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Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

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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

city life the Christians often remain strangers to one another. This is not in accordance with God's will. In the concluding verses of the epistle St. James, besides teaching other important lessons, admonishes us regarding

A Christian's Concern for His Fellow-Christians

1. *In bodily distress* 2. *In distress of conscience*
3. *In defection from the truth*

1

Our text addresses the individual Christian, urging upon him a Christian conduct in several situations of life. It also admonishes the Christians regarding their attitude and actions toward their fellow-Christians in these situations. We shall restrict ourselves to the latter.

"Is any sick among you?" Sickness is one of the chief characteristics of this vale of tears, the source of great misery and distress. Practically every one of us has experienced this scourge either himself or in his family. There is real suffering. Surely, "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," 1 Cor. 12, 26.

The Christians are not to ignore this distress. The elders of the church are to visit him. A congregation obligates its pastor to minister to the sick and should not overburden him with so many matters as to make it difficult for him to perform this important part of his official duties.

He is to pray over him that is sick. This direction is no argument in favor of Christian Science. The pastor is not to supplant the physician. Luke 5, 31 surely applies here. In illness the Christian is to use every God-given means to regain his health. But unless God blesses the efforts of the physician, no cure can be effected. Such prayer is naturally offered by the patient, but his fellow-Christians should join in prayer with him. This prayer is to be a confident prayer, v. 15, but is also to resemble the prayer of the Savior in Gethsemane.

This is to serve as a guide also for all Christians in visiting their fellow-Christian in bodily illness. They have one powerful means of helping him—prayer. This is much better than the ordinary conversations at the sick-bed, which are often a torture to the patient.

Besides, the elders are to anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, v. 14. These words do not institute extreme unction, but merely refer to a common custom of the Orient of easing and relieving pain by the use of oil. Thus the Christian pastor and the Christians are to follow the example of the good Samaritan; if need be, they should gladly sacrifice time to assist in caring for their fellow-Christian. Thus they show true sympathy.

2

Sin is the source of all trouble, also of illness. We should indeed be careful not to regard persons who must suffer much as specially great sinners, Luke 13, 1—5. But in times of sickness the conscience is often aroused and reminded of sins, v. 15. An aroused conscience causes greater distress than physical illness. The sinner attempting to conceal his sins often endures agonies, Ps. 32, 3, 4.

What can we do to help the Christian brother in his grief? V. 16 we read: "Confess your faults one to another." If the sinner is to unburden his heart to you, he must have confidence in you that you will not judge him unmercifully, that you will respect his confidence, that you will do all in your power to help him.

"Pray one for another." God alone can forgive sins, and He does forgive them. Therefore you can confidently pray with your distressed brother. It is self-evident that you will use the precious Gospel to assure him of forgiveness. Such believing prayer is not in vain, vv. 16 b—18.

3

In the last part of our text St. James refers to the greatest danger. The fellow-Christian has erred from the truth. This does not mean a temporary doubt, with which we are often afflicted, but a fundamental error, which causes the loss of faith. Strictly speaking, such a one is no longer our brother, is no longer a Christian, and is facing eternal death.

Let us not be satisfied with regretting the fact that such a one is lost, nor let us be deterred by the fear that it may be difficult to convince him of his error; let us neither be wearied by rebuffs. Rather let us seriously ponder v. 20, consider the great stake, and implore God's help in this important undertaking. What a joy when the lost sheep returns to the fold!

In doing this, we are following in the footsteps of our Savior, proving ourselves His true disciples. May God grant us grace to become more and more perfect in these good works to the glory of His holy name!

PAUL F. KOEHNEKE

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

ROM. 14, 1—9

With the 11th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans St. Paul has concluded the doctrinal portion of his letter. In the remaining chapters he deduces practical lessons. Sum and substance of all these instructions may be given in a verse included in this text: "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." This is the natural and inevitable conclusion: After the Lord has received us as His own, we must live as His own, follow His commandments. So the

apostle speaks of piety in general, the use of God's gifts, the practise of various Christian virtues, our civil duties; finally, at the end of chap. 13, we find a special motive for using great earnestness in performing these moral duties: The end is near.— But there are phases of Christian life and activity which are not covered by a specific command; in our text the apostle exhorts to

Let us see **Christian Toleration**

1. *In what matters Christian toleration is to be exercised*
2. *How it is to be exercised*

1

St. Paul speaks of those who are "weak in the faith." They are not faithless; they are true Christians, fully persuaded as to the essentials of Christian faith, all those points that are plainly stated in Scripture ("God hath received him," v. 3). But there are certain things in which they have not yet reached the full conviction which others have attained. What were these things? Vv. 2. 6. These words leave room for various explanations. Perhaps these persons were ascetically inclined; thought it best for their own spiritual life not to eat meat or drink wine, v. 21, and to set aside special days for devotion and Christian activities; not with a view of meriting favor or reward, but solely because they deemed it profitable. Or perhaps they were Jewish Christians, who still thought it best to adhere to the old distinctions between clean and unclean meats or (because it was difficult to ascertain whether the meat they bought was not part of a heathen sacrifice) not to eat meat at all; because wine was universally abused, it would be best to abstain from the drinking of it altogether; because they found the special holidays of the Old Covenant good for their own spiritual life, they continued to maintain the old custom.

This, then, does not apply to matters that are definitely decided, by command or prohibition, in the divine Word. But there are many things not covered by divine instructions; beyond general principles God has given no command regarding meat and drink (only the abuse forbidden), clothing (only modesty enjoined, pomp and ostentation forbidden), holidays (only the command to hear God's Word diligently), all the externals of divine services, the amount of our contributions for the Lord's work, amusements (only sinful pleasures forbidden), etc. These, then, are matters in which Christian toleration is to be practised.—How?

2

Vv. 1. 3. Those who are strong enough to free themselves of such scruples must not despise the weak, as though they were better Christians, much less condemn them as unchristians; on

the contrary, they must receive them as brethren. They may indeed try to relieve them of their unnecessary doubts, but finally must allow them to retain their own convictions. They should even be careful how they use their own Christian liberty, vv. 20—22.

The weak, on the other hand, must not condemn the others because they do things which they themselves feel constrained to avoid; must not give room to the thought that they are better, more conscientious Christians, thus drifting into pharisaic self-righteousness. Both must be on their guard lest they pass uncharitable judgments on others, their thoughts and motives; remembering that in these things every one must feel his own responsibility to his Lord and act as he thinks right, without judging the other, vv. 3. 4.

There are conditions, however, under which such indifferent things cease to be indifferent. They must be done unto the Lord, v. 6, to the honor of God; for all our life must be lived unto the Lord, v. 8. As soon as something I do (or fail to do) conflicts with the obligation I owe to the Lord, it ceases to be an *adiaphoron* and becomes evil. — Furthermore, we must be fully persuaded that we are right in whatever action we take; when in doubt, don't! — Or there may be accompanying circumstances which remove the act from the realm of indifference, *e. g.*, if it leads us into temptation to sin. — There may even be cases where toleration becomes wrong, when people try to impose *adiaphora* on others as an obligation, Gal. 4, 9—11.

The supreme law here, as in all things, is the law of love; love to our fellow-Christians, whose "keepers" we are, and love to our Lord, who has died and is risen for all of us, both weak and strong. Where that law is observed, there will be peace and harmony, each helping the other on the way to life.

THEO. HOYER

Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity

Eph. 6, 5—8.*

Through sin, work has become a burden and a drudgery, Gen. 3, 19. In our thoughts, labor and sorrow usually go together, Ps. 90, 10. This is true especially when we must work for others and under others, as employees in factories, shops, offices, homes, etc. As a result many regard labor as a necessary evil, perhaps even as a curse. The less of it, the better.

But work is designed to be a blessing, not only physically and materially but also for the mind and the soul. It is to be an aid to happiness.

* Entire Epistle-lesson, vv. 1—9.

How may a Christian Workman Find Satisfaction and Joy in His Daily Round of Labor?

1. *By cultivating a truly Christian attitude of mind*
2. *By drawing constant inspiration from the dignity of his work*
3. *By looking forward to the compensation that really matters*

1

In order to find real satisfaction and joy in our work, even under adverse conditions, we must emancipate our minds from the current ideas and prejudices propagated by worldly-minded persons and strive to cultivate a truly Christian attitude of mind.

A) *Toward our employers.* They are our "masters according to the flesh," v. 5. In everything which pertains to the work which they have engaged us to do, we are subject to them. This is both reasonable and Scriptural. Accordingly our attitude toward them is to be one of —

a) *Obedience.* "Be obedient," v. 5. We are to carry out their commands in all things in which they have a right to make demands, Col. 3, 22; Tit. 2, 9; 1 Pet. 2, 18, as long as we are in their employ.

b) *Good will.* "With good will doing service," v. 7. *Expos. Greek Test.:* "Not simply with readiness but with the disposition that wishes one well." The fact that a man is my employer does not remove him from the domain where I am to exercise my love. The very intimacy of our relationship makes the exercise of love all the more imperative. If Paul expected the Christian slaves of his day to render service with good will, how much more ought we to do this!

Questions: Does your attitude toward your employer conform to this Scriptural ideal? Are some of your unpleasant experiences perhaps the result of your failure in this respect?

B) *Toward our work,* vv. 5. 6. At work it is often impossible to distinguish Christians from unbelievers. According to our text the true Christian attitude is characterized by the following "workman's virtues":

a) *Conscientiousness.* "With fear and trembling," v. 5. The Christian workman is to be filled with a solicitous zeal in the discharge of his duties. He is not afraid, in the first place, of being reprimanded or punished but of bungling his task. He is intent upon doing the best he can.

b) *Sincerity.* "In singleness of your heart," v. 5, without any ulterior, dishonorable, selfish motives. He is open and above board in his dealings with his employer and in the discharge of his work. No scheming in the dark. No hypocrisy or shady subterfuges.

c) *Honesty*. "Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers," v. 6. *Expos. Greek Test.*: "Eye-service is the service that is done only when one is under the master's eye,—an obedience to save appearances and gain undeserved favor, which is not rendered when the master is absent as it is when his scrutiny is on us." How many workmen defraud their employers by "loafing on the job" or doing careless work. Not so the consistent Christian. He does the work for which he is being paid and does it as well as he can.

d) *Whole-heartedness*. "From the heart," v. 6; Col. 3, 23. Not mechanically, as an imposed task from which one cannot escape, but with personal interest, just as if the work were being done for one's own self. "For the heart giveth grace unto every art."

Question: Is this your attitude toward your work? *Examine yourself.*

2

But if we would find satisfaction and joy in our work, we must also draw constant inspiration from *the dignity with which God has invested it*. St. Paul reminds us of the dignity of our daily work by pointing to two facts:

A) By the faithful discharge of our duties in factory, shop, office, home, etc., we are "*doing the will of God*," v. 6. It is God's commandments that we are carrying out. He is our Master in heaven, v. 9. Faithfulness in our work is faithfulness toward Him. A glorious truth investing our humblest tasks and drabest work-days with heavenly dignity and splendor. Here we have the divine glorification of the common tasks and drudgeries of life.

B) In all our work, even in the most menial, we are "*the servants of Christ*," v. 6. Strictly speaking, we cannot divorce our daily work from our worship and religious service. Everything we do in faith is done "*as unto Christ*," v. 5, and "*as to the Lord and not to men*," v. 7. Thus our daily work is to be part and parcel of our religious life, a sacrifice of mind and hand laid upon the altar of Christ.

Questions: Are we conscious of doing the will of God when we work for our employers? Do we work as in the presence of God? Do we conduct ourselves as servants of Christ?

3

However, all this is very difficult. Under the stress and the discouragements of commercial and industrial life we often weaken and fall into the ways of the world. To revive our drooping spirits and to incite us to continued faithful service, St. Paul points us to the reward which God Himself holds out to us. In order to find satisfaction and joy in our work, *we must look forward to this compensation, which alone matters in the end.*

Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

781

A) It will be a reward *from the Lord Himself*, v. 8, "the reward of inheritance," Col. 3, 24. Since we have served Him, we shall receive our real reward from His hands. Compare our daily wages received from our employer with the reward bestowed by God.

B) It will be *an adequate reward*. Nothing that we have done will be overlooked. "Whatsoever good any man doeth," etc., v. 8. Men may be unfair and stinting but not God. He is always just. In fact, His rewards far exceed our deserts.

C) It will be bestowed without respect of persons, v. 9c. Among men family connections, a winsome personality, expediency, prestige, play an important part in the awarding of rewards, but not with God. He always judges impartially and justly.

Conclusion. — Recapitulation, earnest exhortation to self-examination and repentance. Christ's perfection covers our imperfections and makes satisfaction and joy in our daily work possible.

E. J. FRIEDRICH

Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity

HEB. 13, 1—9

This long series of weighty admonitions is addressed to people who by the Law had been made to fear exceedingly and to quake, 12, 18—21, but who had fled for refuge to the Gospel, to Jesus 12, 24; addressed to real Christians, members of God's Zion, who receive an eternal kingdom which will survive the removal of heaven and earth. They are grateful, wish to serve God and be faithful, and needs must serve God and endure, 12, 25—29. They are told how.

Instructions Christians Desire and Need

1. How to serve God acceptably
2. How to persevere

1

V. 1. With faith, God planted also brotherly love in the Christians' heart. To serve God acceptably, we must love those who are very dear to God, John 13, 35; 1 John (entire epistle). No matter how much inconvenience, effort, time, money, it may cost, this vital, indispensable virtue of brotherly love may not be disregarded or skimped.

Vv. 2. 3. Manifestations of brotherly love. Persecuted Christians rightly and wisely sought more healthful climates. Thus their brethren had opportunities to extend unselfish hospitality. Such opportunities come to us today. Take advantage of them. The strangers may not look very promising so far as rewarding or repaying you is concerned. Three men came to Abraham. He did not know them. Yet he entertained them most cheerfully and generously. They turned out to be angels and Jehovah Himself,

Gen. 18. May this consideration help to overcome any reluctance on your part. You never can tell what worthies you may have the privilege of entertaining in unpretentious strangers.

V. 3. Believers being members together, should suffer and weep together, 1 Cor. 12, 25 f.; Rom. 12, 15. What would you desire if you were a prisoner? A letter, a call, a word of cheer, a word of intercession with some person in authority, above all with the Lord? Remember the prisoners and all shut-ins in just that way. The Philippians remembered Paul, Phil. 4, 10. It may soon be your turn to suffer for His name's sake. Today the brother, tomorrow you, — a realization which will deepen your sympathy and should move you to fortify yourself against a similar fiery trial.

V. 4. Unlike the wicked who forbid to marry and would substitute free love for marriage, God holds the estate of matrimony in high regard. He Himself instituted it; Jesus honored it, John 2, 1—11. It is the foundation of the family, the home, the church, the state, of human society, a source of purest happiness, an effective means of curbing evil. You serve God by practising the virtues and works which reflect credit on this holy estate, by abhorring whatever would undermine, disrupt, desecrate it, such as defilement of the marriage bed, marital unfaithfulness, illicit sexual relations. The addition "But whoremongers," etc., is added because there was and is a tendency to condone sex offenses and aberrations as natural, to deceive with vain words, Eph. 5, 3—6. Hence v. 4b needs to be specifically stated.

V. 5. Your conversation, manner of life inclusive of disposition. 1 Tim. 6, 6—10. Here another reason: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." To love and cleave to Mammon and to be discontented would be giving God the lie, saying in effect: "I can place no confidence on Thy promise. I have to look to Mammon to provide for me." Do we know what we are doing when we allow love of money to stir, and even to dwell, in our hearts? Matt. 6, 24.

How necessary just these admonitions pertaining to acceptable service of God are today! The author of Hebrews knows our times, puts his finger on the sore spots, and prescribes the remedies.

2

Vv. 6—9 are instructions as to how to persevere in the one and only saving faith. The precious promise v. 5 b should enable us to say: v. 6 b. The constancy of Christians is menaced by fear of what man can do to them. Instances of this are given vv. 2. 3. From history, also current history (Russia), we may add, that man can torture Christians to death; from experience we know that man can ridicule and cause them grief in little mean ways too numerous to mention. But the Lord being our Helper, what, after all, can

man do that under God's gracious government will not redound to our benefit and prove to be a blessing? Matt. 10, 28. "Remember," etc. V. 7. Man did much evil to them, too. But believing the Lord's promises, they continued to bear witness to the very last. Were they deceived? Fix your eyes on the end of their walk, not on their death so much as to what their death led, on the crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. 4, 8; of life, Rev. 2, 10; of glory, 1 Pet. 5, 4. Such an end you surely desire. Therefore follow their faith. V. 8. Jesus Christ saved our fathers yesterday; He alone saves us today; and forever He is the Way to the Father, the only Way, John 14, 6. In Him alone was and is and will be salvation, Acts 4, 12.

Also false doctrine imperils the perseverance of Christians. Matt. 7, 15. Hence: v. 9. The name of false doctrines, false religions, is legion. Yet essentially they are one. The common denominator of them all is work-righteousness, denying altogether or minimizing man's sinfulness and Christ's merits, magnifying man's natural ability, man's glory. Therefore they are destructive of the Christian religion, a deadly poison. If you are carried about with these divers and strange doctrines, you will become unsettled and perverted in your faith. But you should seek that good thing, an established heart, which is the product of the Gospel of grace. The Law, too, is useful and necessary and must be ever retained. It reveals sin and God as a consuming fire to sinners. It is rule and norm of conduct. But only the Gospel reveals Christ, the Redeemer, the grace of God. Only grace establishes the heart.

Cling to the Law and the Gospel. Learn ever better to use and apply them properly. Concentrate on that, and you are spending your time well, making real progress, 2 Pet. 3, 18, attaining the goal, 1 Pet. 1, 9.

G. BIRKMANN

Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity

1 Tim. 4, 4—11

The so-called Pastoral Letters of St. Paul are an invaluable manual for Christian ministers, 1 Tim. 3, 15.

However, these letters are of vital interest to hearers also, imparting to them a better understanding and a deeper appreciation of the holy ministry. It is for the good of the hearers that God instructs his ministers. Moreover, from God's instructions to ministers, hearers are to learn much for their own lives. While ministers indeed are to be an example to believers, v. 12, the same divine standards of godliness apply to both. (Well to point out this.)

With this in mind, let us consider with deep interest what our text teaches concerning

"A Good Minister of Jesus Christ"

1. *He is nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine*
2. *He refutes error*
3. *He exercises himself unto godliness*
4. *He commands and teaches*

1

A) V. 6. "Words of faith" are the divine Gospel-truths. "Good doctrine," as opposed to error.—Timothy had long since been well instructed. 2 Tim. 1, 5; 2 Tim. 3, 15—17. Paul himself had instructed him. By the power of the Gospel, Timothy had attained the prime qualifications of a good minister, viz., a living faith in his Savior and holy consecration to His service. But as a good minister of Jesus Christ his inward life needed constant nurture and growth, and the means of such nurture and growth are the "words of faith and of good doctrine." 2 Pet. 1, 5; 3, 18; 1 Pet. 2, 2.

B) Apply this to all Christian ministers. The demands upon a modern pastor's time are very exacting. But neither the pastor nor his congregation must ever lose sight of this need of nurture and growth by constant study of, and meditation upon, the "words of faith." Undue curtailment of time for this certainly conflicts with the best interests of both the pastor and his hearers. Only by such nurture will the pastor remain and ever more become, "a good minister of Jesus Christ."

2

Vv. 1—3 false doctrines and practises are mentioned which had arisen even in the days of the apostles. These Timothy was to refute, to "put the brethren in remembrance," in mind, of the wickedness and danger of such teachings. Heresies are characterized as "fables." They are "mere abstract speculations without any connection with the historical realities and practical tendencies of Christianity" (Lange, *Commentary*). They are "profane," unspiritual (Luther), unholy, carnal. Their real origin, v. 1. Finally, heresies are described as "old wives' fables," i. e., as silly, foolish. Cf. 2 Tim. 2, 16. All these Timothy was to reject and refute as opposed to the saving truth and endangering the very salvation of hearers.

Application.—The Scriptures are replete with passages earnestly enjoining this very duty upon Christian ministers. In view of prevalent indifference with regard to doctrinal differences this duty becomes all the more imperative. Faithful performance of it may not make for popularity. Nevertheless it is a divine requisite of a good minister and faithful shepherd of the flock.

3

A) "Godliness" is piety toward God, a complete, cheerful, happy conformity with, and submission to, the will of God in faith and love.

B) "Exercise thyself." As the Greek athletes put forth great effort in training to become physically fit to win in their ancient contests, so the good minister of Jesus Christ (and every Christian) must strive for godliness, not only when this is a comparatively easy, convenient matter but also when this requires real effort, self-denial, loss of popularity, etc., v. 10 a.

C) Godliness is worth this effort, v. 8. Emphasize this over and against the false notion that godliness is a handicap for success in this life. Joseph, Daniel, modern examples. Above all, godliness has God's promise of the life which is to come. That is paramount. Matt. 16, 26. Hence exercising unto godliness is far more important than any bodily exercise, which promotes merely physical well-being.

D) Comfort in such striving, v. 10. The living God can, and according to his promise will, give to the striving good minister the crown of life. As God is the Savior of all men, His gracious will is actually and fully achieved in them that believe and accept. John 3, 16; 1 Tim. 2, 4; Matt. 10, 22; 2 Tim. 4, 8.

4

A) The divine truths, which by personal faith he believes, the good minister of Jesus Christ must teach others in all truth and purity, v. 11. By the Gospel-truths he must show his hearers the way to salvation. A good minister must never lose sight of his objective.

B) The good minister must also "command." As a good shepherd he must lead his flock. The divine authority of the Word should be recognized by both pastor and hearers. 1 Tim. 6, 17, "charge." Heb. 13, 17, "obey."

Conclusion. — V. 16. What an inducement for both pastors and hearers!

AUG. F. BERNTHAL

Reformation Festival

1 Cor. 3, 11—23

The Church is a temple under construction. The Sanballats are plotting to hinder the progress of building. Thus it was at Corinth, likewise in the age of the Reformation, and thus it is today. The temple will be completed. In the building of this temple we are to be laborers together with God, 1 Cor. 3, 9. The apostle gives each of us indispensable directions on

Building the Temple

He calls attention to

1. *The temple that is under construction*
2. *The foundation on which the temple is erected*
3. *The materials that are to be used*

1

Some of the most magnificent buildings in the world are temples and cathedrals. Solomon's Temple. The second Temple, as beautified by Herod, awed the disciples, Mark 13, 1. 2. Greek and Gothic architecture still awe us with their grandeur and beauty. "Ye are the temple of God," v. 16. The word employed by the apostle is not *ἱερόν*, but *ναός*, "used of the Temple at Jerusalem, but only of the sacred edifice (or sanctuary) itself, consisting of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies." (Thayer.) Ye are the temple of God, vv. 16. 17. As the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, Ex. 40, 35, and Solomon's Temple, 2 Chron. 5, 1. 2, so the Spirit of God dwells in you; cp. Eph. 2, 20 ff.; 2 Cor. 6, 16. "Know ye not?" (Text.) This fact is to be understood and appreciated. False conception in Luther's age of clergy and laity. The Church is not confined to the hierarchy, the Pope, priests, canonized saints, etc.; it is the communion of the saints, the whole number of believers.

Being members of this communion, we are not standing on the side-line and admiring the beauty of the temple; we are essential parts, living stones, within this temple, 1 Pet. 2, 5. 9. What a great distinction!

This temple is holy; sanctified, cleansed, by the blood of Christ, v. 17; Eph. 5, 25—27. Over that temple the Lord Himself stands guard, Is. 27, 3; Zech. 2, 8; Ps. 46. God utters the terrible threat: v. 17 a. Let us not by envy and strife and divisions, v. 3, by insistence on our own views and opinions, by false doctrine, destroy the temple of God, the Church of Christ. Woe to the Sanballats! Neh. 6.

2

Another very important consideration in building a temple is the foundation. The cathedral often calls forth admiration, but the foundation, hid in the earth, is forgotten. A foolish man builds his house on sand, the wise man on a rock. Ead's Bridge at St. Louis rests on solid masonry, sunk seventy feet below the river, and bed-rock.

What is the foundation on which God's temple is built? On what rock do you base your faith, your religion? On Peter? on human deeds and works of the Law? on the Golden Rule?

on the traditions, resolutions of councils and synods? That is the Corinthian mistake to base one's religion on Peter, Paul, Apollos, or on human wisdom and Greek philosophy, v. 22 and 1 ff.

V.11: "Other foundation can no man lay . . . Christ." The question of foundation is settled once and for all time. Jesus, the God-man, the Savior, our Prophet, Priest, and King, with His Word and His merit, is the one and only Foundation. Appeal to build faith on Jesus only and to follow the pattern of this foundation in holiness of life, Is. 28, 16; Matt. 7, 24; 16, 16—18.

3

The material that we use in building God's temple should be carefully selected, v. 12 ff. Two kinds of building material are mentioned, the one: "gold, silver, precious stones"; the other: "wood, hay, stubble." The material must be most durable and substantial since the building will be put to a severe test. There will come a "day" of testing, of revealing, v. 13. That day will not dawn like a spring morning, with budding blossoms and songs of birds. The horizon on that day of trial will be ablaze with fire. It is not the fire of an imaginary purgatory, but Judgment Day fire, 2 Thess. 1, 8; 2 Pet. 3, 7. 10. 12. On that day the wood, hay, and stubble will be burned, and the temple into whose construction such material has gone will be in danger of collapsing.

The Corinthians were in danger of mixing the wood, hay, and stubble of Greek wisdom, party spirit, admiration of men, a loose morality, etc., in building the temple, v. 18 ff. The Christians of Luther's day were offered the perishable material of tradition, resolution of councils, worship of saints, indulgences, work-righteousness. Today the combustible stubble and religious rubbish of gaudy hypotheses, the blatant heresies of Modernism and of religious cranks is being dumped on our building site. Beware! Heaven and earth shall pass away, and all the pretensions, fallacies, and heresies will be exposed as such. The Word of God alone will abide forever. The solid, imperishable Word of the living God is the only material we should and must employ. That is the material the "wise master builder," v. 10, St. Paul, used. Luther.

You have the high prerogative of being God's coworker in building His temple, His holy Church. Use, then, the right material, the living Word of God.—Close with an admonition to oppose false doctrine in every form, because error never builds, but always destroys, the Church. Remain loyal to God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure.

H. W. BARTELS