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## Study on Heb. 4, 9-13

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sich irgendwie von menschlichen Meinungen beeinflussen zu lassen, und daher ist beiden das Papsttum der allerschrecklichste Greuel, weil es die Schrift beiseiteläßt und die Seligkeit bloß auf menschliche Meinungen gründet. In beiden ist das Papsttum gerichtet, und das Urteil, das über dasselbe gefällt ist, wird bestehen bis ans Ende der Tage, wo der Papst endlich dem letzten Gericht verfällt.

Gott aber sei ewig Lob und Dank für diese Einhelligkeit in der Lehre! Schlimm wäre es gewesen, wenn Luther irgendwie von der Augustana abgewichen wäre. Wie hätten da die Feinde jubiliert! So aber war ihnen diese Freude nicht gegönnt, und beide, Luthers Säge und die Augsburgerische Konfession, stehen in ihrer Einigkeit da als Grundpfeiler des wahren, christlichen Glaubens, die auch die Pforten der Hölle nicht zu stürzen vermögen.

Milwaukee, Wis.

D. F. Gattstädt

### Study on Heb. 4, 9-13

Eisenach Epistle for Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews calls the attention of his readers to the message of the Son, 1, 2; the Prophet equal with God, 1, 2-14, whose message deserves to be heard and accepted, 2, 1, 2, since it was confirmed by God Himself, 2, 3, 4, and since it speaks of so sure and so marvelous a salvation, 2, 5-17. Therefore they ought to consider their Apostle and High Priest, Christ Jesus, greater than Moses, 3, 1-6, and not harden their hearts in unbelief lest they, like unbelieving Israel of old, fail to obtain the promised rest, 3, 7-19. For unto us, like unto them, is promised a rest. When God promised a rest to His people, He thought not merely of the rest in Canaan; He had in mind another rest, that in heaven. Unbelieving Israel lost both Canaan and heaven, and even those who entered into the Promised Land had not thereby entered into the rest promised to God's people; for if Joshua had brought them to rest, God would not afterward have spoken of another day, 4, 1-8. The Epistle-lesson for the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity, linking up with the standard Gospel-lesson for the day, pleads with all Christians to labor to enter into the rest remaining for the people of God and promised to them in His unfailing Word.

*"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God," v. 9.* Since God in His holy Word, Ps. 95, through His prophet pleads with the people, the Jews living in Canaan, i. e., the promised land of rest, not to harden their hearts against His invitation to enter into His rest, Joshua could not possibly have brought Israel to their final resting-place. There must therefore (οὐν, conse-



quently, draws the conclusion from the premises given vv. 4—8) be remaining another rest to the people of God. "The people of God" was the name given to Israel as a nation because this nation had been chosen by God Himself as His own, His peculiar people, to whom in a special manner He had revealed Himself, to whom He had granted privileges and rights granted in like measure to no other people, or nation, on earth. Cp. Rom. 3, 2; 9, 4, 5; Ex. 19, 3—6; Deut. 7, 6—24; 5, 32—40. Within this nation many refused to believe the Word preached to them, Heb. 4, 2, and were therefore not accepted by God as His people, not given the rest promised to the people of God, the true believers among Israel. In the times of the New Testament the Israel of God, the people of God, are all believers, Jews and Gentiles, Gal. 6, 16; Rom. 9, 6—8. 24—26; 1 Pet. 2, 9, 10. To this people of God in its entirety, to all the individual members of this people from Adam and Eve to the last member of the human race received through faith into membership with this peculiar people of God, there remaineth a rest. The very fact that they are members of God's people warrants to them the fulfilment of their hopes and expectations, for God is true and His promises cannot fail, being the promises of Omnipotence and Grace, Rom. 15, 8, 9; 2 Cor. 1, 20.

The writer designates this rest as a *σαββατισμός*, the only time this word occurs in the New Testament. The rest remaining to the people of God is on the order of a sabbatical rest, such as was commanded to the people of the Old Testament, Ex. 20, 8 ff.; 35, 3; Num. 15, 32 ff.; Lev. 23, 3 (assembly); Num. 28, 9 ff. (sacrifice). Israel was to rest from work so that God might have His work in them. Hymn 391, 4. This was the antitype of God's sabbatical rest, Gen. 2, 2, 3, and, like the latter, a prototype of the New Testament rest. Col. 2, 16, 17.

Therefore the writer continues: "*For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His.*" v. 10. "His rest" refers to the rest which God has prepared for His people. God Himself calls it *My rest*, 3, 11; 4, 3, 5; the writer, *His rest*, 3, 18. Every one who enters into God's rest (and only he) shall himself also cease, rest, from his own works. That this rest is not an absolute rest, a *dolce far niente*, complete inactivity, is evident from the fact that the writer compares this cessation from labor to that of God's rest from His works. This rest of God is explained and restricted by v. 4, where the writer quotes Gen. 2, 2. God rested from His works which He had proposed to do during the six days of creation. The activity of Him who needs no rest, Is. 40, 28, and does not rest, Ps. 121, 4; John 5, 17, did not cease; it assumed a different sphere. Creation having ceased, He rejoiced in His finished work, Gen. 1, 31; Prov. 8, 30, 31,



and henceforth preserves and governs all creatures, Is. 40, 26 ff.; 44, 24-28; Heb. 1, 4; Ps. 121.

In like manner, *ἄνεσθαι*, every one that has entered into His rest has also ceased, come to a rest (aorist), from his own works. Note the close correspondence of these words with those used of God's rest. The rest of the people of God consists in ceasing from the works proposed for them, allotted to them, in this time and world. The good works which God had before ordained that His Christians should walk in them, Eph. 2, 10, have been accomplished. Now their activities take on a different form. As their bodies are now transformed into spiritual bodies, as they are no longer sinful, mortal, corruptible, imperfect, vile bodies but changed, fashioned like unto the glorified body of their Savior, so their activities are on a much higher plane, purely spiritual, perfectly holy and righteous. No longer will there be for them a sowing in hope, but the joy of harvesting and fruition. No longer will sorrow and sadness, their constant companions in this world, be at their side; for them that rest is forbidden ground. As Christians enter into this rest, joy and gladness will take them at their hand, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, Is. 35, 10. There will be no more weariness in doing their daily task, no more disappointments and perplexities and self-reproaches. There is God's rest. Into that rest shall their works follow them, glorified as they themselves are glorified, all sins washed away, all stains removed; all those imperfections which caused them so much heartache, are deleted from their works, yea, from their memory of these works, even as God remembers their iniquities no more. Jer. 31, 34; Heb. 8, 12. With joy and pleasure shall they behold the works of their hands which they wrought while still on the earth, just as God saw all things He had made and rejoiced, for they were very good. They will join in the chorus of angels and archangels, Rev. 5, 12, 13, and with all the heavenly host serve their God and Savior in that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, in all holy conversation and godliness, without spot and blameless. 2 Pet. 3, 11-14. That is the sabbatical rest of God, prepared by Him for His own people.

*"Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief,"* v. 11. *"Let us labor,"* make haste, exert ourselves, give diligence, *"to enter into that [ἐλθόντες] rest,"* the glory of whose bliss exceeds all human understanding, like which there is no other rest, *"lest any man fall after,"* fall in, i. e., fall into and remain lying in this state, *"the same example"* (ὑποδείγμα properly what is shown by being placed under the eyes, a suggestive sign, an example). He had placed before the eyes of his readers the disobedience and unbelief of Israel as



a warning example. "Unbelief," ἀπιστία, refusing to be persuaded, non-compliance, obstinacy, which is moved neither by the command and the threats of the Law, hence disobedience, nor by the invitation and promise of the Gospel, hence unbelief. The life of these unbelieving Israelites, instead of being an ensample of faith and love and perseverance and loyalty, serves only to show the sad results of unbelief. What a tragedy! Shall we fall in like manner? Shall our life serve no other purpose than to be an example of warning to future generations? Perish the thought! Then let us hasten, use every diligence, to enter into that rest before the door is closed forever and we are too late. Our guilt and consequent punishment would be the greater, since we are no longer living in the time of the Old Testament but are privileged to live in New Testament times, offering so many more advantages and blessings, which increase in like measure our obligation to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, 2, 1—4; cp. 1, 1, 2; 3, 1—6, and since the power and efficacy of the Word remain unchanged. This is the next thought brought out in vv. 12, 13, which are connected with the preceding admonition by γὰρ. The author adds another powerful reason for making haste to enter the rest promised in the Word of God.

*"For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart,"* v. 12. The Word of God is the subject of this and the following verse. What does the author mean by this term? We may at once dismiss the opinion of a number of interpreters who refer this term to Jesus Christ, the Word of God. Christ is never so called in this epistle, and Meyer correctly states that "the expression was too unusual for it to be employed and understood without further indication in this special sense, where the connection did not even lead up to it." The term "Word of God" is an all-comprehensive one, including every word, every utterance, of God, no matter at what time, in what place, in what manner, it was spoken—whether spoken by the Father, 1, 5—14; by the Son, 2, 12, 13; by the Holy Ghost, 3, 7; whether spoken by angels, 2, 2, or by men, 1, 1; 2, 3, 4; whether by means of oral or of written speech, the word of God recorded in a book from which one may quote, to certain places of which one may refer, 2, 6; 4, 4, 5; whether this Word is recorded in the Pentateuch, 4, 4; 6, 13—7, 28; 9—12, or in the historical books, 1, 5; 11, 30 ff.; 13, 5, or the Prophets, 2, 13; 8, 8—12; 10, 15—17, or the Psalms, 1, 5—14; 2, 6, 12; 3, 7—11; 5, 5, 6. etc.; whether this Word is the Gospel, 4, 2, etc., or the Law, Moral, 10, 30; Ceremonial, 9, 8. Note especially the manner in which the author throughout



the entire epistle speaks of the Old Testament in all its parts as of the Word of God, not only as containing the Word, not only with reference to certain utterances of God, not only in so far as it refers to Christ, is the "cradle of Christ"; no, the Old Testament in its entirety is to him the Word of God; the mere fact that an utterance of God or any fact is recorded in the Bible is to him proof sufficient of the truth of this utterance or fact. (Cp. Dr. Engelder's article on "What the Liberal Theologian Thinks of Verbal Inspiration" in the May and June issues of this periodical.) The author quotes a book as the Word of God. His religion is indeed, if anything, a book religion. Is it on that account a dead, a deadening religion, stifling all activity, leading us into obscurantism and disaster? The writer of Hebrews certainly did not think so.

The Word of God is "quick," ζῶν, living, imbued with life. The present participle is timeless and durative. Though spoken and written hundreds, thousands, of years ago, it is by no means dead ballast, an outworn philosophy of life, of value to us only in a theoretical way, as a record of man's efforts to search out God or of the religious experiences of past ages. No; it is as living and pulsating with life today as it was when it was first written. And it will ever remain alive; the passing years, yea, eons, cannot deprive it of its living power; it is the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, 1 Pet. 1, 23. Since it is ever alive, it is always "powerful," ἐνεργής, active, at work. Never for a moment does its activity cease, its dynamic energy stop. In no instance does it return void to its Author; always it accomplishes that which He pleases; unceasingly it prospers in the thing whereto He sent it, whether that be to serve as a savor of death unto death or as a savor of life unto life. For it is not man's word; it is the Word of God, higher than man's word as the heavens are higher than the earth. This live, active Word of God is "sharper than any two-edged sword." When John on Patmos saw one like the Son of Man standing in the midst of His congregation, represented by seven golden candle-sticks, he saw coming out of His mouth a sharp two-edged sword, His Word, Rev. 1, 16. A two-edged sword is the better able to penetrate deep into the body and sever the more quickly and thoroughly the members of the body. The Word of God is sharper than any other sword. No man-made blade can equal, or even approach, in point of keenness this sharpest of all swords. Man-made swords may cut in two heavy bars of iron; Damascus blades have been known to be so keen as to cut through a soft feather pillow. The sword of the Word of God is sharper, keener than that. It pierces, it penetrates, "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." Again the present participle denotes



timeless and durative action. It is continually piercing, always keen, never dulled, no matter how long and how often it is active in piercing and dividing. Witness the power of the words spoken by God on the first days of creation. From the moment the word was spoken, alive, active, keen, piercing, it divided the light from the darkness, the waters from the waters, the dry land from the seas. And to this day by virtue of the word spoken six thousand years ago light is divided from darkness, waters from waters, dry land from the seas. So it will remain until God Himself will revoke His word, until He will speak that word whereby heavens and earth will pass away and make room for the new earth, the new heavens, and time will pass into eternity. Cp. also Gen. 8, 22.

As the word on the first day penetrated primeval darkness and divided darkness and light, so the written Word of God pierces man, to whom it is addressed, penetrates into his inmost being, "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow." What is the meaning of these words? There are many different interpretations. In his *Greek-English Lexicon*, Thayer says: "Many take μερισμός actively: 'up to the dividing,' i. e., so far as to cleave asunder or separate; but it is not easy to understand what the *dividing* of the 'soul' is. Hence it is more correct, I think, and more in accordance with the context, to take the word passively (just as other verbal substantives ending in μος are used, . . .) and translate even to the division, etc., i. e., to that most hidden spot, the dividing line between soul and spirit, where the one passes into the other." We cannot agree with Thayer. Neither the noun which occurs only once more, Heb. 2, 4, nor the verb denotes a separation of two objects previously united, but invariably the dividing of one object into various parts, Luke 12, 3. Such dividing may be done for the purpose of distribution, Mark 6, 41, the noun being used in this sense Heb. 2, 4; of imparting, Rom. 12, 3; 1 Cor. 7, 17; 2 Cor. 10, 13; Heb. 7, 2. This dividing is quite frequently a disturbing one, a dividing that causes unrest, dissension, strife, 1 Cor. 1, 13; 7, 34;\* Matt. 12, 25, 26; Mark 3, 24—26. Moreover, the passive sense, advocated by Thayer, will not suit the second pair named by the writer, joints and marrow; they do not "pass one into the other." We therefore prefer

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\* In 1 Cor. 7, 34, where there are a number of variant readings, many interpreters and critics connect μεμέρισται with v. 33 and translate: "And he is divided," viz., in the matter of cares, some calling him in one direction, some in the other. See Lenski, *Interpretation of First and Second Corinthians*, p. 326 f. Even if one connects it with v. 34, there is here not a separation of two things formerly connected, but a division of care, the one caring only for the Lord, the other dividing her cares between the Lord and her husband.



the interpretation according to which the four items named are the objects divided, each one for itself being cut into pieces. That is in full keeping with the general usage, with the context, and with Scriptural teaching.

Briefly stated, the author means to say that the Word of God pierces, divides, judges, both the psychic and physical elements of man, both the inner life and the body in and through which this inner life operates and is manifested. The inner nature is described by three terms, *ψυχή*, *πνεῦμα*, and *καρδιά*. It would only confuse the hearers if the pastor would try to explain the exact meaning of these words at great length. All denote life in one or the other form or manifestation. The best definition, in our opinion, is given by Lenski in his *Commentary on Corinthians*, p. 729: "Man is composed of two parts, the one material, the other immaterial. The latter is designated in Greek by two terms, *ψυχή* and *πνεῦμα*. By *ψυχή* is meant the immaterial part as it animates the material part or body, making it alive. By *πνεῦμα* is meant the same immaterial part, but as it is open to impressions from the supreme *πνεῦμα*, the Spirit of God. Death separates the immaterial from the material part, but *ψυχή* and *πνεῦμα* cannot be separated, being one entity; these two can only be distinguished as two sides of a unit." The heart may be defined as the seat of life in its various manifestations, as physical, mental, moral, emotional, etc., life. "Joints and marrow" are usually interpreted in a figurative sense, as "the ligaments and marrow of the soul and spirit," denoting "the innermost and hidden depth of the rational life of man." Meyer. That seems rather far fetched, and the few examples from classical Greek adduced are not convincing, because there the expression is *μυελὸς ψυχῆς*, while here two pair of words are placed side by side, and the *τε . . . καὶ* does not connect the second pair with the former, but simply joins the two terms *joints* and *marrow* together closely. Cp. on this use of the double conjunction Luke 22, 66; Acts 1, 1; 8, 12; 24, 15; etc. *Ἐνθῦμησις* denotes what is in, or produced by, the *θυμός*, thoughts arrived at not by a process of calm, logical reasoning, but on the spur of the moment, motivated by some emotion or passion (cp. Matt. 9, 4; 12, 25), while *ἐννοια* denotes what is in, or produced by, the *νοῦς*, the understanding, intelligence, reason. Both are ascribed to the heart, since the heart is in the Greek language the seat of intellect, emotion, will. Hence the meaning is that both inwardly and outwardly, both as to his soul, his spirit, his heart, and as to his body, man is affected, and affected deeply, stirred to the innermost depths of soul and body, by the living, active, sharp, penetrating, dividing power of the Word of God, be that Law or Gospel. On the soul-stirring power of the Law, piercing the heart of man, dividing



it against itself, causing strife, dissension, the thoughts accusing, excusing one another, read *Smalcald Articles*, II. Of the Law; III. Of Repentance (*Trigl.*, p. 479). The preaching of the Gospel has the same effect. Christ Himself assures us that the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the Gospel convicts man of sin, of righteousness, of judgment. His going to the Father to procure righteousness, His defeat of the devil, salvation to all that believe on Him, that is Gospel pure and unadulterated. And this word carries a certain conviction into the heart of the unbeliever. Christ tells us that the unbeliever, when hearing the Gospel will be convicted by the Holy Spirit of its truth. Their own conscience will tell them that there is no other righteousness than that procured by Christ, that there is no other way to salvation than that pointed out to them in the Gospel. And so long as they refuse to accept this message of pardon and peace, their heart and soul and spirit will be divided against itself; they will be torn by conflicting thoughts and emotions; they will be constantly kicking against the prick which the Word of God pressed deep into their soul, constantly fighting the sword piercing ever deeper, causing never-ceasing, ever-increasing despair and damnation. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked, Is. 57, 21. The Word of God—the Law, commanding peace with God and man, the Gospel, granting that peace to all that believe—will in all that reject it work peacelessness.

This piercing, dividing power of the Word of God is not confined to the soul and spirit; it has the same effect on the joints and marrow of the body. Anything that influences the soul, or spirit, which dwells in, and operates through, the body and its members, naturally reacts on the body and its component parts. That is especially true of the soul-stirring, spirit-swaying power of the Word of God. When David refused to listen to the Word of God, so well known to him, so often coming to his mind after his sad fall, not only his soul but also his body suffered untold agony, Ps. 32, 3, 4. That has been the experience, though not always in so high a degree, of untold thousands who steadfastly refused to obey the Word of God.

Not only the unbelievers, also the believers, have experienced, and will experience throughout their lives, the power of the living word. To them it has become the savor of life unto life. In and through His Word God hath shined into their hearts, giving to them the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 4, 6. What a blessed division has taken place within their soul and spirit! No longer does Satan hold undisputed sway over them; Christ is now established on the throne of their hearts. No longer are they under the dominion of their sinful flesh; the



Holy Spirit is now their Lord. Rom. 6, 11-23. No longer without Christ, without God, without hope, without peace in this world, but brethren of Jesus, children of God, filled with the blessed hope of eternal life, the peace of God passing understanding ruling in their hearts, heavenly joy and satisfaction the key-note of their lives. Rom. 5, 1 ff. This Gospel with its message of forgiveness and hope and joy, of union and communion with God, gladdens not only the spirit, revives not only the soul, Is. 57, 15-19; 61, 1-3; it heals the body, so that the bones broken by God's hammer of the Law (Jer. 23, 29) again rejoice, again are made whole, Ps. 51, 8; 6, 2 (cp. vv. 8, 9); Heb. 3, 19 (cp. v. 16).

This peace and joy of body and soul, however, is not undisturbed. The Christian is not perfect. He still sins daily, hourly. And the Law of God, searching, probing the inmost heart and spirit, reproaches the Christian for his sin. There is in him a never ceasing division, dissension, the old fighting against the new, the spirit against the flesh. Paul describes this constant division which begins in the conversion of man and continues throughout his life in that chapter of remarkable depth and insight into the inner life of a Christian, Rom. 7. That is a division which affects soul and body. The very fact that a Christian, the farther he advances in sanctification, sees the clearer his imperfection, his lack of fervent love toward his Creator, Savior, Comforter, causes him many a sorrowful hour, many a heartache, many a physical discomfort and anguish. Read penitent David's prayer, Ps. 38, 1-8, and Luther's masterly introduction to this psalm: "This is a psalm of prayer wherein he complains of his sins, which cause anxiety and sorrow to his conscience and permit him to see naught but the arrows of God, that is, wrath, threats, death, and hell. This sorrow consumes marrow, bones, strength, and vigor, distorts the face, the color, all senses, one's whole bearing. For really to feel sin and the despair of an evil conscience is agony above all agony." (Vol. XIV.) Cp. also Ps. 119, 120; Hab. 3, 1, 16; the agonized cry of Paul after having described the division within himself, Rom. 7, 24 (this *body* of death!). So the division continues throughout the life of a Christian, a life made up of battlings, dissension, groanings, while waiting for the consummation of that hope engendered in us by the Word of God, our final adoption, to wit, the redemption not only of our soul, but also of our body, Rom. 8, 23. But throughout this constant division the living, active Word of God not only keeps alive, constantly stirs up afresh this strife; the same Word, that same Gospel, gives strength to the new man to divide, to separate from that reborn heart the love of sin and fleshly lusts, to conquer the old man, to serve God in holiness and righteousness forever.



The apostle adds another clause, further describing the activity of the Word of God. It is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." We have brought out the distinction between thoughts and intents above. The word translated "discerner," *κριτικός*, means one able to judge, skilled in separating, *κρίνειν*, truth from falsehood, good from bad, in sifting all the evidence in a given case, and then, on the basis of such thorough investigation, to render his decision, his sentence of guilty or not guilty. This power to be the criticiser, the judge, of man is inherent in the Word of God. Man, vain fool that he is, proudly calls himself a critic of the Bible. Man dares to let his reason, his thoughts and intents, sit in judgment upon the Word of God, accept whatever he pleases, reject whatever does not seem in agreement with his prejudices. The fact of the matter is that not man, but the Word is the critic, the judge of man's actions, his words, his very thoughts and intents. Human judges can judge only what is open and manifest. The Word of God goes deeper; it penetrates to the very bottom of the matter; it goes down into the heart and sifts, separates, classifies, judges, the inmost emotions and conclusions, the secret desires, the hidden well-springs of his words and actions. And according to its findings it judges. He that believeth shall be saved, is declared righteous; he that believeth not shall be condemned. This sentence is pronounced upon man already in this world. We have heard that in and through the Word the Holy Spirit convicts the world of its unbelief, John 16, 8. 9. Similarly Christ says to the Jews: John 6, 45. 46. Moses accuses them even while they are alive, not Moses in person but through his word written in the Bible. The Word proclaimed by man forgives or retains sin, John 20, 23; Matt. 18, 18. The Word gives life eternal already in this world, John 5, 24; 6, 63. 68. The Word of Christ written in the Bible, 1 Pet. 1, 11, shall judge mankind in the Last Day, John 12, 47—50. The Word of God is the judge of the world.

The apostle has described the intensive power of the Word of God; now he brings out the thought that extensively, its power is no less marvelous. *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened to the eye of him with whom we have to do, v. 13.* We see no reason to assume a change of subject here from the Word of God to God Himself. Neither the context, as Lenski states, nor the expression "before his eyes," as Meyer holds, requires such a change. The context as little demands that we understand a person here as the previous verse requires a person. The attribution of eyes to the Word of God is in keeping with its personification in v. 12 and no more unsuitable than the attribution of eyes to the wheels of



the chariot in Ezekiel's vision, Ezek. 1, 18; 10, 12, this chariot being a symbol of the glory of God revealed in the Gospel. (See this periodical, Vol. VII, p. 184.) In order to judge the thoughts of the hearts of all men, it must be able to look into the hearts of all men and hence to direct its "eyes" upon all men. The Word of God, just because it is God's Word, fixes its gaze on humanity, and before its piercing, penetrating eyes all men are naked, "stripped of all natural or artificial covering" (Delitzsch). They present themselves to the eyes of the Word as they really and truly are. The Word penetrates the robe of outward, often hypocritical virtue wherewith men succeed in cloaking their inward depravity before the eyes of their fellow-men. It penetrates through all the shallow excuses, the scientific objections, advanced by unbelievers. It sees them all, not one being hidden, invisible, before its eyes, and sees them all in their true state. All are sinners, Rom. 3, 10-12, 23; 1, 29-31. If there is to be a justification of mankind, it must be in the manner described in Rom. 3, 24-28. Another very significant expression is used by the apostle, the force of which is unfortunately lost in the translation "opened." *ῥαχνηλίσαν* means to seize by the throat and throw back the head. No matter what efforts man makes to escape the all-seeing, piercing Word of God, they are useless. Before this Word there is no escape; all are forced to face it, whether they will or no. The Word of God comes to man irrespective of his wishes, and it demands a decision; one must either accept it or reject it. There is no middle ground, no possibility of neutrality. We must face the issue proposed by the Word. That is the application, the solemn admonition, which the apostle makes at the conclusion of this majestic passage. "With whom we have to do," *πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος*, towards which for us the Word. Our word must be directed toward the Word of God. Note the emphatic position of *ἡμῖν*. We, the apostle himself and every one of his readers, we all, must speak to this Word, must answer its demands, must give word in response to its word. What shall our word be? Shall it be: I believe, O Lord; help Thou mine unbelief? Shall it be: Away with this foolishness? Shall it be the answer which Felix gave? Acts 24, 25. Shall it be Is. 6, 8 or Ex. 4, 13? Answer we must. Silence would in this case be speaking louder than words. For the Word of God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We may seek to screen our disobedience with pious words; we may succeed in hiding our true state before our fellow-men; that will not help us. Here we have to do with the Word of God, the eternal God, a Word that is ever alive, ever active, ever judging, ever demanding an answer. It will not let man go. It fastens itself in his memory. Business, pleasure, may drown out its voice temporarily, but it will



always return, always convicting, condemning unbelief and the unbeliever; always justifying, sanctifying, saving, whosoever accepts its good tidings of great joy.

This general truth in vv. 12. 13 serves the apostle as a powerful motivation for his urgent plea in v. 11; hence the *for*, v. 12. The Word of God offers to us the rest prepared by Him. The Word, living, active, powerful, is able to work faith in the hearts of man. The Word makes that rest our own. The Word, piercing, penetrating, knows whether our profession of faith is sincere or hypocritical. The Word fills the saddened, weary heart and spirit of the believer with heaven-born joy and peace. The Word creates unrest, disquietude, in the heart of all who refuse to accept its invitation to enter into God's rest. The Word will judge all men; they will have to give account for their attitude over against its pleas. The Word will reject all who rejected it. The Word will open the portals to eternal rest to all that believed its marvelous message. Lord, open Thou by Thy Word our hearts to hear, to accept, to preserve Thy holy Word. Hymn 2, 1. 2.

The rich contents of this passage may be presented to the congregation in various manners. We shall submit a few outlines covering the entire text: *Let Us Labor to Enter into Our Rest*. 1. It is so precious a rest. 2. It is offered so freely in the living Word. 3. Rejection of this offer is so serious a matter.—*The Tragedy of Unbelief*. 1. It rejects the rest prepared for the people of God. 2. It violates the majesty of the Word of God.—*We Have to Do with the Living Word of God*. 1. Therefore beware of unbelief. 2. Therefore confidently accept its invitation.—On the basis of vv. 9—11, one may speak on the rest prepared by God, a rest like God's, a rest for believers only. Vv. 12. 13 will give occasion to point out the power of God's Word. Intensively, it pierces body and soul; extensively, no man can escape its penetrating eye.

THEO. LAETSCH

## Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

### Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

JAS. 5, 13—20

Through faith in Christ Jesus we Christians are members of the Church of our Savior, Eph. 2, 19—22; 4, 4—6. This is truly an unspeakably great gift of our God.

All believers are members of the body of Christ together with us, Rom. 12, 4. 5; 1 Cor. 12, 12 ff. This truth is not to be considered a mere theoretical proposition, but is to be put into practise, 1 Cor. 12, 26. Especially in our times and in the hustle and bustle of