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Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

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Christian faith and love. Yes, it is a fearful thing to neglect the Christian training of our children. Unbelieving parents are guilty of it; also members of the Church are frequently indifferent. Some even have a school in their congregation, but do not find it worth while to send their children or do not cooperate with the school. What follows? Often these children are but meagerly instructed, fall from grace, are lost. Our prayer is that God may keep us from such folly of neglecting our children's Christian education. But where parents realize their duty, rich blessing rests upon them, their homes, their children, the Church, and even the State. They may fall away for a season; some may even be eternally lost. The rule, however, is: "When he is old, he will not depart from it," Prov. 22, 6. Give examples of such as persevered in faith thanks to their early training.

Our Synod has grown to be a large body, due, under God, to its system of Christian training, especially to its schools. They call for large expenditures, great sacrifices. Does all this pay? Ask men and women grown old in our midst; also the young people who remained faithful; and the saints already made perfect are praising God for the blessings of a Christian school. And so today we join in the prayer of Manoa, v. 8, for wisdom in educating our children. Pray for all whose task is to train children. God bless our system of education!

PAUL KOENIG

Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

2 THESS. 3, 6-14

The Gospel of Christ, if personally applied for justification and sanctification, adjusts all difficulties of life. It changes us to adapt ourselves to circumstances wrought by God, or it alters a situation in our favor. The Gospel of Christ can restore economic and industrial peace where tyranny and suppression on the part of either employer or employee rage and where political and economic science fails.

Paul's Treatment of the Labor Problem

1. The Occasion.

A) Yielding to the natural disposition of the flesh and perhaps also to religious fanaticism, some in Thessalonica, called brethren, shirked work, v. 11, preferring idleness, v. 11, and its resultant gossip and gadding about, v. 11, depending on public or private support, v. 8, all of which is termed disorderly conduct, vv. 6, 11. This self-chosen idleness constituted a moral, economic, and spir-

itual problem. — The report of the conduct of these weak Christians had come to Paul, v. 11. It was a public offense, inexcusable also because it was in disregard of previous instruction and admonition, vv. 6, 10, committed by Christians who exposed a) the Christian religion and congregation to ridicule and contempt and b) themselves to church discipline, vv. 6, 14.

B) The very same temptation faces us today; for the economic and industrial stage is still set for wide-spread idleness. Economists wonder what new problems will arise by reason of the sluggishness threatening the nation anew, and laborers speculate on the coming opportunities of leisure and idleness. We Christians wonder to what degree the temptations will affect our congregations and members. — Are you demanding your rights as a Christian laborer or like the unbeliever? Do you take part in riots and disturbances, instigated not for labor but merely about labor, not for bread but for leisure? Do you take only what you earn, or do you demand as much as you can get by stream-lined idleness, either as employer or laborer, stealing time? And can you run the risk of losing your soul's salvation for the sake of temporal considerations?

2. The Precept.

It is the same, cast v. 10 in negative, and v. 12 in positive form. V. 10 refers to the idler. Neither sympathy nor support should be extended him, but if he remains impenitent, he should be excommunicated. V. 12 refers to the worker. He is entitled to just compensation for all work in which he is legitimately occupied either as employer or employee. Avoiding tyranny or rioting, he should live according to v. 12. He has no claim on another's bread. — The precept pertains to all able-bodied, not the sick or the innocent jobless. For these God has made other provision. — This is an old precept, Prov. 6, 6—11; 13, 4; 15, 19; 19, 24; 20, 4; 21, 25; Gen. 2, 19, 20 a; 3, 19; Ps. 128, 2; not subject to revision according to the American or any other standards. — It does not promise riches to the worker, not even modern standards of living, working, eating, leisure, but contentment, v. 12, and serves as a preventive to disorderly conduct. — Fully observed, it proves to be workable, practicable, a blessing; for it is the divine precept, vv. 6, 12. Cp. Eph. 6, 5—9. — These are evangelical admonitions. Relation of Gospel to our daily tasks. "At Thy word," Luke 5, 5. Christians dedicate their daily work to Jesus and keep it undefiled.

3. The Example of the Practicability of the Precept.

Vv. 7—9. Paul's example helps to clinch the point. He is not railing and haggling. He lived consistently with the precept he gave others. What gross inconsistency on the part of many brethren who grumble because they cannot obtain shorter hours,

more leisure, and larger salaries, but employ pastors at a low salary and yet expect them to work far into the night. "God preserve unto us a pious ministry!" (Walther.) And God grant unto us a pious laity! "Ye ought to follow us" (text). If the apostolic precepts were applied to all cases, all labor problems would be solved. See vv. 4. 5.

4. A Comparison.

Paul: Work and eat; no work, no bread. The idle world: Insist on eating though you work not. Paul agitates in the name of our Lord, unto labor, and contentment, against idleness, by the Gospel, to his own financial loss, among Christians, in love. The world agitates in the name of selfishness, unto idleness and discontent, for leisure, by force and science, to its own financial gain. The true Christians agree and succeed with Paul and their pastors. A gulf exists between the old divine, successful precept and the modern worldly philosophy, which cannot be spanned by the Christian, Matt. 6, 24. 33. 34.

G. H. SMUKAL

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

HEB. 12, 18—24

This text was addressed to Christians of Jewish extraction, some of whom, having been converted as adults, were in danger of lapsing again into Judaism. The object of the writer therefore was to show them the superiority of the Christian religion over the Jewish worship and to admonish them to remain true to the covenant made with them. Such admonition is necessary also today. With love for material things increasing, love for things spiritual will decrease correspondingly. Let us consider

The Blessed Estate of the New Testament Christian

1. *He shows how much the Gospel Church differs from the Jewish Church*
2. *He shows how much the Gospel Church excels*

1

Vv. 18—21. Read Ex. 19 and Deut. 4. That was a solemn and fearful occasion. The mount itself burning, the country shrouded in darkness, a storm-wind of hurricane proportion, "voice of words" heard, Deut. 5, 4—22. Filled with terror, the people begged Moses to arrange that this fearful scene might end. By using incidents from this scene the apostle shows the difference between the two covenants.

a) Mount Sinai, on which the Old Testament covenant was founded, was a "mount that might be touched." It was very much

external and earthly. The Church on Mount Zion is invisible, spiritual. John 4, 23. 24.

b) Upon that mount there was "blackness and darkness," and the Old Testament dispensation was shrouded in dark shadows and types. In the New Testament the Gospel, the light brought down from heaven, cheering the home and dispelling the darkness of the tomb (Ps. 119, 105; 2 Pet. 1, 19), shines much clearer and brighter.

c) It was a terrifying dispensation, striking them with such dread that they entreated that the word, etc., v. 19. Even Moses, v. 21. The purpose? Gal. 4, 1—7. The Gospel dispensation is mild, kind, condescending, suited to our weak nature. Rom. 1, 16; 1 Tim. 1, 15.

d) It was a limited dispensation. Not all Israel could approach to that holy mount, but only Moses and Aaron. Under the Gospel we all have access with boldness to God, John 6, 37.

2

Vv. 22—24. "Ye are come," not "Ye shall come." Now already they have entered into the fellowship of eternal realities. The humblest life need not wait for death to draw aside the separating curtain in order to enjoy these privileges. V. 22. The New Testament Church is called Mount Sion, heavenly Jerusalem, city of the living God. Reason: Ps. 9, 11; 76, 2; 110, 2; Is. 2, 2. 3. In the midst of this Church God has His home, collectively and individually. Rev. 14, 1; 21, 2; 1 Cor. 3, 16; 2 Cor. 6, 16. As we toil down here, annoyed by many cares and fighting with many sorrows, let us remember that we have come into heavenly places, v. 22, to dwell in the house of the Lord, "to behold His beauty and to inquire in His temple." Our solemn duty? Phil. 3, 20. Make your investments at home. The Jews invented banking and letters of credit in order that they might the more easily shift their wealth from one land to another. We are strangers here. V. 22. Therefore: Matt. 6, 19. 20.

Heavenly society. V. 22: "to an innumerable company of angels." The myriads of angels which on Mount Sinai made their presence known in thunder and tempest, terrifying the people, now appear rejoicing over additions to their ranks. Luke 15, 10. Those who by faith are joined to the Church are joined to the angels in a fellowship of bliss.

V. 23. "To the general assembly," etc. "General assembly" is a term used in classic Greek for festal meetings of the nation at their great games and always carried in it the idea of joy. We have communion with this great assembly. We belong by faith to the congregation of God's first-born children, those that have

been converted to faith in the first-born Son of God. We are united with them in the same blessed hope, grappling with the same spiritual enemies, and hastening to the same rest and victory. The names of these are inscribed on the register of the great city.

"To God, the Judge of all." More accurately: "to a Judge who is God of all." The office of the early Jewish judges was not only the judicial one, but it also included that of intervening for others and defending their rights. Ps. 40, 17. As members of this select company, we are able to stand before this Judge in trusting confidence by virtue of the justifying faith which has been created in our hearts through the Gospel.

"To the spirits," etc. We are even now one great congregation with the saints that have reached the bliss of heaven. Luke 23, 43; 2 Cor. 5, 8; Phil. 1, 23. Hymn 463, 1. How noble the lowest and humblest human life becomes! Like some rough sea-shell, tossed about in the surge of a stormy sea; but when opened, all iridescent within, bearing a pearl of great price.

V. 24. All this is possible because we have come to the great Mediator of the New Testament. This covenant is ratified by the blood of Christ which pacifies God and purifies the consciences of men. This blood speaks to God in behalf of sinners. It pleads not for vengeance but for mercy, with a voice so persistent and persuasive that it secures a perfect acquittal for us. Heb. 11, 4.

Conclusion.—We have come into possession of a glorious heritage. We live in the presence of a reconciled God, in the company of angels, perfected saints, and all that are knit to the same Lord. Have we at all times realized and appreciated this? Just what place in our lives does this honorable position occupy? What does this privilege mean to us when we compare it with home, friends, business, ambition, or pleasure? May we always, because of the greater blessedness of the New Testament Church in comparison with the Jewish worship prove ourselves to be the true people of the covenant of God. Rev. 3, 11. Hymn 468, 1. 7.

F. WORTHMANN

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

HEB. 4, 9—13

One of the most comforting doctrines of Holy Scripture is that of the resurrection of the dead. Clearly taught in the Bible, Job 19, 25—27; 1 Cor. 15, 20; 1 Thess. 4, 14; John 14, 19.—But is this doctrine that we shall leave the prison-house of the grave really so very comforting? Suppose a man were in prison and his term were ended, but another crime were hanging over his head and an officer of the law were waiting at the prison gate to arrest him

as he stepped forth into freedom, do you think the prisoner would be comforted by the thought of his release? The doctrine of the resurrection can be comforting only if we know that a happy future awaits us when we shall be released from the grave. A study of our text will show us

The Christian's Assurance of Heaven

1. *There is a heaven.*

There are people who deny the existence of a happy hereafter; they prefer to believe that death ends all, that we die like the animals. And sometimes the Christian is harassed by doubts and wonders whether it is really true that there is a heaven. But all denials and doubts are silenced: v. 9. The Bible is filled with passages that speak of heaven, Heb. 12, 22; Ps. 16, 11; 1 Pet. 1, 4; 2 Cor. 12, 2, 4; and many others. We are certain that heaven exists, and we are comforted by this certainty. We are beset by sorrow and trial and sin in this life; sometimes our burdened heart asks whether the troubles will never end. Troubles may continue; but they will have an end. The men who voyaged with Columbus were frantic with terror because they thought there might be an endless ocean; their hearts took courage when they saw the land of the New World. We need not fear; all trouble will end; there is a heaven. Hymn 566, 1.

2. *Heaven is a rest.*

The word used in v. 9 for *rest* is peculiar; it means "Sabbath-festal celebration." When God had finished all the work of creation, He rested; and He commanded that His people in the Old Covenant should observe that day as a day of rest. So we are to think of heaven as a rest, with God, from all earthly toil and woe. Some people paint their pictures of heaven with earthly colors; the Indians expected a happy hunting-ground; the Mohammedans expect sensuous delights (*Popular Symbolics*; see Index sub "Heaven"). We must draw our pictures of heaven with Bible colors. Heaven is *rest*.

Does this description of heaven satisfy? That depends. If a person delights in sin, then the prospect of rest from all sin is not so alluring; if a person is unwilling to bear a cross for Jesus' sake, then the promise of rest from all trials does not interest him; if a person is quite satisfied with his meager efforts to please God, then the expectation of rest from these puny efforts will not seem desirable. But if we battle valiantly against sin; if we are burdened with a cross for Christ's sake; if we are chagrined at our futile efforts to please God, then the thought of *rest* from it all is glorious, v. 10. Hymn 566, 4.

3. *Heaven is for the people of God.*

Not for every one? Some say that all will go to heaven (*Universalists, Popular Symbolics, 436*). But the Bible says that heaven is for the people of God. And who are they? In the Old Testament the Jews are many times called the people of God. Does that mean that we who are not Jews cannot get to heaven? No; the people of God have ever been those who believe in Jesus, the Messiah, the Redeemer. The Jews who believed that Christ would come to save them were God's people; the Christians who believe that Christ has saved them are God's people, Titus 2, 14; 1 Pet. 2, 9. By faith in Christ we have become people of God. Heaven is for God's people; heaven is for us.

Should we not therefore strive to remain people of God? There is great danger of losing this privilege. The Jews lost it through unbelief, vv. 11. 2. We are in danger of losing the privilege in the same way, through unbelief and sin. We sin daily; but God forgives sin to those who repent. If a person remains impenitent, however, or does not believe the teachings of Scripture, he is not of God's people. The Bible-stories of the sins of the Jews in the desert and their disregard of God's promises must be a constant warning to us, lest we also lose the high privilege of being people of God.

How can we remain God's people and thus have assurance of heaven? Our own efforts will fail. Temptation is too strong; our heart, self-righteous by nature, rebels against repentance; our faith often wavers in the hour of trial and before the assaults of unbelief. But the Word of God will uphold us. It will show us our sins, convince us of the need of repentance, lead us to faith in Christ, and teach us true righteousness, vv. 12. 13. If we heed God's Word, we shall be God's people, John 8, 47. Then we shall have the assurance of heaven. Our one endeavor in life should therefore be: v. 11.

FREDERIC NIEDNER

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

JAS. 2, 10—17

The doctrine of perfectionism as held by Rome, Methodism, the Holiness Churches, the advocates of the "victorious life," is anti-Scriptural and dangerous. See Conc. Theol. Mthly., III, pp. 417. 881. As long as Christians live in the world, Rom. 7, 14 ff.; Phil. 3, 11 ff.; 1 John 1, 8, etc., apply. This does not mean that Christians need not strive for perfection.

Christians Must Strive for Perfection

1. *God's Law is satisfied with nothing less*
2. *God's Gospel obligates and enables us to strive for it*

1

V. 10. Modernism reverses this statement of the apostle. Man may transgress as many commandments as he pleases; as long as he shows some good traits, be it a certain chivalry, an inclination to certain forms of charity, loyalty to some principle or code, irrespective of its nature, etc., this good quality, this trait will cover the multitude of his sins, will atone for his errors, will prove that, after all, there is a spark of the divine in him, that he is not utterly bad, not hopelessly lost. Over against this widespread indifference to the wickedness and disastrous consequences of sin the pastor must show its true nature, lawlessness, rebellion, and its just penalty, eternal damnation. Transgress one commandment, purposely or accidentally, unknowingly ("offend"—stumble), and you have transgressed, overstepped, violated, the whole Law and become guilty of all the Law; you are held in its inexorable clutches, for you have sinned against the supreme law, the summary of God's Law, love, Deut. 6, 5, of which the individual commandments are only examples. One broken link breaks the entire chain. In this series of examples one commandment is as important as any other, for all are given by the same Lawgiver, God, who holds every offender, be it in many, be it in one point, guilty of all. Cp. Jas. 4, 17; 1 John 3, 4. 8. 10; Deut. 27, 26; Rom. 6, 23.

2

Here we often hear an objection. Why be so scrupulous? We are no longer under the Law, but under the Gospel, the Law of liberty, which has freed us from sin and its consequences, also from the Law of Moses, its demands and threats. Not works but faith justifies. Works are unnecessary; constant insistence on their necessity may be harmful, engendering a spirit of legalism and self-righteousness, utterly at variance with the Gospel.

The apostle nips this argument in the bud, v. 12. The law of liberty is not a law of license, nor of lassitude in doing good works; it is the Gospel of righteousness and holiness. While the Law of Moses obligates to righteousness, but does not and cannot engender the perfection it demands, the law of liberty, the glorious Gospel of Christ, not only obligates us to righteousness but enables us to strive for, and constantly grow in, holiness. That message John 3, 16; 2 Cor. 5, 19—21 makes us free, lovers of Him that set us free. This grateful love does not rest content with one or two weak attempts at holiness, but will make us zealous of good works, Titus 2, 14; cp. Rom. 6, 15—23; 8, 2—17; 12, 1 ff. Being under the law of liberty, you expect to be and shall be judged by this law, the Gospel; therefore v. 12. So do, not as galley slaves driven by the taskmaster's lash, not in a spirit of bargaining with God, trying to

get the best of the deal, looking for greatest possible reward for least possible exertion, nor as abusing liberty, Gal. 5, 13; 1 Pet. 2, 18. No; as free children, willingly serving God and the fellow-man in fervent love. Where such merciful love is lacking, you are no longer ruled by, and following, the law of liberty, you are under the law of bondage, v. 13. Only mercy, the sure proof that you are under the Gospel regime, can triumph over judgment. There is no judgment for mercy.

Is then, after all, faith not sufficient? Must works be added before it can justify? No, no, says the apostle. But: vv. 14. 15. As surely as love that is content with mere words and has no deeds to show, is dead, no love, so surely is faith that is no more than a faith of the head and lips and mouth no living faith but a dead thing, which is as powerless to justify as it shows itself to be powerless to sanctify. "Faith is a divine work in us, which transforms us, gives us a new birth out of God, John 1, 13, slays the Old Adam, makes us altogether different men in heart, affection, mind, and all powers and brings with it the Holy Spirit. Oh, it is a living, energetic, active, mighty thing, this faith! It cannot but do good unceasingly. There is no question asked whether good works are to be done; but before the question is asked, the works have been done, and there is a continuous doing of them. But any person not doing such works is without faith. He is groping in the dark, looking for faith and good works, and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, although he indulges in a lot of twaddle and flummery concerning faith and good works." (Luther, translated by Dau. Read the whole passage, St. L. XIV, 99 f.)

Surely Christians must strive for perfection. Heb. 12, 14; Phil. 3, 13—15.

TH. LAETSCH

