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## Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections

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und zu seinen Jüngern redete, da standen etliche dabei, die so lange lebten, bis das große Gericht über die ungläubigen Juden kam. Dies Gericht ist heute noch deutlich zu sehen. Und dies Gericht ist ein Zeichen und Anfang des allergrößten Gerichts am Ende der Welt.

Christ, nimm dein Kreuz auf dich und folge Christo nach! Dann trifft dich dieses Gericht nicht. Lied 280, 1. 7. *J. A. N i m b a c h.*

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## Outlines on the Eisenach Epistle Selections.\*

### First Sunday in Advent.

HEB. 10, 19—25.

At the portal of the new church-year we to-day stand in solemn awe, aware of the uncertainty of health and life and wondering what lies ahead of us. It is especially the spiritual side of our existence which is the object of our solicitous concern. Will the new year always find us firmly anchored in the wounds of Jesus, constant in faith, fervent in love, a temple of the Holy Spirit, ready to obey the final summons whenever it may come?

As thoughts of this nature surge into our minds, we are desirous of receiving a message from God which will be helpful to us at the beginning of another year's pilgrimage. In our text there is a word of admonition from the Lord which, while important at any time, is strikingly appropriate and pertinent to-day. It urges us to adopt

#### Three Resolutions

as we look into the future:—

1. *To cling to Jesus in true faith;*
2. *To confess our faith without wavering;*
3. *To admonish each other to be rich in good works.*

#### 1.

The author of Hebrews is writing these hortatory sentences standing, as it were, before a splendid painting which he has just finished, showing Jesus as the true divine High Priest, as superior to the priests of the Old Covenant as an object is to the shadow it casts, as the Creator is to the creature. Having summarized in vv. 19—21 what he has taught on this all-important topic, he now draws practical conclusions from this teaching. Since the things mentioned are great truths, great realities, what must we resolve to do?

Resolve to go to Christ in true faith, he says, v. 22. It is merely

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\* It is the intention to furnish English outlines on the so-called Eisenach Epistle-lessons in the ensuing church-year.—EDITORS.

a figurative way of saying, **Accept Christ as your Savior, boldly, unhesitatingly put your trust in Him.**

Many people will not go to Christ because they try to make themselves believe they do not need Him. Cf. the Pharisee in the Temple, Luke 18, 9 ff. Others will not go to Him because they feel there are more interesting and attractive things beckoning them—the pleasures and riches of the world. Cf. the rich young man, Mark 10, 17 ff. Still others hesitate to draw near because they think their sins are too shocking, too black. Cf. Judas. Let us be like Zacchaeus, who went to Jesus although oppressed by a deep sense of his sinfulness.

How is it possible for sinners to come to Christ, the Holy One? His blood has been sprinkled on our hearts and has cleansed them so that we no longer need have an evil conscience, v. 22b. The shedding of His blood has paid our debts, unworthy though we were. Besides, there is the pure water of Baptism, in which He has conferred on us full forgiveness, v. 22c. We can be sure that, just as Baptism is a reality, so the forgiveness, too, is real.

Considering these divine measures and guarantees, there should be found in us not a weak faith, but full assurance of faith, v. 22.—Let the new year be one in which we are characterized by a strong faith.

## 2.

After having placed our hearts in the right relation to Christ, we shall have to consider the next resolution proposed to us: to confess our faith without wavering, v. 23. Professing our belief is an act which flows naturally, spontaneously, out of faith; that we still have to be admonished to engage in it is due to our sinful flesh. Cp. the words of Jesus, Matt. 12, 34: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and the words of Paul, 2 Cor. 4, 13: "We believe and therefore speak."

Exalting the riches offered us in Christ is something we can do without fear of misleading people. One hesitates to recommend certain investments because their security is not above question. In speaking to people of Christ, one does not have to fear that a collapse of the market, or an unforeseen drought, or a sudden war, or a virulent epidemic will make the treasures one recommends lose their value. "He is faithful that promised," v. 23. God's infallible Word guarantees the utter reliability of the Gospel proclamation.

If the early Christians, who through confession of their faith often jeopardized liberty, possession of their property and life, were urged to confess Christ without wavering, how much more should we gladly testify to the faith that is in us when we, at least normally, can do so without any peril!

If our profession is rather weak, is it not because the fire in our heart is not burning so brightly as it should? Let the new year be one of courageous confession.

## 3.

The final resolution which we are urged to make refers to our duty to our fellow-Christians; we are admonished to exhort them to become rich in good works, v. 24. Note that what is here inculcated is a special manifestation of brotherly love. Can we confer a greater favor on a Christian brother than leading him into ways of godliness and charity? Before we admonish a fellow-Christian in this respect, we must of course show *ourselves* diligent in well-doing. The parable of the Mote and the Beam here has its application, Matt. 7, 3 ff.

In order to be able to admonish each other, we should not forsake our assemblies, our meetings, the services of our Church. The main reason of our assembling together is of course the hearing and learning of the Word. But the reason given here must not be overlooked either. When we meet, we have an opportunity to exert a good influence on each other. Let the topic of our conversation be not merely the weather or the political election.

Remember, the day is approaching, v. 25. This may be the last time that we meet to begin a new church-year. Let this move us to take these matters seriously. Hence let the new year be one of mutual admonition.

Having these resolutions in our heart and carrying them out, we shall find the new church-year to be a blessed period of our life, connecting us ever more closely with Jesus Christ, our High Priest, who is the same yesterday and to-day and forever. W. ARNDT.

