

21.502a

LAT&H Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor  
on Thursday, September 8. 1983.

Lesson. Isaiah 52.

And underneath are the everlasting arms. Deuteronomy 33. 27.

There are a few preliminary observations. One is, we are cognisant of the fact that Dr. Watts in the last hymn (764) has preached an abundant sermon on the text, far better than we can attain to, though let us not limit by our speech the sovereign, efficacious, divine power of the Spirit. It is the preacher's wish that the power of the Holy Ghost may wonderfully, graciously, effectively communicate the substance and bliss and wonder of the word of the Lord to our souls, the preacher included, and the Lord's servants with their long journeys, and their wives. So in a variety of circumstances, needs, a sense of weakness, a lack of nervous energy, temptation, servile fear and illness, may the dear Lord grant the power and unction and life of the Holy Ghost to be infused, injected if you like, into your persons from this sacred, monumental text. I said your persons; your body, soul, spirit or mind. You will be aware that this is one of the divine blessings proclaimed to Jeshurun. It is a clause of the cluster of blessings to Jeshurun, and this is another name for spiritual Israel, or to those who fear God and love and know Him and are loved eternally by Him; in all generations and centuries of history to the end of this dispensation. So Jeshurun includes all who love and fear God in this congregation at any time, in all places, under the influence and power and blessed with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It is a positive, specific, divine, immutable promise. It is factual. It is not only a promise in so far as you will know the bliss of it; it is a revelation of fact; an eternal, glorious fact, and the fact is, all those the Lord loves with an everlasting love, and as the verse continues those in experience spiritually, drawn with lovingkindness; all loved with an everlasting love in Heaven and on earth, in all nations of the earth tonight; regenerate or unregenerate, who know the Lord or are ignorant of Him at present, all yet to be born the first and second time, embraced by the bonds of

the covenant; the fact applies to all of them. "And underneath are the everlasting arms."

"Preserved in Jesus when  
My feet made haste to hell;  
And there should I have gone,  
But Thou dost all things well."

Why are those unregenerate now safe? Because, underneath are the everlasting arms. I cannot do justice to the text, but seek to dip my foot in oil and bring forth that which will give peace, eternal joy and comfort. This is one of the fundamental truths of your faith. Without it there is only one alternative: you would sink. Beloved friends, try to contemplate as we developp the subject by the grace of God, the glory, beauty, eternity, immutability, exquisite wonder of the word. "Underneath you." Those arms have always been under you and all through your time. Before you entered the world, before you saw the light of day and through your childhood, the dangerous years of adolescence; all through the journey: whether you are fifty, sixty, seventy, or a hundred; all through the years unseen, not tangible, unseen by mortal powers, under you are the everlasting arms. That is the secret of it all. How long have you been helped in the ministry? How long have you been maintained as a Church officer? Underneath are the everlasting arms. How long have you been spared to each other in true conjugal love and marriage, with all the family responsibilities? Underneath are the everlasting arms. What is the secret of your being brought to September 8? You never thought you would reach it. There are a number in this Sanctuary who never thought they would reach it. You thought a number of times you would be gone. You felt desperately ill and weak. What is the secret that you are here tonight? Underneath are the everlasting arms. What about the earlier years when the children were small. working all the hours and little sleep at night, yet some sweet sleep. What is the secret? Underneath are the everlasting arms. What about afflictions, major operations, the agony of pain many have known at times? Bereavements, dear widows, the fatherless and motherless: what is the secret? Underneath are the everlasting arms. You see the answer. It is the specific, vital answer to the whole. Why are you sustained in your spiritual life? why a spiritual appetite and

thirst in your soul? Why do you know access to the Throne of Grace? Why do you have holy liberty, stretch your soul on the eternal Rock and build your house there? The answer is, underneath are the everlasting arms.

When you think of it the text has its special application to babes and little ones spiritually. As in nature these need arms; strong, loving, embracing arms, the little ones you travailed for and brought forth, so in grace. What about spiritual birth, infancy, babes in grace in the Church. I hope there a number of young friends the Lord is working in. What is the secret of it? It is a blissful one. They are in the everlasting arms. They are carried through. The Lord hears them. They are carried through their little troubles - they are not little to them. They are borne on the Church's sides, dandled on her knees. I hope the Lord uses your arms and knees and sides. You will be happy when your lap is filled. It is satisfying to human nature, to a child of God in the Church of God. In a special way babes in grace need arms. It is believed according to research that the first fear is the fear of falling. God has provided mother's and father's arms. What about it spiritually? You are still a child; I am. We still get the fear of falling, of being left alone. We want to feel the embrace of arms and we are happy. If you do not feel them you are in a distressed condition. You feel the warmth, the strength and you are happy, satisfied. The text has specific reference to boys and girls who leave school or college and they fear God. They face a dark, cruel world, or they are in the services. Talk about the world being dark and cruel, and for a boy to go off round the world that is ruthless, violent, seductive! What is the secret? The Lord has preserved so many, called them by His grace and made them monuments of His mercy, and He has brought them through dangers and distresses. Underneath are the everlasting arms. They are not at the bottom of the sea. So boys and girls, teenagers, how you need the everlasting arms under you! What about dear friends in a profession where they have been exposed to extreme danger, such as fire? and in the sore conflict of the world, what is the secret? Underneath are the everlasting arms. I am sure you will ascribe to this truth. You may not see it at the time, but there has been a supernatural, divine power here to preserve you from death. Somehow in

Glory, when on the high seas would speak of standing on the vessel and seeing a torpedo making for the ship, and they thought that all would soon be over. The Lord deflected the torpedo. The secret is, underneath are the everlasting arms. And there is what is ~~spoken~~ spoken of in the Word of God as the heat and burden of the day. All your working life, the great pressure of life; the mother with her work in the home, and so on; fearing God, loving the Lord, knowing Him. What has sustained you, beloved? what has brought you through? what upheld you? It is said of the Lord Jesus, "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold." The Father upheld His own dear Son in His humiliation. What upheld you in your working life? Underneath are the everlasting arms. It is blessedly true. What sustained you through the hassle of life? There are many things, abrasive, traumatic, and in the midst of human beings of divers temperaments. What is the answer? Underneath are the everlasting arms.

I go for a moment to life's evening time, if you are spared to reach it. What happens? It is remarkable how health is maintained, and the use of arms, legs, eyes, the functions of the body. Some go on for years; eighty and beyond, and their natural forces are hardly abated. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." What happens? The process of decay outstrips the process <sup>of</sup> replenishment, and there is evidence of deterioration in limbs and faculties, in the whole system. There is usually a weakening of strength. What about it to those who fear God, to old people leaning on their staff for very age? It is true. Instead of running you walk. Instead of walking you sit. Wonderful to have sight and hearing, the use of your faculties, to be able to get out of bed unaided. What is the special <sup>need</sup> of dear old saints who fear God? There is only one answer to it. Underneath are the everlasting arms.

This is not just a declaration of holy doctrine. It is warm, vibrant, spiritual experience. It is not occasional; it is permanent. "How shall I face the future when I am old?" Underneath are the everlasting arms. We have a chapter in Isaiah on the old. The Lord carries them, bears them. Don't you need the Lord to do that for you? to carry

you? In all your trials, afflictions, operations, what is the answer? Underneath are the everlasting arms. He carried you through. In your floods and flames, how will you come through? Underneath are the everlasting arms. It is beautiful, blessed, soul-establishing and confirming. Give God the glory due to His Name and say,

"Hither by Thy help we've come  
And we hope, by Thy good pleasure  
Safely to arrive at Home."

Give Him all the glory. It is not for us; it is for Him. I often look back over my few years in the pulpit, and it is mysterious to me all the generations I have seen in the pews. This is the secret. Underneath are the everlasting arms. I render to Him the glory due to His Name. He 'holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved'. Underneath are the everlasting arms. The best part of all is, these kind, soft, tender arms will safe convey us Home. It is lovely, isn't it?

I will take another step in the discourse and express the function of arms, and hands with them. What is the function of the forelimbs? First, to embrace. That is the first thing the Lord did. I warrant the first thing you did with your babe was to put your arms round it. So from all eternity the Lord has put His arms round you to embrace you. And remember vice versa, the Lord gives you arms of faith so you put your arms round Him. That will satisfy you and be a crowning blessing. You will say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word." First to embrace. He folds you to His heart, His bosom, because you are in His heart. Do you think the Lord will ever let you go? Never. Have you had an embrace recently, the joy of it? Think of the prodigal and his father; of Joseph and his brethren. It is a wonder that the Lord embraces a poor penitent sinner. He puts His arms round you. He will never let you go. "O Love, that will not let me go." Arms support, hold, take your weight and the weight you carry. I have often discerned in the ministry with a number of services in succession, and added solemnities and anxieties and I have felt unequal, inadequate and jaded, in the morning I have felt an injection, an infusion from God of strength. I have felt the everlasting arms under me. I have said, This is not natural; it is supernatural, divine.

and specific. It is to serve God with, and I feel the everlasting arms to carry me through. May the dear mimisters of the Sanctuary feel the same, and the dear ones at home. It is wonderful.

So the second function is to support, and remember, those arms support the whole universe. Those arms support the whole of the Covenant of Grace. The promises and blessings of God are in those hands and arms. They support the whole Church of God, every individual, all His people. It is wonderful. You need it. I need it. Your neighbour needs it; your wife, your husband needs it. You who are alone, all need it, and the Lord does not leave one out. It is a miracle. In a crowd some are passed; they are left out; never with God. "He calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth," not one. Underneath are the everlasting arms. So the second is to support. Think of what you need for body, soul and spirit. And for your weakness, afflictions, disabilities, trials, responsibilities, all heavy weights; these arms support you. Give Him all the glory.

These arms defend you from all the attacks of your enemies; from Satan, self, all the powers of your wicked, deceitful heart. Those blessed arms defend you. Nothing can effectively harm you. None can pluck you out of His hands or arms. You can't be lost, never fall out of them. It is wonderful. With all the attacks of the enemy these arms protect us, and as we read in the Lesson the Lord makes bare His holy arm, and when He does it means He performs. And there is a reference to His stretched out arm, to pluck brands from the fire; to pluck all His people out of their wretched state in unregeneracy, and His own people become ensnared. And He makes bare His arm when He discourses His sovereign, almighty power by the Spirit to save, rescue, deliver and take His chosen for whom He has searched out of the briars and thorns, and lays them on His shoulder and brings them home rejoicing. Underneath are the everlasting arms. And I say to you, we must be brought down; be shown our sinful, lost, fallen state, be stripped of all that is false, of our own righteousness: brought to nothing in ourselves and blessed with repentance. When the Lord does this you will know as we shall sing presently, what Dr Watts wrote,

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm," -

the Lord has brought me here. That is how I feel.

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Thy kind arms I fall,  
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus, and my All."

Those arms will carry you to Glory. Blessed be God.