

3-1-1961

Homiletics: Outlines on the Old Testament Eisenach Series

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Recommended Citation

Hohenstein, Herbert E. (1961) "Homiletics: Outlines on the Old Testament Eisenach Series," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 32, Article 17.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol32/iss1/17>

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HOMILETICS

Outlines on the Old Testament Eisenach Series

By HERBERT E. HOHENSTEIN

EASTER DAY

Ps. 118:14-24

This is the day! This is the great Christian feast day, and that's why the psalm before us is so fitting. For its theme is

This Is the Day!

I. On which God's great hand acted (vv. 15, 16)

A. It had to act because the hands of our first parents reached up to take the forbidden fruit from the tree. By that act mankind ever since has been in the hands of sickness, suffering, and death.

B. And act it did! That great hand of God created the wonder of wonders, a baby in the Virgin's womb. That hand of God was active in the life of Christ, healing diseased bodies, raising lifeless bodies, thus bringing God's rule over the powers of hell and darkness. And then the hand of God effectually went to work when Christ's hands were fixed to the cross to loose us from our sins. Still that mighty arm was not finished with its task. Easter dawned, and that strong hand of God reached down, rolled back the rock from Christ's tomb, and raised His dead Son to new and never-ending life. From the silent and gloomy halls of death, God called forth His Son to the light of endless life.

II. On which the rejected Stone became the Cornerstone (v. 22)

A. He seemed such a small, worthless, unglamorous stone. "What good thing can come out of Nazareth?" The Jews of His day stumbled over Jesus just because He was so common, earthy, so very frail and human. They expected a God whose pomp, power,

and manifest glory would leave them open-mouthed and wide-eyed. Instead, He was born in a stable, rode as their King on a donkey, and said He was worse off economically than the birds and the foxes. The chosen people did not choose to look down to such ordinary things; they were looking up for spectacular things. Therefore they stumbled over the lowly Jesus. They rejected Him, even to the point of nailing Him to the cross.

B. But on this day Christ became the Cornerstone.

1. The stone went rolling from His vacated grave. He burst the bonds of death. Now He has indeed become the great living Stone who has rolled over and crushed to powder death, devil, and hell, the great living Stone who has crushed the life out of our sins. They are dead, those sins of ours, and no longer have strength or breath to condemn us. (Cf. Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7)

2. By breaking out of His stony grave, Christ has become the Cornerstone of His church. This Easter miracle is the foundation stone of our faith. For a dead Christ means an empty faith, sins still very much alive to accuse and torment us, victorious death. If Christ is still in a Palestinian grave, then life isn't worth living, pain isn't worth bearing, and death isn't safe dying. But He did come back, and now our faith and the church rest on a cornerstone that can't be budged.

III. On which we remind ourselves really to celebrate the Easter Victory

A. Easter dare never become simply a day of high emotions, a day when our spirits tingle and soar to the stirring victory hymns,

only to allow all to be forgotten as we settle back again into the comfortable and pleasant routine of our daily lives and sins.

B. No, Easter is the oxygen of the Christian. He lives and breathes Easter.

1. In his confident faith, with the poet of this psalm, he joyfully shouts: "I shall not die, but I shall live!" (v. 17) This faith gives a fresh bounce to his walk and brightens every sorrow. This faith gives him the courage he needs to live cheerfully and calmly.

2. In his holy living (vv. 19, 20). With his fellow saints this glad Easter Day the Christian enters the gates of God's house to sing his praise to God, who has forever halted the relentless march of decay by the raising of Christ. And in the midst of his worshipping fellow saints the Christian gets the power he needs to become a better "church of the Spirit" during the week. He goes to church to be a better church, a better temple of the Holy Ghost, filled ever more and more with holy desires and impulses. Only thus do you truly celebrate Easter.

QUASIMODOGENITI

GENESIS 32:22-31

These Bible words tell us what happened
At the Brook

I. *Jabbok was the name*

It is called the *ez Zerka* today. That means "the blue." This is probably an accurate description of how Jacob felt on that night long ago when he crossed the Jabbok, mighty blue. For one thing, he was alone. For another, he was worried, worried about his brother Esau. Would he still be angry and hateful and in a murderous mood when they met? Jacob was also worried about God. How did the Lord feel toward him after his wicked and wily deception of Esau? Did He still love him? Would He still bless him and be with him? Yes, Jacob probably felt mighty blue by the blue brook, Jabbok.

II. *There was a wrestling match (v. 24)*

A. It was a tough match

1. For Jacob

a. This was a long bout. It lasted all the night. Not just a few brief moments but an all-night battle. It is safe to say that this wasn't Jacob's first wrestling match or that he engaged in this sport just a few times a year. You don't wrestle all night unless you're in good shape from a lot of hard wrestling.

b. This was a painful bout. These two wrestlers weren't faking or playing games. This wasn't a typical television match meant to look vicious and bone-crushing but in reality just good faking. Nor was this match meant to entertain. These men were playing for keeps. This bout cost Jacob a dislocated thighbone.

2. For us.

a. You, too, often have long wrestlings with God. Perhaps for months or even years you have been grappling with God in prayer for the thing so dear to your heart and so desperately needed by your dear ones, for things you are sure you must have for peace and contentment. But the match goes on. Who will outlast and outwrestle whom? At times you are so downcast and discouraged. Your prayer arms ache and are fatigued from all that wrestling, and you are tempted to quit and to acknowledge defeat.

b. You, too, often have known pain in wrestling with God. Perhaps it isn't your thighbone that gets dislocated in these wrestlings, but it surely seems that your heart is being broken.

B. It was a match that Jacob refused to lose (v. 26).

1. Was it right for Jacob to talk like this: "God, I am going to hang on to You, wrap my wrestling arms about You until You give me what I want, Your blessing"? Was it right for Jacob to be so bold with God?

a. Yes, since Isaac had pronounced God's blessing upon him (Gen. 27:28, 29). It is true, Jacob got this blessing by sinful trickery, but that deception did not destroy the validity and effectiveness of the blessing. Or had it? That was Jacob's worry, and that is why he wrestled so with the Lord until God did bless him and thus verify and confirm the blessing that Father Isaac had pronounced upon him years before.

b. Yes, since God Himself had promised to bless Jacob (Gen. 28:10-15). In a sense, Jacob was simply trying to wrestle from God what the Lord Himself had already given him, the divine blessing. Thus Jacob was insisting that God keep His promise.

2. Can you be a Jacob with God?

a. Of course you can. For when you say, "God, I am not going to let You go unless You bless me," you are simply demanding from the Lord what He has already done for you. For what does Paul write in the opening lines of his Letter to the Ephesians? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *has* blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing." In Christ, God has already blessed us, blessed us with pardon, resurrection, the eternal joy and life and glory of heaven. This blessing you can demand from God. You can say, "God, I won't let You go unless You forgive me." He already has, by the death and resurrection of Jesus, His Son. You can say, "God, I won't let You go or let go of life unless You raise me from my coffin." He already has when He brought Christ back from His vainly guarded grave. You can say, "God, I won't let You go unless You bring me to heaven." He already has when He raised Jesus on high 40 days after His rending of the tomb.

b. But you can't insist that God keep His promises at precisely the time and in the precise manner His people desire. This is tempting God. Therefore although the Lord promises us His protection, we never have the

right to demand it from Him in our way. We do not merit it simply because He has promised it.

III. *Jacob received a new name (vv. 27, 28)*

1. He needed one. For Jacob means "take hold of." This underscores Jacob's selfishness. Jacob—the name means "to defraud." And that is precisely what Jacob did: he defrauded his brother Esau of the birthright blessing.

2. He got a new name, Israel. That means "you have fought with God and won." The point is that if one wins out over the mighty God, certainly one is more than a victor over men and over all misery.

3. And what about you? Like Jacob, you, too, have had a change of names. It happened in your Baptism. In that act you received a new name, the child of God. You became an Israelite according to the spirit. And remember, the name "Israel" means "one who has fought with, and won over, God." If you have fought and won out over God, how can any sin or sorrow conquer you?

IV. *Jacob saw God's face (v. 30)*

Despite the fact that he saw God's face, Jacob lived. You and I live precisely *because* we have seen God's face—the face of God in Jesus Christ. That's what Christ is: God's face in our flesh. It is a face lined and furrowed from all our temptations and griefs, a face twisted from the torture of His Passion and cross, a face with the mask of death, a face full of new life again. We look at the face of God in Christ, and because of that look we live.

MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

PSALM 23

This is

A Poem That Flattens and Fortifies

I. *It flattens*

A. This is a fact and teaching of Psalm 23 which is often overlooked. Everyone thinks

of this psalm as a comfort poem, a poem that lifts and fortifies weak hearts and trembling spirits. And it is just that. But it also flattens. It takes the starch right out of our proud self-reliance. It deflates us, forces us to recognize and face up to our frailties and inabilities.

B. How so? The moment that you call God your Shepherd you confess that you are a sheep, and think what that means! It means that you are not too intelligent. It isn't "wise as sheep" but "wise as owls." It means that we are not too strong. Whoever heard of someone saying, "He's strong as a sheep?" No, it's strong as an ox, or a lion; sheep are very frail. It means that we are not too holy. What are the adjectives we often use in connection with sheep? Black, or straying.

C. Of course, we say with might and main, "The Lord is my Shepherd." But then realize how such a confession flattens you, takes the starch right out of your pride and self-reliance. For sheep are stupid, weak, and straying creatures. They need a shepherd, and so do we.

II. *It fortifies*

How this poem lifts and fortifies us for life's uncertainties, lacks, and sufferings!

A. The Lord is our Shepherd. And who is this Lord?

1. The Lord, who became a sheep with us. The Shepherd became a sheep when God became a man in Christ. Know the comfort of this. For the Shepherd experienced how hard it is to be a good sheep, how full of temptation and suffering is the life of a frail sheep. He knows how tempting it is to be a black sheep. Christ can say, "I know My sheep, know personally from My own agonizing experiences the difficulties of the sheep." When you yourself have gone through trouble, you are not so ready to criticize, or to find fault, and to be irritated with, the person who is troubled by the same

sin you have had to fight, the same suffering you have had to endure. So it is with Christ. He doesn't shake His head in amazement or disgust over you when you stray or are weak in suffering. His is a sympathetic understanding, for He knows. He became a sheep with us.

2. He is called a Lamb, a lamb like that Passover Lamb by whose lifeblood the Israelites were spared from death in Egypt. Even so our Passover Lamb was sacrificed on the cross to deliver us from eternal death. There is a big difference, however. The Passover Lamb was not revived again. Jesus Christ was!

3. He can be compared to a goat. The Old Testament describes the ritual of the goat chosen to bear the sins of the people away from the camp and out into the desert. There in the desert the goat died with the people's sins. Even so Jesus Christ walked out of the city of Jerusalem bearing our sins upon His back to the cross. He died, and our sins died with Him.

B. The Lord is *our* Shepherd. That means that He is a shepherd of each one of us. He does not simply shepherd statistics. He shepherds sheep, each sheep. He calls us by name and not number. Each sheep is loved; each sheep is important; each sheep is famous and noticed in the eyes of the Shepherd. You'll never be lost sight of or swallowed up in the crowd.

C. Therefore you won't lack a thing the Shepherd knows you need. This doesn't mean that you won't lack anything that you want; this would be a dangerous thing. It would be like a three-year-old insisting that his father give him a butcher knife to play with. The father says No only because he loves the child. And even so our good Shepherd must sometimes say No to us, to our desires, only because He loves us. But since He is the Good Shepherd, whatever He gives us must also be good for us.

D. Your Shepherd regulates your diet (v.2). After the sheep have filled their stomachs on the lush, green grass, the shepherd compels them to lie down and rest awhile lest the foolish flock in their desire for more food rush off to another pasture and bloat themselves and become terribly sick. The shepherd knows how to regulate the diet of his sheep. And so does our Good Shepherd. He knows when to give us the green grass of joy and when to make us eat on the parched meadows of suffering. He knows how much we should have of both prosperity and joy. He is the daily dietitian and not you.

E. Your Shepherd leads you beside restful waters (v.2). These are quiet streams and not torrents where the current is dangerous or icy. He leads us by cool pools of stillness where we can find safe refreshment and life again. However, the rest that our Shepherd gives us is not an end in itself; it is a means to refresh us and to restore us for a renewed walking on the hard and difficult paths of righteousness.

F. He leads us in straight paths for His name's sake (v.3). This means that the Shepherd, not the sheep, is alone responsible for their walking on holy paths. He is both the Leader on these paths and the one who enables them by His power to walk those paths of righteousness. The comfort, of course, is obvious. If our staying on the path that leads to eternal life is in the strong hands of the Shepherd and not in our weak and frail hands, then surely we can never fall away; surely no one can pluck us out of His hand.

G. He is with us in death (v.4). What a comfort to know that as we approach the valley of death, the Shepherd still leads us, still goes before us and points for us the way. Wouldn't it be a horrible experience if at the entrance of this valley our Good Shepherd would say, "I am sorry, My sheep, but this is one path I do not know. I have

never walked it before and therefore I cannot lead you." So we would have to stumble into this valley with fear, not knowing the way. But this is not the case; the Good Shepherd still leads us in the valley of death, for He has walked into it and out again for our salvation. He leads us with confidence into this dark valley and out of it again to the light of endless life. With His rod the Good Shepherd beats off our enemies, the devil and his wolf-pack of evil, who would try to snatch us into the den of hell. With His staff, His Shepherd's crook, the Good Shepherd keeps us on the path that leads through the valley of death to the fold of heaven.

H. Our Shepherd spreads a feast before us (v.5). The picture here is of the shepherd who prepares good and safe grazing land for his sheep. He sees to it that the land is cleared of sharp rocks and of brambles that would hurt his sheep. He sees to it that the pasture land is as safe as possible from the sheep's natural enemies—the wolf, the bear, the snake, and the lion. And even so Jesus, our good Shepherd, has prepared for us the good and safe grazing land of each tomorrow. He is already out there in the future preparing that pasture for us.

I. He pours oil over our heads. This is undoubtedly that potion of fermented hemp or barley mixed with healing herbs which the shepherd pours over the bruised head and sides and back of his sheep at the end of the day in order to heal their hurts and wounds. Even so our Good Shepherd continually pours over us the healing medicine of His Word with all of its wonderful comforts and promises.

J. He gives us an invigorating cup ("My cup runs over"). The picture here is of the tonic which the shepherd often gives to revive and invigorate his weary sheep. Even so our Lord gives us the invigorating cup of His Word, His Word so crammed full of those

precious promises that once again revive our fainting spirits.

K. He pursues us with His goodness and mercy. The word translated "follow" in the English text is a rather weak translation of the Hebrew verb. It means "to pursue," and that is precisely what our Good Shepherd does, chases us wherever we go—not to punish us for our sins but to bestow upon us His goodness and mercy. No matter where we go or where we are, we simply cannot escape from this loving pursuit of our loving God.

L. We'll live in His house forever. Right now, our life is like being in the narthex of a beautiful cathedral. Even the narthex causes us to stand in awe and wonder because of its beauty. And we conclude, if the narthex is so beautiful, how much more the nave of the church! In this beautiful world we live in we are only in the narthex of God's church, and in death we pass from the narthex into the nave, and then what beauty we shall behold in the house of our God forever.

JUBILATE

ISAIAH 40:26-31

If there is one thing you cannot do with God, it's to classify Him. For as this passage points out

He's in a Class by Himself

I. *Who is? The Holy One (v. 25)*

This description underscores

A. God's dedication. That's what the word "holy" means: "dedicated." For example, the Communion chalice has been dedicated, set aside exclusively for use in the Lord's Supper. God is dedicated, has set Himself aside exclusively for you, for your preservation, for your salvation. So dedicated was God the Father to you that He gave up His dearest treasure, the jewel of His heart, His own Son—for your eternal joy. So dedicated was God the Son that He gave you

not simply presents from Himself but Himself as the present, His life laid down and taken up again, so that you might have the forgiveness and fellowship of God forever. So dedicated is the Spirit that He spends all His time giving you Christ, keeping you with Christ, and making sure that you stay on the path to heaven.

B. God is holy; that means, secondly, that He is unique. And why is God so different? Merely because He is so high and mighty? No, because He is so forgiving (Is. 55:6-9). These words prove that God's uniqueness lies in His constant willingness to forgive. We often think that God's thoughts and ways are most clearly seen and felt in the sufferings He sends us. Not true! His unsearchableness lies primarily in the pardon He keeps lavishing upon us. It is not in the pains that He sends but in the pardon He bestows so freely, gladly, and everlastingly that God is unique. And it is this uniqueness that should cause us to shake our heads in amazement—His everlasting willingness to forgive.

II. *And here is why*

A. He is the Creator of the stars. And what a Creator! We are told by the psalmist that the heavens are the work of God's fingers. So strong is this mighty God of ours that He scarcely exerted Himself in making this great universe.

B. He is the Preserver of the stars. God didn't simply set the stars in motion and then leave for an eternal vacation, letting them shift and wander through space on their own. No, this is what He does: Like a shepherd He calls the stars out each night to their heavenly pasture; He even calls them by name and is concerned if just one from this heavenly herd is missing.

C. This Shepherd of the stars is also the Shepherd of Israel. Israel, of course, refused to believe this, for the people kept saying that all their troubles were concrete proof that God wasn't at all aware of them or concerned about them. He had lost sight of His

people. But the Lord replies, "How can you talk like that? If I don't lose count of a single star in My countless heavenly flock, if I give such individual care and attention to a lifeless star, how could I ever lose sight of you, My living and beloved children? Could I cherish and love a lifeless mass more than you?" What a comfort these words are to us! For we are sometimes tempted to say, "My way of suffering is hidden from the Lord. He doesn't know how I am afflicted. He has overlooked and forgotten about me." Do you really think you are of less value in God's sight than a star? To what star did God ever say, "I give you my only Son to be your Savior"? To what star did He ever say, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered"? To what star did He ever say, "I've tattooed you on the palm of My hand"? It isn't to stars that God speaks promises like these but to you. Then how can you say that God has overlooked or ignored you?

D. He doesn't run down or wear out (v. 28).

1. This holds true of God's love. He once said, "I have loved you with an *everlasting* love." He also indicated that the mountains, those towering, majestic symbols of strength and permanency, would go before His love leaves you. Have you seen any mountains taking a stroll outside your home lately? Then, no matter what leaves—your health, your wealth, your loved ones, or your very life—God's love is still with you, the love that sent Christ to a cross and then raised Him from the grave for your salvation. God said you will be able to break the law of day and night, you will be able to stop the sun from rising, before you can cause His love to set upon you. You'll be able to stop the shades of night from falling before you can fall from His everlasting arms. Since the arms of Christ were once raised and stretched on a cross for the blotting out of your sins, you are in God's arms forever.

2. This holds true of God's power.

a. This is what God was saying to Israel: "I did not sink down weary or exhausted after My creative activity. I didn't spend My energy after rescuing you from Egypt; I flicked Pharaoh and his hosts off Me as a man flicks away a fly. Therefore, don't ever get the foolish notion that My power to help and save is diminishing and running down. I haven't weakened one iota. I am still at full strength for you."

b. And even so God still speaks to us. God, who parted the Red Sea for His hemmed-in Hebrews long ago and made for them a path of safety from their enemies, can still do the same for you as you are surrounded by your sufferings. He can part the waters before you and make a way of escape.

c. Yet God gives this power only to

(1) The faint and exhausted (v. 29). This is the point. You cannot pour water into a glass already full. Nor can God pour His power into people full of their own. First they must be emptied of the foolish reliance upon themselves before they can count on God. And suffering does this emptying (2 Cor. 12:9, 10). You see, your sufferings are God's way of saying, "You still need a little more emptying of your own power before I can pour in My strength. Then you will be invincible."

(2) Those who wait for it (vv. 30-31)

(a) This is what God was saying to Israel: "Look, stop all your running, your scurrying to and fro in frantic but futile efforts to get out of your messes and miseries. All your own schemes and devices won't work. For even at best, no matter how hard and long you run, you are still going to drop down utterly exhausted and done in. For even youths and young men faint and become weary. No, the solutions to your problems are not in running but in waiting on Me—waiting with the sureness and confidence of those who watch for the morning.

They know it is coming. There is no doubt about it. Even so you know that I am coming in My good time and according to My carefully and lovingly laid plans for your benefit, coming to rescue you from all your afflictions. Therefore wait. And if you wait with that hope, you will find your strength to endure renewed, you will get the wings of an eagle and rise and fly above all your suffering. Then indeed you will run and not be weary, you will walk and not be faint. For only waiters are good runners."

(b) Is it just to Israel that God speaks these words? Of course not. He still speaks them—to us. You, too, have your wings. Start flying.

CANTATE

PSALM 98

The theme of this day and of this sermon is

Sing

I. Sing

That's easy to do when life's a lark and a breeze and one's troubles are few and far between. But when you are deep in distress, then singing comes a bit harder. It's sighing and not singing that issues from your lips. Can you sing in suffering? Remember, Paul and Silas did when they were in the jail at Philippi and their backs were bruised and bleeding from the whipping they had just received. Perhaps it would be easier to sing if you would remember that thunderstorms bring the necessary rain. Were it not for the storms that bring refreshing rain, the plants would wither and dry. And even so the storms of suffering that bring pain and affliction bring with them the necessary rain to refresh and to reinvigorate the wilting, drooping plant of our faith.

II. Sing unto the Lord

A. The Hebrew word designates the God of promise, the God who once made a marriage promise to Israel, pledging Himself to be her husband forever.

B. Even so God has married us in the

baptismal rite, and what a love our heavenly Husband bestows upon us! It is not just a love of words—but of actions! God so loved us that He gave, and gave not just honeyed words, not just love letters dripping with beautiful phrases. No, God gave His only Son into death and then raised Him to new and never-ending life, that we might have pardon and be assured of the gladness of heaven.

III. Sing a new song

A. This was the old song: "Good Lord, deliver us from devil, death, hell, all our sins and sufferings."

B. This is the new song: "God has delivered us by the life, death, resurrection, home-going, present prayers and rule and future return of Jesus Christ." By these events and through this Son, God had rescued us from every evil of body and life for the joys of the world to come.

C. This is the only kind of song you can sing, for after all, you are a *new* person. That's what St. Paul writes: "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." This means, of course, that the old things have passed away, the old sins, the old fears, the old hates, the old goals. How does St. Paul put it? "If you have been raised with Christ, set your longings on the things above where Christ sits on the right hand of God." We remember, however, that even though we are new creatures plenty of the old man still remains. This is said for our comfort lest we be depressed and give way to despair over our apparent inability ever completely to master our sinful selves.

IV. Why?

A. Because God has done marvelous things. This word "marvelous" is used elsewhere in the Old Testament to describe God's making and preserving of His world and of His creatures. It also refers to His marvelous rescue of His people from Egypt and at the Red Sea. Above all, it refers to that child born of a virgin. This Immanuel is called

Wonderful, Counselor. Christ is the supreme wonder, for by Him we don't have to wonder about our sins any more. Are they forgiven? Will God hold them against us? By this wonderful Child of Mary we know that our sins are pardoned. Now we don't wonder any more about death. Will it claim us and chain us forever? Of course, it won't. For the wonderful Child of Mary has done a most marvelous thing. He has burst the bonds of death and triumphed over the tomb! And to us He says, "Because I live, you shall live also." There is no doubt about it.

B. God's right hand and holy arm have obtained the victory. There are some 250 references to the hand of God in the Bible. Most of these stress the might and mercy of that arm in delivering the Hebrew people from Egypt. The bolstering conclusion, of course, is this: If that great arm of God accomplished such a rescue in the past, nothing is too difficult for it in the future. With the prophet we too say: "Behold, the Lord's arm has not been shortened that it cannot save!" It is not too short to reach and rescue you from your deepest sin or suffering. It is you who are often short on the necessary faith to take hold of that rescuing arm.

1. There is protection in God's arm. With the prophet we say, "In the shadow of His hand He has hid me." Yet you are not just under God's hand; you are on it. For He has carved and engraved you on His palm and indelibly tattooed you there. You are united with the great God Himself. Can God be conquered? Of course not. And since you are His, neither can you. Can God die? Of course not. And since you are His, neither can you.

2. There is correction in God's hand. Peter writes, "Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand." Exaltation will, of course, follow in due time; that is, when we are precisely ripe for it and not before. God knows best when to remove His correcting

hand. It is interesting to note also that Saint Peter in this passage (1 Peter 5:6,7) tells us to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand by throwing all of our worries upon Him. This is one of the greatest prides of all: to worry, to take into our hands a responsibility which belongs to God alone—the care and government of our future.

3. God's arm has obtained the victory. It certainly has! The arms of Jesus were cruelly stretched on the cross and then folded in death. On Easter, God's strong arm reached down and revived the dead Christ. By these acts God's mighty arm has obtained the victory, our victory over Satan, sin, and hell.

C. God has remembered His love and faithfulness (v.3). You see, it is not your forgiven sins which God remembers but His love and faithfulness. It must be this way because of Christ Jesus, the Cloud, Christ, the thick Cloud, that stands constantly between God's searching eye and our sin. Because of that Cloud God does not see our sins, He forgives.

D. Because this is the way you give the Spirit to one another (Eph. 5:18, 19). A good singing church is a good Spirit-giving church. We do not sing on Sundays simply to entertain ourselves or to have the thrill of singing; no, we sing to one another "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in our hearts," in order that we might help one another to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

E. Because you cannot do less than creation (vv. 7-9).

1. Why is the world singing? Because the Lord is coming, not just to judge but to deliver, to rescue His world from slavery to death (Rom. 8:19-21).

2. The world is singing. Can we do less? For we, too, with the world, will be set free when Jesus, the Judge and Deliverer, comes. Therefore sing!

Richmond Heights, Mo.