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Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

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truths are fundamental, not only for Christian faith, but for the life of our love. Only the propitiation makes our love possible, and only the deity of Christ makes this propitiation possible. — This text may be used to show *The Antichristian Character of Modernism*. 1. The Christ of the Modernists is not the Son of God; 2. their propitiation is not a vicarious atonement; 3. their love is not the love engendered by Christ.

T. L.

Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

First Sunday after Easter, Quasimodogeniti

1 PET. 1, 3—9

Easter is the festival of hope. Even the children of this world indulge in pleasant thoughts at Eastertide: A beautiful, though mythical, symbol of rejuvenescent nature; as such hope-inspiring, giving promise of better things after failure and disappointment.

If Easter had no deeper significance, its promise of hope were vain, even if it were based on (Modernism!) a Christ who, though not actually risen, lives in his lofty ideals. This world passes away and with it the hopes and happiness attached to it. Death and the grave remain the ultimate prospect, 1 Cor. 15, 19.

The Easter-message affords genuine hope, which reaches beyond this life and world.

The Christian's Blessed Hope

1. Its foundation 2. Its content 3. Its realization

1

V.3. Indeed, the foundation of our hope is not in ourselves, Eph. 2, 1; 2, 3; Rom. 6, 23. Not only temporal death, but eternal separation from God, the Source of life and bliss. That implies utter hopelessness, despair for time and eternity, Eph. 2, 12.

The foundation of our hope rests in God. He alone could bring life from the dead, v. 1. In regeneration He gave us a new, a spiritual, life, not dominated by sin nor subject to its curse. By the Word of Truth, Jas. 1, 18, and through Baptism, Titus 3, 6, God brought us to faith, unto obedience, etc., v. 2, 1 Pet. 1, 22. When we, sprinkled with His blood through the Gospel, first trusted in its atoning power, God wrought a miraculous change in us, Eph. 2, 5; Col. 2, 13 ("quickened"). Then began the life of which St. Paul writes: Gal. 2, 20. — How different the prospect that now opens to us! In the life of faith the hope-destroyer, sin, has no part. We are freed from its guilt and power, alive unto God. Since it is life that is of God, Eph. 4, 18, should it be void of hope? "Begotten

unto hope." God's purpose. The hopes of the world often deceive and, if realized, prove unsatisfying. Here a "lively" hope, having in it the life of God, of which the new birth is merely the beginning. Having come from God, it leads to God, reaching perfection in eternity, 1 John 3, 2. — Precious gift of God at the baptismal font, at the conversion of a sinner!

A gift of God it is. "According to His abundant mercy." His infinite love laid the foundation of our hope in the sacrificing of His Son, John 3, 16; Titus 3, 6. 7. No merit, no distinguishing mark, between us and those as yet without faith and hope; no cooperation. We were active participants in our new birth as little as in our natural birth. Because God is rich in mercy, He rescued us from the hopelessness of our sinful state, united us with the Savior, and translated us into the life that alone deserves the name. Afar off, we were made nigh ("found me when I sought Him not"); enemies of God, we were made accepted in the Beloved. — Hymn 308, 1. 5. What is more trustworthy than the mercy of God? "Now I have found the sure foundation."

Moreover, the apostle states the *tangible evidence* of the reality of our hope. "Through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ's resurrection is not merely an evidence of a future life in general; it has an intimate relation to our lively hope — "through." It is the earnest that our Christian hope is not a fantastic dream. Our hope is centered on a living Christ, declared to be the Son of God with power, Rom. 1, 4, able to fulfil His promise, John 14, 19; who as our Substitute, our Brother in the flesh, entered into glory and has become the First-fruits of them that slept, 1 Cor. 15, 20. We, being united with Him by faith, shall follow in order, 1 Cor. 15, 23. — The Christian in his hope does not chase a phantom, but looks forward to a life and an immortality that is *brought to light*, a positive reality, 2 Tim. 1, 10. — Now, what does this hope include? What is its content?

2

V. 4. In describing our hope, the apostle carries out the figure in which he set forth its foundation. "Inheritance." Begotten of God, we are His children, Gal. 3, 26. Even human law recognizes the right of inheritance. We are heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, Rom. 8, 17. Wonderful inheritance! Heirs of Him "who is the blessed and only Potentate," etc., 1 Tim. 6, 15. 16. Joint heirs with Christ, who was received up into glory and sitteth at the right hand of God. A life of glory and bliss beyond human understanding. — This inheritance is "reserved in heaven" for us "to be revealed in the last time," "at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The Christian's hope is directed heavenward, not earthward. The

modernistic social gospel, seeking only moral, social reform and human betterment, would deprive the Christians of their blessed inheritance bought with the blood of God's Son. Be not deceived! Christ has not promised "mansions" on earth, but mansions in His Father's house. Christ's Gospel points your hope away from this vale of tears, which it will remain, all the dreams of religious enthusiasts to the contrary notwithstanding; away from a "heaven on earth" to an inheritance reserved in heaven, the grandeur, beauty, and glory of which is beyond compare.

Mark its excellences. It is "incorruptible." Temporal bequests, earthly treasures, are subject to decay. The germ of death and corruption is in them as a result of sin. Our heavenly inheritance is secure against the influences of destruction.—It is "undefiled." Temporal inheritances are frequently tainted with injustice, avarice, fraud, ill-gotten gain. Their possession so often entails an evil conscience and the curse of unhappiness. The object of the Christian's hope is pure, unspotted, holy, the inheritance of the saints in light, 2 Pet. 2, 13. Unalloyed pleasure.—"Fadeth not away." Earthly beauty and glory is like the flower that withers. Quickly loses its charm, even surfeits and disgusts. Our heavenly inheritance retains constant freshness. The first rapture upon entering the glorified world endures without end.—Truly, when this inheritance is "revealed in the last time" ("wherein," viz., time), we shall "greatly rejoice," vv. 6, 8, and in contemplation of it we have a foretaste even here, rejoicing in hope, Rom. 12, 12.

3

But now the anxious question, Will this blessed hope be realized in me? What Christian is not thus troubled? True, we know the inheritance is "reserved" for us. But will I be there to receive it? Danger of falling from the faith. I am a frail, sinful being, so prone to yield.

The attainment of our hope rests securely in God's hands, v. 5. He is mightier than our foes. Our faith and hope are His gracious handiwork. He will continue the good work, Phil. 1, 6; John 10, 28.

God's promise stands sure even though: v. 6; Ps. 77, 9. Our afflictions are, under God's direction, a trial of our faith, v. 7, teaching us to rely solely on God's mercy and power. They redound to the honor of God, v. 7, as will be manifest when we shall have received the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, v. 9. Therefore we should not murmur, but rather: Rom. 5, 3—5.

Admonition to bless God, as in vv. 3, 4, and to use the means of grace, through which our blessed hope is sustained and brought to a joyful fruition.

J. W. WERLING

Second Sunday after Easter, Misericordias Domini

Eph. 2, 4—10

The glorious Easter-festival preached the miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Christ abolished death," 2 Tim. 1, 10. "Death is swallowed up in victory," 1 Cor. 15, 54. This is undoubtedly the most startling occurrence in the annals of history. Scripture has made it the central, the pivotal, truth of the Gospel, Acts 2, 23, 24; 4, 33; Rom. 1, 4; 1 Cor. 15, 17; 1 Thess. 4, 14; 1 Pet. 1, 3; 3, 18. There is a direct connection between Christ's resurrection and our quickening, not merely our final resurrection, but also our quickening unto spiritual life. Today's text is such an echo of the Easter-message.

God hath Quickened Us together with Christ

1. *What is meant by this act of God?*
2. *What prompted it?*
3. *What purpose does it serve?*

1

"Quicken," v. 5, means to make alive. Context shows this. Apostle described natural man as "dead in trespasses and sins," v. 1. In vv. 2, 3 he showed clearly that this death means a life "according to the course of this world," in the spirit and under the influence of Satan, centered upon the lusts and desires of the flesh, and subject unto the wrath of God. Cf. Rom. 1 and 2. Spiritual death is severance from God, the Source of life, lack of knowledge of God, lack of desire to serve Him; on the contrary, nothing but hatred, mistrust, disobedience. This is also our condition by nature. Note "we," v. 5.

"Quicken" in this connection means to regenerate, convert. This is true also of "saved," v. 8. (See Stoeckhardt, *Epheserbrief*.) This is God's work. Note that term "dead" precludes every thought of any ability within man to convert himself. Note also "not of yourselves," v. 8, and "not of works," v. 9. God states that He does it. Only the Source of Life can create life where there is only death. (Cf. v. 10, "create"; 2 Cor. 5, 17; Gal. 6, 15, "new creature.") The conversion of a man dead in sins is a creative act of God. Faith is God's work within us, vv. 8, 10. God performs this work through the Gospel and the Sacraments, Rom. 1, 16; 10, 17; 1 Cor. 2, 4; Acts 2, 38; 22, 16; Col. 2, 12; Eph. 5, 26; Matt. 26, 28. The expressions "through faith," v. 8, and "It is the gift of God," v. 8 (note contrast), certainly emphasize that our conversion is God's work.

The contrast, "death," "quicken," emphasizes what a marvelous thing God has accomplished when He has brought a sinner to faith:

Life, true life, is engendered, which manifests itself in contact with God, interest in spiritual matters, knowledge of God, a will to serve Him, filial fear and love of God, and childlike trust in Him.

2

"It is the gift of God," "not of yourselves," "not of works," vv. 8, 9, shows convincingly that nothing within man prompted the quickening. Not only does death not contribute anything, it even does not invite or motivate any one to do something, toward life. For natural man this is a very difficult and humiliating, but very necessary and profitable lesson.

Since the cause is not in man, it must be in God. "Love," great love, v. 4. Yes, this is genuine love which can move God to grant spiritual life to the spiritually dead. It is great, abundant love. It embraces every individual sinner; and if every one were to draw upon it, it would still not diminish. "Mercy," rich, abundant mercy, v. 4. God had pity upon man's hopeless and helpless condition. There is a limitless supply of such mercy in God. "Grace," v. 8. This statement occurs twice. It again emphasizes that the cause is altogether in God and not in man.

3

V. 6. The apostle now employs the thought of Christ's resurrection and session. Christ entered into glorified life. He is heavenly, 1 Cor. 15, 48. By faith we are "buried with Christ," "quickened together with Him," "made to sit together in heavenly places," vv. 5, 6. In our conversion we not merely received the benefits which Jesus earned for us, but also entered upon a new life, a heavenly life, Phil. 3, 20; Eph. 1, 3; Col. 3, 1, 3. This heavenly-mindedness is a matter not merely of the future, but also of the present. (See Stoeckhardt, *Epheserbrief*, p. 121.)

V. 10. God makes "new creatures" of us also for this purpose: "created . . . unto good works." Our conversion is a translation from death into life, and life must manifest itself, show activity. Justification is followed at once by sanctification. Faith produces works, Rom. 12; Jas. 2. Here is an excellent opportunity to show how the risen Christ lives in His Christians. Our life in Christ is a life in good works in the home, in the community, in the congregation, in the District, and in the Church at large.

V. 10. Also this is an act of God's grace. Even our good works are "ordained by God." He prepared them that we might walk in them. We deserve no credit or glory. It is all God's doing.

V. 7. This focuses our attention upon the final consummation of God's plans. Then "the exceeding riches of His grace," etc., will be truly manifest.

J. W. BEHNKEN

Third Sunday after Easter, Jubilate

1 JOHN 4, 9-14

"The love of many shall wax cold," Matt. 24, 12b. This prediction of the Savior concerning the times preceding His final coming we see fulfilled on every hand. How little true love to God and one's fellow-man in the world! Gen. 4, 9; Luke 10, 31. 32. Had it not been for the Government's relief work in recent years, no doubt thousands, yea, millions would have suffered dire want in the midst of plenty. What is the real cause of this dreadful lack of love? Men no longer know the one true God nor His wonderful love; cp. 1 John 4, 7. 8. Men must therefore hear more of God's wonderful love, not only on Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Easter, but throughout the year.

God's Great and Wonderful Love to Us

1. *The manifestation of this love*
2. *The blessed fruit of this love*

1

"God is Love," vv. 8b. 16b. These beautiful words immediately before and after our text are, as it were, the golden frame of the exquisite picture of God's love presented to us in text. God not only *has* love, as human beings, but He *is* Love altogether, a great, big fire of love, reaching from heaven to earth and back again, from eternity to eternity, Jer. 31, 3. This great and marvelous love to us God did not keep hidden and covered up, but He has manifested it, v. 9. God has manifested His great love to us already in the creation and preservation of all things, especially by creating us so wonderfully, by giving us so many good things in life for our sustenance and enjoyment, Acts 14, 17; Luke 16, 25a; Ps. 104, 24.

But proof supreme of God's great and adorable love we have in the work of redemption, vv. 9. 10. The love of God manifested and revealed to us here is great indeed.

a) Because of the tremendous sacrifice it made. All true love is manifested by sacrifice. What greater sacrifice could God have made? He sent His only-begotten Son into the world, v. 9, had Him become man, a very lowly man, put Him under the Law, had Him suffer and die and endure all the curse of the Law for us, Gal. 4, 4; 3, 13.

b) God's love is great because of what it has accomplished. In Christ it brought life, v. 9, true spiritual life, eternal life and bliss in heaven. In Christ God's love brought propitiation, v. 10, atonement, satisfaction for all our sins, 1 John 2, 2. Jesus is "the Savior of the world," v. 14b.

c) God's love in Christ is great and wonderful because it is all-inclusive. It excludes none, not even the vilest and blackest sinner. — Abraham's love truly was great when he was willing to sacrifice his only son, whom he loved most dearly. But is not God's love much greater? Abraham was willing to give up his son for his good God and best Friend; but God actually gave up His own Son for His enemies, Rom. 5, 8. 10.

d) God's love is great because it is *free* love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God," v. 10. God first loved us, v. 19. Not we, but He, made the beginning in loving. He loved us when we were not at all lovable, but in sins and filth and rags and in death. He loved us not because He needed our love to enhance His happiness, but simply because He had mercy and pity on us and because He wanted to make us exceedingly happy in time and eternity.

e) This great and wonderful love of God is also *sure* love, v. 14. John is not passing on to his readers what he had gotten merely by hearsay. John with his fellow-apostles was an eye- and ear-witness of this great and wonderful love of God. He was with Jesus three years, saw this love of God in Christ's life, in Gethsemane, in the high priest's palace, at the cross.

You have heard what God's Holy Spirit tells you through the faithful and dependable witness, John, about God's great love. What should you do with it? Despise, reject it? God forbid! Do what John and his friends did, v. 16a. May the Holy Spirit, through the Word and the Sacraments, shed abroad also in your heart this love of God! Rom. 5, 5. May you ever sing: —

God loves me dearly, grants me salvation;
God loves me dearly, loves even me.

Hence will I praise Thee, O Love Eternal;
Hence will I praise Thee all my life long.

2

Vv. 11—13. If the great and wonderful love of God in Christ has been manifested to us and really fills our believing hearts, then those otherwise so cold and loveless hearts of ours cannot remain so any longer, but must also begin to love. The *blessed fruit* of God's love must appear. Love begets love, we say. Now, if God loves us beyond all our understanding, we should expect the apostle to say that in turn we also should love the loving God. Later, v. 19, he actually does that; but here, v. 11, he stresses *brotherly* love. If it is true, as it actually is, that God loved us so amazingly, beyond all measure, then it should naturally follow that we love also *one another*, our brethren and sisters in the faith. But, of course, our love should not stop there. As God's love includes all men, even the vilest sinner, His bitterest enemies, so our love should also include all men, even those who mistreat and abuse us, Gal. 6, 10.

V. 12: "No man hath seen God at any time," etc. God in His real glory and majesty is invisible to us. "He dwells in a light which no man can approach unto," 1 Tim. 6, 16. But we can serve this invisible God in our brethren and fellow-men. If a man prates about his love to God and does not love, even hates, his fellow-man, he is a liar, v. 20. But if we love one another, God dwells in us, the great and invisible God makes His abiding home with us. His love is "perfected" in us, reaches its end and aim with us, also in this respect.

V. 13. The love which we have toward our fellow-men and Christians is irrefutable proof that we have the most intimate union and communion with Him, our loving God and Savior. We are sure then that God "hath given us of His Spirit," some of His Spirit's life, power, and love, and that one day we shall see God, 1 John 3, 2; 1 Cor. 13, 12.

John, the writer of our text, is rightly called the Apostle of Love. The Lord loved him dearly, John 13, 23; 19, 26, and by this love engendered in him true love toward God and his brethren. "Beloved," he calls the Christians again and again, vv. 1. 7. 11. We are told that, when John was old and feeble and could not walk any more, they had to carry him to the gathering of the Christians, and there he would repeat over and over again these words, "Children, love one another."

Let us follow John in his ardent and unselfish love to others. How much opportunity to show true Christian love to our brethren who are in bodily and spiritual distress! Let us therefore often expose our icicle hearts to the warm and melting sunshine of God's great and wonderful love in Christ Jesus, and the blessed fruits of this love will certainly become manifest.

J. T. ROSCHKE

Fourth Sunday after Easter, Cantate

2 TIM. 2, 8—13

In our day is being fulfilled Rev. 20, 7—9a. From within and without enemies are attacking the Church of God. Rankest paganism is clamoring for recognition as scientific Christianity, Modernism, unionism, etc. Shall we give up? In the prison at Rome sat an old man, awaiting death because he had preached the Gospel. Paganism was about to celebrate its seeming triumphs over God's saints. Yet Paul is not discouraged. He does not think of becoming disloyal to his trust. He urges that the Gospel be preached, no matter what may befall him and others, 2 Tim. 1, 6—8; 2, 1. 2. In our text he adds weighty reasons.

Remain Faithful to Christ and His Old Gospel

1. *Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead*
2. *Remember that God's Word is not fettered*
3. *Remember that God's promises and decrees stand unmovable*

1

V. 8. Each word of this admonition is a powerful urge to remain faithful to the Gospel. Remember Jesus. Hymns 91. 92. Remember the Christ, the God-appointed, anointed Savior. He is the only, but sure Way to salvation, God's own Savior. Remember the price He paid! "Dead." Is. 53; Phil. 2, 7. 8; Rom. 5, 6—8. Remember, He was raised, He is Victor over all His and our enemies, 1 Cor. 15, 55—57. This is the Gospel preached by Paul, called by him "my" Gospel, not because, like modern gospels, it is of man's invention, but because he had accepted this Gospel of the blessed God, 1 Tim. 1, 11; 2 Tim. 3, 15. 16, as His own cherished treasure. A Gospel, good news indeed, faithful and worthy of all acceptance. Is not this Gospel worthy also of our faithful adherence and loyalty?

2

V. 9. Paul suffered trouble because of the Gospel ever since he had accepted it, Acts 9, 15. 16; 1 Cor. 6, 4—10; 2 Cor. 11, 23—33. Charged with being a dangerous evil-doer, he now lies bound in prison, looking forward to certain death, 2 Tim. 4, 6. Yet he remains faithful to Christ and His Gospel. Though he is bound, the Word of God is not bound, cannot be bound. Even in fetters he preached the Word, Acts 28, 30. 31; Phil. 1, 12. 13; yea, his bonds encouraged others to preach, Phil. 1, 14. Though he knew that soon his poor lisp, stammering tongue would lie silent in the grave, that Gospel preached by his tongue would not be silenced, could not be fettered. The enemies trying to silence the Gospel are creatures, powerful, crafty, cruel perhaps, the wise and mighty, the rulers of Church and State, the leaders of science and society, and standing behind them, instigating them, Satan, the wicked Foe, Eph. 6, 12; yet they are ever creatures, no more, while the Word they seek to fetter is God's own, the Word of the living, all-powerful Lord of hosts, and therefore: John 6, 63. The enemies may gain some ground; congregations may apostatize; cities, states, countries, may sink back into paganism. Yet the Word shall not be bound. The Gospel shall be preached, and preached effectively, successfully, even unto the end of the world. Ps. 2; Matt. 16, 18; 1 Kings 19, 10. 18. We are not fighting for a lost cause. Immanuel, God with us, is our watchword. This conviction urges us on to unwavering loyalty; for we know that God's promises and decrees stand sure.

3

Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, born in fulfilment of God's promise, 2 Sam. 7, 12 ff., and raised because of this promise, Acts 13, 34. 35. God will keep all His promises, 2 Cor. 1, 20. In keeping with the Lord's eternal decree the elect of God will obtain salvation, v. 10. How sure may we be of success, relying on the Word of the unchanging God! And what an urge to preach the Gospel! For then we become His instruments in carrying out His eternal, unchanging decree of salvation. So He will keep all promises, vv. 11—13. We died with Christ in regeneration, we daily crucify our flesh that it may not again live and rule over us. That requires constant battle. Yet undismayed we remain faithful to Christ and to His Gospel, for we shall also live with Him. What though we must suffer? What though Satan sends us afflictions? What though people consider and call us queer, odd, pietistic? What though we yield to our enemies at times? These seeming victories over God's saints last but a little hour, at most a lifetime. We know that Satan can send us no more than God permits; we know that, "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him," rule here in His strength over suffering, sin, flesh; rule there in everlasting liberty and righteousness. On the other hand, if we deny Him, His decree stands: "He that believeth not shall be damned." He is faithful in keeping His promises, but just as firm and unchanging, in His threats. Deny Him, and there is no other salvation, Heb. 10, 26.

Summing up the urgent reasons why we should remain faithful to Christ and His Gospel, close with a fervent admonition to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. TH. LAETSCH

