined together in one large, though invisible, body (unless they are unbelievers and have received the Sacrament unto their condemnation).

It is a grand thought that, whenever we go to the Lord's Table, we are once more put into fellowship with all other believers who commune, wherever they may be. Cf. 1 Cor. 12, 13. Just as there lives in us the same faith, so we receive the same heavenly gift.

Before human eyes there are many divisions and barriers; but the all-seeing God beholds those of us who believe and receive the

Lord's Supper as one body, bound together by the strongest ties, one of them being the joint partaking of our Savior's body and blood. May our aim ever be to let this invisible relationship become visible wherever it can legitimately be done! In that way we shall truly honor this precious testament of our loving Savior.

W. ARNDT

## Good Friday

2 COR. 5, 14—21

Today the Christian world commemorates the suffering and death of the Man of Sorrows on Calvary's cross. The whole procedure in Gethsemane, in the palace of the high priest, in the judgment-hall of Pilate, on Golgotha, is so mysterious. Yet men have gone out into the world, have suffered imprisonment, the scourge, the sword, the tortures of fire, preaching Christ Crucified. Our text explains —

### "One Died for All"

1. *Our text states the fact that "One died for all"*
2. *Our text speaks of the priceless benefits that accrued unto us from this fact*
3. *Our text urges sacred obligations upon us that we should assume as a result of this fact*

### 1

A fact of tremendous importance is stated in the text — "One died for all." Accordingly there are two parties, the "One" and the "all." What the One did we are assured was done for all.

a) The "One," we are told, "died." That is the death we commemorate today. Jesus came to Jerusalem. His enemies plotted against Him. He was betrayed and denied by His friends. Gethsemane; the trial; the scourging; thorns; cross; nails; the vinegar; the darkness; the wail "My God, . . . why—?"; the death. Strange! The One that suffered this cruel death was sinless, innocent. He "knew no sin," v. 21. So it was testified by Pilate, by Pilate's wife, by the malefactor, by the centurion. Cf. Heb. 4, 15; 7, 26; 1 John 3, 5; Is. 53, 9; 1 Pet. 2, 23.

b) Our text implies that the death which the innocent "One" suffered was deserved by the guilty "all." The term "all" comprises the whole human race, the whole "world" of men. Man transgressed God's will; he sinned. Not merely one man or a minority or a majority, but all, every one, joined the rebellion and declared war against God. Sin is a state of war against the Almighty, Rom. 8, 7; Eph. 2, 15; Rom. 5, 10; Col. 1, 21. But the unalterable decree of the Supreme Judge is: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." All

have sinned. Consequently all are condemned to death, to damnation, to the pit where their shrieks and moans will never cease, where their worm will never die, and where their fire shall never be quenched.

c) Now, God in our text assures us that what the guilty "world," the "all," deserved, death, damnation, the innocent "One" suffered in their stead and for their good, v. 21. "The Just for the unjust," 1 Pet. 3, 18. Before the bar of divine justice all suffered death when Christ died, v. 14; Is. 53, 6; Gal. 3, 13. One — for all — died.

## 2

a) By this substitutionary death on Calvary the penalty of our guilt is paid, the sin of the world of all ages is blotted out, and God is perfectly reconciled with all mankind, with each individual sinner. Text, vv. 18. 19. 21; 1 Tim. 2, 5. 6; Eph. 1, 7; John 1, 29. Heb. 2, 9: "that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Pieper, *Christl. Dogmatik*, II, 411 ff., on the Vicarious Atonement.)

b) Let us note that God is the sole Author and Finisher of our salvation. "God hath saved us." No sacrifice, no torture, no pilgrimage, no merit, work, worthiness, no churchgoing, no praying, no paying, nothing on man's part, enters into consideration to effect or perfect this reconciliation. When the One had died for all, God declared pardon and peace to the whole world. Our atonement, reconciliation, and salvation lie altogether in the hand of a loving and gracious God, 1 Thess. 5, 9; Col. 1, 20.

## 3

a) We should gladly *accept this reconciliation*. God offers and conveys His pardon and peace to man through the Gospel. He sends His ambassadors with the proclamation of peace to all the world, v. 20. The insulted omniscient and omnipotent King, the eternal and glorious God, begs us to accept His reconciliation, to trust in Him, to *believe in His grace*. Say with confidence: "Since Christ died for all, He died for me, reconciling me unto God; for 'He hath made Him to be sin for me who knew no sin that I,' etc. Surely He has borne my griefs," etc. Is. 53, 4. 5; Acts 2, 43; John 3, 16; Rom. 5, 1.

b) This boundless love of Christ constrains, impels, believers henceforth to "*live unto Him which died for them*," etc., v. 15. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. . . . All things are become new," vv. 16. 17; John 3, 3; Rom. 6, 4; Eph. 2, 10; 4, 23 f.; Col. 3, 10. Where Christians live unto Him who died for them there are no church problems, no lack of church attendance, no deficits, no need of "raffling," no excesses, no factions, and the like. Rom. 6, 1—11; Gal. 2, 20.

c) "To wit, that God . . . hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation." "We are ambassadors for Christ," vv. 19. 20. For what purpose? To lock the Word of Reconciliation up in the church safe and throw the key away? If God has entrusted us with "the Word of this salvation," Acts 13, 26, shall we seal our lips and fail our God? If the Word of Life is committed to us, shall we permit perishing souls to die? Are we really burning with zeal, aglow with joy, constrained by the love of Christ, to proclaim this Word of Reconciliation to the ends of the earth? Do we plead with men, earnestly beseech them, pray them, in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God"? Do we give sufficient evidence that we are actually aware of our sacred obligations?

We are standing under that cross of Calvary today. There hangs the Man of Sorrows. There One died for all. There God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. It behooves us with implicit faith to accept this divine reconciliation and solemnly to vow that we will live unto Him who died for us and to pray our dying fellow-men in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God!"

H. W. BARTELS

### Easter Sunday

1 Cor. 15, 12—20

In the Corinthian congregation there were some who said that there is no resurrection of the dead, no resurrection of the body. There are such people today. What attitude are we to take over against them? Are we to say, Everybody is entitled to his opinion; it makes no difference whether one believes in the resurrection of the body or not? No; it is a radical error, destructive of the very foundation; for: v. 13. The deniers of the resurrection get themselves into a most grievous predicament, and the apostle convinces them by a *reductio ad absurdum*.

Convinced of Christ's resurrection, with hearts full of Easter joy, we today join St. Paul in his exultation:—

"But Now is Christ Risen from the Dead!"

For—

1. The apostles are not false witnesses
2. Our faith is not vain
3. Our hope will not be disappointed

#### 1

Paul writes: vv. 14. 15. If Christ did not rise from the dead, the apostles stand convicted as false witnesses, the meanest kind of false witnesses at that, who deceitfully belied God Himself. The apostles preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That was an essential feature of their office, Acts 1, 22; 10, 40. 41. They gave the

testimony of Christ's resurrection everywhere they went, and gave it with great power, Acts 4, 33. We have a striking example of it in this very chapter. Paul declares to the Corinthians the Gospel he preached to them, by which also they are saved, "unless ye have believed in vain" (by repudiating the resurrection), vv. 1, 2. What is this Gospel? Vv. 3, 4. Note the emphasis on Christ's resurrection. In it the promises of the Old Testament Scriptures were fulfilled, as proved by many witnesses, vv. 5—8. In view of such clear and abundant testimony it is utterly unreasonable to deny the resurrection of Christ.

Surely, then, the apostles, in preaching the resurrection of Jesus, were not false witnesses, but by this very proclamation proved that they were trustworthy, honest, utterly reliable men, 2 Cor. 13, 8. Moreover, they had no selfish or mercenary end to gain, but could not but expect persecution. Above all, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke by inspiration of the Holy Ghost as God's chosen witnesses, 2 Cor. 2, 13. To impugn their testimony is not only unreasonable, but sheer blasphemy. They are true witnesses of God, and therefore it is a fact which stands like a rock: Christ is risen from the dead.

## 2

To deny this would involve another absurdity, v. 17. Your faith would be empty, without content. Faith lays hold of the Savior, or forgiveness of sins, justification through the Savior. But if Christ has not risen, there is no forgiveness for faith to receive, then God rejected Christ's sacrifice for our sins and is still unreconciled to us. Jesus could not then be the Redeemer of the world. He would be — *horribile dictu* — an impostor, a false Messiah.

Again, our faith would be futile, impotent to accomplish anything, while in reality, as is evident to all who would see, nothing is so powerful as the Christians' faith in the crucified and risen Christ, Mark 16, 15, 16; Acts 16, 31; Rom. 3, 28; 10, 9; 1 Cor. 1, 23, 24.

We see the power of the Christian faith demonstrated in the history of the Church. St. Paul. What was he before his conversion? Acts 26, 9—12; 1 Cor. 15, 9; 1 Tim. 1, 13. After his conversion? V. 10; Acts 9, 20; Gal. 1, 16. He filled the Roman world with the Gospel, gathered and established many flourishing congregations. Faith made all this difference. The marvelous change in the people constituting those congregations is a living, unassailable testimony to the power of faith, 2 Cor. 3, 1—3. What brought about the Reformation? our synod, our congregations, our schools, our institutions, our missions?

Millions of Christians have departed in peace like Simeon and are right along falling asleep (v. 18) unafraid, without seeing death

or feeling its cruel sting. Whence this courage and assurance in the face of death? V. 57; Luke 2, 29. 30. No, our faith is not vain, and therefore it cannot but be true: "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the First-fruits of them that slept."

## 3

As Christ rose from the dead, so there will be a resurrection harvest of all who fell asleep in Jesus. This is our Christian hope. But what if Christ did not rise? Vv. 18. 19. We do not hope for a golden age or a millennium on earth, not for earthly riches and splendor, not for pleasures in which the children of the world seek their heaven. Our hope is to be with Christ in the eternal bliss and glory of heaven. Because of this hope Christians lose their life, i. e., deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, wage relentless war against the devil, the world, and the flesh, assume the sacrifices, responsibilities, and sufferings necessary to keep the faith and to extend the kingdom of God. But what if Christ, on whom their hope of the resurrection of the body and of eternal life rests, has Himself been conquered by death and the grave? Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished just like the wicked and unrighteous; then the disappointment to which Christians should be doomed would be all the more bitter, as they hoped for so very much. Their lot would be no better than the lot of those who have no hope at all. Yes, worse; they would be "of all men most miserable." Losing out on this world, they would fail to attain to the world to come.

No; our Christian hope, engendered in us by God Himself, 1 Pet. 1, 3. 4, a hope that will not make ashamed, Rom. 5, 5, a hope that is based solely on the resurrection of Christ, assures us of the certainty of this resurrection. Rejoice and sing, "I know that my Redeemer lives," etc.

P. G. BIRKMANN

### Easter Monday

1 Cor. 15, 54—58

Victory is the key-note of this blessed Eastertide. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" The pages of history are replete with records of glorious victories, victories that have determined the destiny of nations. Never has a victory more glorious or of greater moment been achieved than that which at each recurring Easter stirs the Christian heart to its very depths with joy, a victory of unspeakably blessed significance for all the nations of the world to the end of time, yea, to all eternity. Rightly may we with all the fervor of enraptured souls join the great Apostle Paul in his inspired paean of victory:—



**"Thanks Be to God, which Giveth Us the Victory!"**

Consider —

1. *The victory*      2. *The thanks which it evokes*

## 1

We cannot but break out in exultant joy if we consider —

A) The dreadful foe that was swallowed up in victory. "Death is swallowed up in victory." We need not strive for a great amount of oratory to picture the dreadfulness of this foe, rightly called the king of terrors. Through fear of death men were made subject to bondage all their lifetime, Heb. 2, 15.

The apostle appends to his song of triumph an explanation, showing what it is that makes death so terrible and powerful. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law." "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," God had said to Adam, Gen. 2, 17. Death came into the world as a result of God's righteous and terrible wrath over sin. That is what makes death terrible. That is what makes sin the venomous, the painful, the fatal sting of death. As its sting makes the scorpion a terrible beast, so sin gives death its terrifying, fatal power. The strength of sin, in turn, is the Law. Sin is the transgression of the Law, 1 John 3, 4. And for every transgression the Law provides the penalty of death, Rom. 6, 23; Gen. 3, 17—19. Thus the Law gives sin the strength to consign man to death.

This foe, so fearful, so venomous, so powerful, is swallowed up in victory! "Thanks be to God!"

B) Consider joyfully how our Champion, "our Lord Jesus Christ," achieved this glorious victory. Indeed, Christ "hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light," 2 Tim. 1, 10.

a) "The sting of death is sin." But Christ, the God-man, made full and complete atonement for our sins on Calvary's cross. There He suffered death to lodge its sting in Him, and there death lost its sting. There He became death's plague and the grave's destruction, Hos. 13, 14.

b) "The strength of sin is the Law." But Christ perfectly fulfilled the Law for us, Gal. 4, 4; Rom. 10, 4; 8, 1. By His vicarious holy life and innocent death He satisfied all the demands of divine justice. That spelled the doom of death. "Death is swallowed up in victory." The victory is complete; death in truth is abolished.—The outward appearance of death may yet attempt to frighten us, especially in its more shocking aspects. But triumphantly we may overcome all fear with the assurance that he is a stingless, a harm-

less foe. Hymn 218, 5b. Thank God that we may hurl the defiance of our text at the erstwhile king of terrors!

C) Rejoice; for God "giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

a) Christ is our Champion. For us He fought the fight, for us He gained the victory, Rom. 4, 25.

b) Christ's victory is freely offered, freely given us, by God in the blessed Gospel, the happy proclamation of victory over death and the grave. Believe, rejoice, and it is yours.

c) It is yours *now*. God constantly gives it to you ("which giveth"). Indeed, "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality," *i. e.*, on the great day of resurrection, which forms the burden of this entire glorious chapter, the victory will be fully consummated. Then we shall come to complete and everlasting enjoyment of it. When Christ rescues our bodies from the grave, fashioning them like unto His glorious body, Phil. 3, 21, then indeed will death be swallowed up in victory. Meanwhile our text fittingly forms a portion of the burial service in nearly every Christian church, affording precious consolation in regard to departed Christian friends and laying the foundation for our own triumph in the hour of death. What a comfort! What a hope! "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory!"

## 2

V. 58. "Therefore," in consequence of the preceding and in fervent gratitude to God for His glorious Easter-gift of victory, —

A) "Be ye steadfast, unmovable," *i. e.*, in joyful faith in your victorious Savior and what He has done for you. Do not let any one move you from the foundation of your faith and hope, nor do you yourself turn from the faith in the risen Christ. Faithful, joyful appreciation of His gift is ever the chief thanks which a merciful God seeks in His redeemed. How can we, enlightened by God's Holy Spirit, withhold this?

B) "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." This is the spontaneous manifestation of joyful faith and sincere gratitude. "The work of the Lord" is the work which Christ Himself was engaged in, proclaiming Himself by word and deed as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and death's Conqueror. It is the work which now He has entrusted to all Christians, Matt. 28; Mark 16.—With ever-increasing zeal we are to labor in this work, not shunning hardships, self-denial, sacrifices.—Special encouragement: "forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." The goal of this work, bringing victory to souls yet in bondage

through fear of death, the advancement of our Redeemer's kingdom, will surely be reached. Success is established and assured "in the Lord," in the truth of His promise, in the power of His resurrection. This success will compensate for all our toil. What an impulse Easter joy should give to our mission efforts, personal, our Church's, locally and at large! — Let all our life and work reflect the joy of our Easter-song: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory!"

AUG. BERNTHAL

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## Brief Lenten Outlines

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### V

#### Crucified

MARK 15, 25—28

The person and life of Jesus are a series of paradoxes. That poor child of humble parents is He who is born King of the Jews. He who was of the tribe of Judah was the great High Priest; cp. Heb. 7, 14. He who sat at the feet of the scribes was the Prophet greater than Moses, Deut. 18. Especially the history of His Passion is filled with such paradoxes. Cp. Acts 3, 15; 1 Cor. 2, 8; Heb. 5, 8. A similar mystery, inexplicable to human reason, but the source of unending joy to faith, is revealed in our text.

#### The King of the Jews Crucified

1. *By His crucifixion Jesus is numbered with the transgressors*
2. *By His crucifixion He is proved the King of the Jews*

#### 1

V. 25. Crucifixion was a slow, lingering, exceedingly painful, withal the most shameful, form of putting one to death. To crucify a Roman citizen was an outrage which brought the swift vengeance of Rome upon the perpetrator. Hence the demand to crucify an accused person deliberately branded him as a dangerous, wicked, vile criminal. With this in mind, the Jews, His own people, had charged Jesus with rebellion against the Roman government, one of the crimes punishable by crucifixion. Though Pilate was convinced of His innocence, he yielded against his better judgment, for political reasons, to the demand of the Jews and had Jesus crucified. Jesus endured all the agonies of this painful, shameful penalty. To add to the insult, He was crucified between two malefactors, v. 27, thus literally fulfilling Is. 53, 9. V. 28. And still — marvelous mystery! — this selfsame crucified Jesus, by His very crucifixion, proved Himself to be the King of the Jews.