

Underneath

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that believers find unwavering security and comfort in the everlasting arms of God, which uphold and sustain them beneath all trials and through death.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 33:27, Psalm 91:1, John 14:19, Psalm 18:10, Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 121:3, Hebrews 13:5, Psalm 46:1

Topics: "God's Providence", "Divine Protection", "Faith and Assurance"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound comfort found in the biblical promise that 'underneath are the everlasting arms.' He encourages believers to trust in God's sustaining power beneath every trial, fear, and uncertainty, including death itself. Drawing from Scripture and vivid imagery, Spurgeon reveals how God's eternal strength is the firm foundation of the Church and individual faith, offering assurance and rest to all who abide in Him.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"Underneath are the everlasting arms." Deuteronomy 33:27.

GOD surrounds His children on all sides—they dwell in Him. The passage before us shows that the Lord is above, for we read, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the Heaven to help you, and in His excellency on the sky." Assuredly He is around them, for, "The eternal God is your refuge." And He is before them, for, "He shall thrust out the enemy from before you; and shall say, Destroy them." Here, according to the text, the Lord is also under His saints, for, "Underneath are the everlasting arms." "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations," and by You we are surrounded everywhere, as the earth is by the atmosphere—

"Within Your circling power I stand. On every side I find Your hand. Awake, asleep, at home, abroad, I am surrounded still with God."

The verse which contains our text should be interpreted somewhat after this fashion—"The eternal God is your dwelling place, or your rest, and underneath are the everlasting arms." The parallel passage is that verse in the Song wherein the bride exclaims, "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand does embrace me." The soul has come to its resting place in God and feels itself to be supported by the Divine

strength. The heart has learned to abide in Christ Jesus to go no more out, but to lean on His bosom both day and night. It is somewhat in the condition of Noah's dove which, when weary, was about to drop into the destroying waters, but Noah put out his hand and plucked her to him into the ark. And when she was all safe, in the hollow of his hands, held by her preserver with a firm but tender grasp, she found in that place a refuge which surrounded her and upheld her from below. The hands covered her on all sides and came beneath her, too. Even thus, the hand of God sustains all those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I am going, however, to take the words just as they stand in our own authorized version and to consider them apart from the context. I ask your most careful consideration of them, for they must be very full of meaning and very emphatic in their force. The words are placed at the end of Moses' song and they are its crown and climax. He had wound himself up to the highest pitch of poetic excitement and spiritual fervor—and this passage is the result. He had spoken grandly, before, concerning the separate tribes and the words which fell from his lips are unspeakably rich. But now he is about to close and, therefore, he pours forth his loftiest strains and utters full and deep meanings—the ripest and choicest fruit of a lifetime of communion with God! As our Lord ascended to Heaven blessing His disciples, so did His servant Moses, before climbing to Pisgah, pour out a torrent of benedictions, full and deep, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

It is not possible, therefore, that the language can be too greatly prized. The words mean all that we can make them mean! The nectar of their consolation is altogether inexhaustible! May God the Holy Spirit help us to weigh and measure them and then distil their inner sense and drink of the spiced wine of His pomegranate. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." I shall handle the text in this fashion. Where? "Underneath." What? "The everlasting arms." When? They are underneath us now and always and if it is so, what then?

I. First let us attend to the question—WHERE? "Underneath." Now, "underneath," is a region into which we cannot see. We glance down and the dead cold earth stops our gaze. When we are heavy in spirit we fix our eyes upon the ground and look, and look, and look—but even an eagle's glance cannot see far below. We scarcely can peer beneath the thin green sod—the bottom of a grave is well near the full range of mortal vision. The underworld is mysterious. We associate the subterranean with all that is dark and hidden and, because of this, it is often regarded as terrible. A man

scarcely ever fears that which he can see in proportion to his dread of what he cannot see. Therefore, our alarm at the "underneath."

What may be underneath us when we leave this sunlit region for the grave's overshadowing vault? What will happen to us in eternity? Life will soon end—what is death? What is the immediate result of death? What shall we feel when we are traversing those unknown tracks and finding our way to the Judgment Seat of God? Not knowing except that little which has been revealed to us, we are all too apt to conjecture terrors and invent horrors—and so to begin trembling concerning that which we do not understand! What a comfort it is to be told by the Voice of Inspiration that, "Underneath are the everlasting arms!"

Poets have usually been in a gloomy humor when picturing the underworld. Imagination is very apt to spin a black and tangled thread. You have read of dark caverns where the bodies of men are fast detained, of which caverns Death has the key. Of this the grim Anglo-Saxon poet wailed the warning note—

"Loathsome is that earth-house, And grim within to dwell! There you shall dwell, And worms shall divide you!"

You have heard of gloomy ruins where the night raven forever sits and croaks. You have heard of corridors where prisoners incessantly rattle their chains to the dolorous music of sullen groans and hollow moans. We have been afraid of death because of the horrors with which our ignorance has surrounded it! And we have been dismayed at the future because of the mysteries which darken it.

Be comforted! Our text, like a lamp, reveals the abyss of death and lifts up the veil of the future! Follow its gleam and you will see how it dispels the darkness! If you are a child of God, you may descend without fear into the lowest depths— even if, like Jonah, you had to cry, "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever," yet you need not be dismayed—for, "Underneath are the everlasting arms." If you were called to take some such awful journey as Virgil and Dante have fabled in their poems, when their heroes descended into the dread Avernus, you need not tremble, though it were said of you as of them—

"Along the illuminated shade Darkening and lone their way they made." If, I say, you were bound to traverse the sepulchral vaults and all the gloomy dungeons of Hades, yet you need not fear, for, "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

Mystery of mysteries! Death, you are no longer terrible to us because the Light of lights is shining upon you! Depths unfathomable, we no longer fear to pass through you, for there is One whose love is deeper than the depths beneath as it is higher than the heights above! And He has said, "I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring them up from the depths of the sea." We gladly take our journey downward at the call of God! And without fear we pass through the gates of the tomb and enter the doors of the shadow of death, for, "Underneath are the everlasting arms." "Underneath"—the word awakens thought and enquiry. Everything ought to be sound, solid and substantial there. "Underneath" must be firm, for if that fails we fail, indeed!

We have been building and our eyes have been gladdened with the rising walk and with the towering pinnacles. But what if something should be rotten "underneath?" Great will be the fall then, if we have built as high as Heaven, if sand lies underneath, yielding and shifting in the day of flood. "Underneath" is the great matter to which the architect, if he is wise, will give his best attention. And truly, Brothers and Sisters, when you and I begin to examine our Graces and our professions, that word, "underneath," suggests many a testing question. Is it all right with us as to the root of the matter—"underneath?" If not, the fair flower above ground will wither very speedily. The seed has sprung up hastily, but how is the soil underneath? For if there is no depth of earth, the scorching sun will soon dry up the superficial harvest.

"Underneath," though it is mysterious, is also intensely important and, therefore, the great joy of being able to say by faith, "Yes, 'underneath' is well secured, we have trusted in God and we shall not be confused. We have relied upon the eternal promises and they cannot fail. We have rested on the infinite merits of the atoning Sacrifice of God's dear Son and we shall never be ashamed of our hope." Happy is he who rests upon the Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things

and sure, for with him all is safe underneath! And, though the earth is removed and the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, he need not fear, but may patiently hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God.

For a period we may be content with superficial pleasures, but there are times of trial when we have to fall back upon something deeper and more reliable—earthly props give way, in their season, and we need superior sustaining power. The carnal mind meets with an hour when "the proud helpers do stoop under him" and Believers, too, in proportion as they foolishly lean upon an arm of flesh, find their confidences departing. Then it is that we feel the value of Divine upholding and rejoice that "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

Let us look more closely into this most important matter. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." That is, first, as the foundation of everything. If you go down, down, to discover the basement upon which all things rest, you come, before long, to "the everlasting arms." The things which are seen are held up by the invisible God! This outward visible universe has no power to stand for a single instant if He does not keep it in being. By Him all things exist. There are no forces apart from God's power! No existences apart from His will! He bears up the pillars of the universe. He, only, spreads out the heavens and treads upon the waves of the sea. He makes Arcturus, Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south. Foolish are those philosophers who think that they can reach the essence and soul from which visible things were evolved unless they bow before the invisible God! He is the foundation of creation, the fountain and source of being, the root and basement of existence. "Underneath" everything "are the everlasting arms."

Most true is this with regard to His Church. He chose her and redeemed her to Himself—the very idea of a Church is from the Lord alone. As a temple He devised her architecture, saying, "I will lay your foundations with sapphires." And He has built up her every stone by His own power. He sustains her walls against her enemies so that the gates of Hell cannot prevail against her, for the foundation of God stands sure. The foundation of every true Church is the Lord Himself, the Highest, Himself, establishes her. God is in the midst of her—she shall not be moved. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." Blessed be God, what is true of the Church as a corporate body is true of every member of the Church! There abides no spiritual life in the world which is not founded upon the everlasting arms.

Beloved, if the life of God is in you, if you search deep and go to the basis of it, you will find that your life is staying itself and drawing its constant nurture, yes, deriving its very existence from the life of the eternal God. Jesus says, "Because I live, you shall live also." Your life is the life of God in you, for the Divine seed is the foundation of all spiritual life. Beware, then, of harboring in your heart anything which has not underneath it the everlasting arms. If there is any hope, let it be founded on the Everlasting Covenant of God. If there is any joy, let it well up from the everlasting love of God. If there is any confidence, let it be stayed upon the everlasting strength of Jehovah. If there is any service rendered, let it be according to the everlasting commandment.

If in your soul there is any Divine Grace. If there is any virtue. If there is any praise, suffer none of these matters to be superficial or pretentious—the creation of your own native strength—but let them all be founded upon the work of the Holy Spirit in your soul. In fact, let it be said of each of them, "Underneath are the everlasting arms." Nothing will serve our turn in the trials of life, the terrors of death, or the solemnities of the Last Great Day, except that which has underneath it the everlasting arms! See how the nations reel when God no longer sustains them—"He removes the mountains and they know not, He overturns them in His anger." See how those Churches fly into apostasy which have not underneath them the everlasting arms—they are quenched as the fire of thorns and only a smoke remains!

Did not Jesus say, "Every plant that my Father has not planted shall be rooted up"? See how hypocritical professors disappear like the morning mist when the sun rises! Nothing will abide the day of the Lord's

coming unless its foundation is laid in the eternal God. The Lord help us to know what this means so that we may be like the wise man who dug deep and built his house upon a rock. Again, we may read the words, "Underneath are the everlasting arms," in the sense of being the bottom and end and object of everything. If in faith you search into Divine Providence, however dark and trying it may appear, you will soon find that underneath it are the everlasting arms.

Satan may be mining, but God is undermining! Even under the deep devices of Hell the everlasting arms are to be found. Satan's craft is deep to us, but it is very shallow to the Lord, whose wisdom goes far deeper than all the cunning of the Prince of Darkness. The evils and errors which are in the world should not cause us to despair of the ultimate victory of the Truth of God, for beneath them there is still the immutable decree of the Ever-living and the Ever-blessed—and

that decree shall be accomplished, whoever may oppose it! Has He not said, "I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return. That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear"?

His purpose shall stand. He will do all His pleasure. He works all things according to the counsel of His own will. Trace your present trials below their surface—trace them to the deeps, instead of groaning over their outward appearance—and you will find that underneath each trouble there is a faithful purpose and a kind intent. Yes, beneath the utmost depths of distress and grief, God is still at work in love to your soul! From seeming evil still educing good and, better still—and better still in infinite progression—underneath the best events are the arms of love to make them good and underneath the worst that can happen are the same everlasting arms to moderate and overrule them! As the design and object of all, "underneath are the everlasting arms."

I take the text, "Underneath are the everlasting arms," to mean, next, that the arms of God are there as the preservation of His people. His people sometimes appear to themselves to be in very great danger, but it is written, "He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone." Certain of the saints are set in very high places and their brain might well be turned so that they would fall. But they shall not slip with their feet, for God upholds the righteous. If under deep depression of spirit and sore travail of heart their feet should be almost gone, what a blessing it is to think that "underneath are the everlasting arms."

Sometimes faith walks upon a very slender thread high up above the ways of common men. Poising her balancing pole of experience, she tries to keep her feet—but her satisfaction is that even if she should slip for a while and her joy should fail, yet there is a net beneath her which will receive her in her fall so that she shall not be utterly dashed in pieces. "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not" is the gracious safeguard of those who fall, as Peter did, when Satan has them in his sieve. The people of God must and shall be safe! Satan may cast them down, but God shall save them before they fall into Hell. Let us walk carefully, none the less, because of this. Let us watch well our footsteps as much as if our preservation entirely depended upon ourselves—but let us always look only to our Lord—knowing that He, alone, keeps the feet of His saints.

Holiness, strength of faith and ultimate perfection are the things which we must daily aim at, but it is a blessed consolation that when, through infirmity or carelessness, we do not fully maintain our consecrated walk, we are not, therefore, cast away forever, for it is written, "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholds him with His hand." "Underneath are the everlasting arms." That leads me to

read my text in the fourth sense as teaching us that the everlasting arms are the rest of His people. If these everlasting arms are always outstretched to preserve me lest I totter in weakness and fall into destruction, then on those arms let me lean my whole weight for time and for eternity! That is the practical lesson of this choice word.

Keep yourselves, Beloved, in those arms which even now are embracing you! Why vex your heart when you may be free from care? Underneath everything, your Father's arms are placed—what, then, can fret you? Why are you disquieted when you might dwell at ease and inherit the earth? Are you afraid to rest where the universe rests? Are not your Father's arms a sufficient pillow for you? Do you think that it is not safe to be at peace when the love and might of God, like two strong arms, are stretched out to hold you up and the Divine Voice whispers to you "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him"? His own Word to His Prophets is, "Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem." Will you not accept the comfort which He sends by His Spirit and bids His servants impart to you?

When God Himself does rest in His love will you not rest in it and shall it not, again, be proven that, "we that have believed do enter into rest"? Is not the Lord Jesus our peace? Why, then, are we troubled? Well may you lie down to sleep in peace when underneath you are the everlasting arms! Well may your spirit be filled with composure and become indifferent to outward trials when you are thus held up! Blow, you winds and toss, you waves, the boat cannot sink, or if it did sink it could not sink to our destruction—we should only drop into the great Father's hands—for underneath even the sinking vessel are the everlasting arms! Now, let the earth reel with earthquakes or open wide her mouth to swallow us up quickly—we need not fear to descend into her dreariest gulf—since underneath us would still be the everlasting arms! What a fullness of rest this secures to the believing people of God!

I will fetch from the text one more meaning while I am speaking upon the position of these arms. The text seems to give us a promise of exaltation and uplifting. We may be very low and greatly cast down, but "underneath are the everlasting arms." The merciful God is great at a dead lift. "He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people." Who can tell how high a man may be lifted up—to what sublime elevations he may safely ascend when the Lord makes his feet like hind's feet that he may stand upon His high places? If still underneath him are the everlasting arms he may safely obey the word, "Get up into the high mountains." He may outsoar the eagle, mounting higher and higher till he has left the sun like a speck beneath his feet and still underneath him shall be the everlasting arms. Therefore higher and yet higher may we hourly ascend in thought, in joy, in holiness, in likeness to our God!

This is meant to encourage us to rise, since there can be no danger while the arms of God are underneath. This, then, my Brothers and Sisters, is where we may expect to find the strength and power of God—it is underneath us, bearing us up! We may not always see it, for the underneath is hidden from our sight, but surely as in secret the Lord upholds the huge columns of the universe so He bears up all His own servants and their concerns! "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

II. Secondly let us meditate upon WHAT it is which is beneath us. The everlasting arms. What is meant by this? I hope the gentlemen who are so ingenious in toning down the word "everlasting" will not meddle with my text. A new way of reading the Bible has been invented in these highly enlightened days. I used to get on exceedingly well with the Book years ago, for it seemed clear and plain enough, but modern interpreters would puzzle us out of our wits and out of our souls, if they could, by their vile habit of giving new meanings to plain words! Thank God I keep to the old simple way—but I am informed that the

inventors of the new minimizing glasses manage to read the big words small—and they have even read down the word, "everlasting," into a little space of time! Everlasting may be six weeks or six months according to them. I use no such glasses! My eyes remain the same and "everlasting" is "everlasting" to me whether I read of everlasting life or everlasting punishment. If I clip the word in one place, I must do so in another. And it will never do to have a terminable Heaven. I cannot afford to give it up here when its meaning is joyous to the saint and, therefore, not there when its sound is terrible to the sinner!

What, then, are "the everlasting arms?" They are arms which always were and always will be. They are arms which always were strong and will never grow faint or weary. They are arms which, once outstretched, will never be drawn back again. They are arms which, once engaged for the defense of the chosen people, shall never cease to work for their good, world without end! Not failing arms, nor dying arms, but everlasting arms are underneath the saints of God! I understand the words to mean, first, the arms of everlasting purpose, "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." His purpose may be called His arms, by which He stretches out His hands to do His work and these can never fail, for, "The Lord of Hosts has purposed and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out and who shall turn it back?" "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations." "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, even that He does."

We have to deal with One whose gifts and calling are without repentance. In the Book of His purpose it is written and His Providence and Grace shall tally with the secret decree, "He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion," and the everlasting purpose of Sovereign Grace shall be carried out to the end. O my Soul, when your poor purposes shift and vanish and you have to change them 20 times a day, what a blessing it is to think that the purpose of your God stands fast, and He, Himself, is without the shadow of a turning! He has declared that He that believes in Christ shall be saved and so you shall be, though all Hell assail you! Come what may, the eternal purpose lies at the bottom of all, and will be the end and result of all, and so all Israel shall be saved, for, "underneath are the everlasting arms" of unchanging purpose.

But next we see here the everlasting arms of love. I do no violence to Scripture when I compare love to arms, for is it not written, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you"? Love has hands and arms with which it draws us and these are, at this moment underlying all the dealings of God with us. This love is everlasting love—without beginning, without variation, without end. Underneath you, child of God, is the infinite affection of the Omnipotent God—what, then, can harm you?

Your love? Ah, how it flames forth at times and then how dull it becomes! But your safety comes from a love which never varies, which many waters cannot quench and which the floods cannot drown. Look beneath you and you may see a depth of love, fathomless and eternal, which may well remind you of what Moses said when he spoke of "the deep which lies under." The strength of love which abides in God, who is Love itself, no mind can conceive! All this is placed under you, O Believer, for your succor, support and security. Immovable arches of immortal Love sustain your soul from fear of ruin. Rest there and sing unto the Lord your song upon your stringed instrument as long as you have any being.

But next, these arms may be described as the arms of power. And what says Isaiah the Prophet? "Trust you in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength." What said Jeremiah? "Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the Heaven and the earth by Your great power and stretched out arm and there is nothing too hard for You." Strength is needed to uphold the people of God lest they fall to their

confusion and that strength is always ready, no, it is always in exercise! Believer, you have been able to stand because the arm of Divine strength has never been withdrawn. He is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless and He will do it. "O bless our God, you people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard: which holds our soul in life, and suffers not our feet to be moved." These are the arms of Immutability, for God abides forever the same. "I am God; I change not: therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed."

He saved His people "with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for His mercy endures forever." They are the arms of everlasting blessing, for God has determined to make His people happy and happy they shall be. "Surely," He says, "in blessing I will bless you." "Your blessing is upon Your people." He gives liberally unto them and that liberality is never diminished, nor can it be stopped. Underneath you, Believer, are the everlasting arms, forever carrying you as a nurse carries her child, forever gathering up for you innumerable blessings and carrying them for your provision. He shall gather the lambs with His arms and with those same arms will He show strength unto His people. How blest are they who have such arms beneath them!

I heard of a man who was spending a great deal of money, living in grand style and launching out in business. Certain of his fellow tradesmen told me that they could not see a reason for his cutting such a figure. But said one, "There is somebody at his back, we are quite sure of that." And so it is with us—we may well be strong, we may well be happy—for there is an unseen power which is at our back—the everlasting arms are underneath us—and we cannot fail! Let us be joyous, confident and praise the right hand of the Lord! Yes, though our conflicts should multiply, let us not fear, but let us sing unto the Lord, "Your right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power. The right hand of the Lord is exalted. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly." For this right hand upholds the cause of His servants.

III. Now, in the third place, let us consider WHEN the everlasting arms are underneath us. The only answer is now and for evermore. Now, at this moment, Beloved, the everlasting arms are underneath us! The life of a Christian is described as walking by faith and to my mind, walking by faith is the most extraordinary miracle ever beheld beneath the sun! Walking on the waves, as Peter did, is a type of the life of every Christian. I have sometimes likened it to ascending an invisible staircase far up into the clouds. You cannot see an inch in front of you, but you wind up towards the Light. When you look down, all is dark, and before you lies nothing visible but clouds. Beneath you yawns a fathomless abyss.

Yet we have climbed, some of us, for years up this perpetually ascending stairway, never seeing an inch before us. We have often paused almost in horror and asked in wonder, "What next? What next?" Yet what we thought was cloud has proved to be solid rock! Darkness has been light before us and slippery places have been safe. Every now and then, when the darkness has been denser than usual—a darkness which might be felt, when all the past behind us has vanished and nothing has been seen but the one step we stood on—we have said, "How did I get here? What a strange, mysterious life mine has been!" We have almost wished ourselves down on the level among the worldlings who can always see their way and know what is underneath them. But faith has come to our help, again—we have believed—and believing we have seen the invisible and grasped the eternal! And then we have gone on, have put our foot down again and soon have run up, with joy, the shining way!

What an ascent we have sometimes made upon that ladder of light so that we have companied with angels and left the world far down beneath our feet! Now and then we have enjoyed a glimpse through the thick darkness of the jeweled walls of the Eternal City which needs no candle, neither light of the sun. We

have seen, I say, its brightness and determined, still, to climb the mysterious way. Well, Believer, at this moment, though you cannot see your way, yet since

you are walking by faith, "underneath are the everlasting arms." It is so, though at this moment you fear that you are going down into a gloomy glen. You have lost a great deal of money lately and the friend who so kindly helped you is taken away, so that you are going down in the world—yes, but underneath are the everlasting arms.

You are getting nearer to those arms now. Friends and wealth came between you and the almighty arms—but now you must lean only on them. The creature fails and you must rest on the Creator! You will have sweeter fellowship, now, than you ever had, since there is nothing to come between you and your Lord. "Ah," says one, "but I am sinking in spirit. I am greatly depressed." Still underneath are the everlasting arms. Your soul is sinking, like Peter in the waves, but a hand is outstretched to save you—you cannot sink while your heavenly Father's hands are near. Go on sinking, if the Lord so wills it. Sometimes the greatest sweetness in life is found and intense bitterness. I never have in my soul a more solid and real joy than when I have been cast into the dust with fearful depression of spirit. I stay myself upon my God and Him, only, and then I touch the confines of bliss, though trembling all the while. I hardly know how to express the unrivalled sweetness of resting upon only the Lord!

When you are flung altogether upon God, then does your soul enter into the most Divine peace! The natural spirits have gone, everything that sprang from the vigor of youth and the natural elasticity of the mind has departed—now you come right upon God and lie naked in His hands. And then there is cast into your cup a foretaste of Heaven which the soul sits down and humbly sips to herself, for the secret she can never tell—no ear would understand her if she did. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." And so, dear Friends, if you should sink both in circumstances and in spirits and your experience should happen to be a very downcast one, it will still be well. If now you have to discover the corruption of your nature, which you knew little of before. If now your experience, instead of being that of the Brethren of the higher life, should be one of humiliation, of prostration of spirit, of deep self-loathing—still, underneath you are the everlasting arms. If you are not to climb to Pisgah with Moses, but must dive to the bottom of the mountains like Jonah, still underneath are the everlasting arms—even at the lowest point of your going down! So it shall be forever and forever, for the arms are everlasting in their position as well as their power.

Now you have come to die. You have gathered up your feet in the bed. The death sweat stands upon your brow. You are sinking, so far as this life is concerned, among the sons of men, but underneath you shall then be the everlasting arms! Beautifully has Bunyan described confidence in death, when he pictures the pilgrims passing the river. Christian cried out to young Hopeful, "I sink in deep waters! The billows go over my head! All His waves go over me." Then said Hopeful, "Be of good cheer, my Brother, I feel the bottom and it is good." Thus, Beloved, shall it be with you! You shall feel the bottom of death's chill river, but you shall say, "It is good," for underneath are the everlasting arms!

Then comes the last plunge and we shall be as when a man stands on the edge of a precipice and leaps over into the clouds below him. You need not fear to take your last farewell and drop into your Father's arms, for underneath you shall be the everlasting arms! And oh, how sweetly shall you be caught up together with the Lord in the air, pressed to the bosom of the great Father and borne upward into the Heaven of heavens where you shall behold the face of the Well-Beloved and find yourselves entranced in His company forever and forever! O heir of Glory, underneath you there is no Hell! Underneath you there

is no annihilation! Underneath you are the everlasting arms—therefore commit your spirit unto your faithful Creator and then welcome life or death, for all is well with you!

IV. Lastly, let us reply to the query, WHAT THEN? If underneath us are the everlasting arms, what then? First, let us look underneath. My Brothers and Sisters, you have been going on with great discomfort, sighing and crying because your way is rough and because sometimes you think it dangerous and fear that you will slip into a chasm and perish. Now, instead of complaining after this fashion, and fearing the road, stop a little and begin to examine—"What is underneath me? What is the bottom of my hope?"

You hypocrites dare not examine! You formalists dare not search! You are afraid to ask questions and to open your eyes lest you should see too much. But those who are honest and sincere in the way of our Lord are not afraid to be tested. You who are under any anxiety will do well to pull right up and say, "I have been troubled with doubts and fears and I will no longer endure it. I will know the end of this! I will search myself and know my ways and pray the Lord to let me see the worst of my case, for I long to know what there is underneath." If you are believing in Jesus Christ with a sincere heart and resting in the atoning Sacrifice and the Covenant of which His blood is the seal, you can afford to search underneath—for you will find all things solid and eternal!

It is well to look underneath an outward Providence when it frowns darkly upon you, for it conceals the eternal purpose of love. The sorrows which you see are but, as it were, a napkin hiding the precious treasure of eternal Grace and, therefore, you can say to yourself in all ill weathers, "All is well, for all is well underneath! The eternal purpose is working out my lasting good." Do not be afraid to search underneath, my trembling Brothers and Sisters. but when you do so and find the everlasting arms to be there, then sing unto the Lord with all your might!

The next inference is, if underneath us are the everlasting arms, let us lean heavily. We are afraid to lean too hard on God. To be careful not to encroach on a friend is a very proper disposition. Do not spoil a generous friend by drawing upon him so heavily that he will dread to see you again. I wish some people had a little more of that disposition, as far as I am concerned, but this is not a right feeling when you have to deal with the Lord! Never fear that you will weary your God! Never say to yourself, "I will ask as little as I can." Why, He says, "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it!" Never say, "I will trust Him a little. I will take Him a part of my cares and rest a portion of my trials upon Him." No, lean with your whole weight!

Do not keep a spare ounce for your own carrying—that will break your back! Bring all the tons and the pounds and the ounces and the pennyweights and cast them all on God! He loves His children to treat Him with entire confidence. All your weight will not trouble Him. You know Aesop's fable of the polite little gnat which apologized to the ox for burdening him when he lighted on his horn, and the ox replied that he really did not know he was there. Your God will not tell you that, for He counts the very hairs of your head, but He will tell you that your load is no burden to Him. Why, if you had 50 kingdoms burdening your brain and if you carried the politics of a hundred nations in your mind, or were loaded with all the cares of a thousand worlds, you might safely leave them with the Wonderful Counselor and go your way rejoicing! Lean hard, Brothers and Sisters! For underneath you are the everlasting arms!

The next thing is, then, let us rise confidently. Do not be afraid of ascending to heights of love. Do not be afraid of having a high ambition for a wholly consecrated life. Be not afraid of high doctrines, or high enjoyments, or high attainments in holiness. Go as high as you like, for underneath you are the everlasting arms! It would be dangerous to speculate, but it is safe to believe. Some men are always going downward,

turning diamonds into gas and hallelujahs into howls! They are trying to get rid of precious Truths of God and to substitute some new theories for them. Let us be brave in the other direction and seek to comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. You may climb, my dear young Brothers and Sisters, nor fear to fall even if you reach the masthead of Truth, for underneath are the everlasting arms!

Once more, let us dare unhesitatingly and be very courageous for the Lord our God—

"Through floods or flames, if Jesus leads, I'll follow where He goes"

for underneath are the everlasting arms! Are you called upon to lose everything for Christ? Go on and leap like Curtius into the gulf for your Lord Jesus, for underneath you are the everlasting arms! Does your Master call you to an enterprise which seems impossible? Nevertheless, if God has called you to it, attempt it, for He renders to every man according to his work. Remember what the Negro said—"If Massa Jesus say to me, 'Sam, you jump through that brick wall,' I jump. It is Sam's business to jump—it is Massa's work to make me go through the wall." So it is with you. It is yours to leap forward when the Captain gives the watchword—and in confidence to attempt what mere nature cannot achieve—for the supernatural is with us!

The best of all is, God is with us! Underneath us are the everlasting arms! Less reliance upon self and more reliance upon God! Less counting of the barley loaves and fishes—and a greater readiness to bring them to His hands who can multiply them till they shall feed the thousands—this is what we need! God grant us Grace to trust in His almighty power and sing from now on and forever, "underneath are the everlasting arms!"

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