

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Joe Slater

We've sung it endless times: "What a fellowship, What a joy divine, Leaning on the everlasting arms!" When Elisha A. Hoffman wrote those words in 1877, no doubt he had Deuteronomy 33:27 in mind: *"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."*

As Moses was writing Deuteronomy, the conquest of Canaan was imminent. Israel would face fierce Canaanite warriors, but *"He (God) will thrust out the enemy from before you, and will say, 'Destroy!' Then all Israel shall dwell in safety, the fountain of Jacob alone, in a land of grain and new wine"* (Deuteronomy 33:27b-28a).

God's "arms" are a metaphor referring to His power. He had delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage *"by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm"* (Deuteronomy 4:34). Psalm 44:3 acknowledges, *"They did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, nor did their own arm save them, but it was Your right hand, Your arm . . ."*

John 12:36-38 attributes the miracles of Jesus to the power (arm) of God, as prophesied in Isaiah 53:1, *"Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"*

Paul assures us that God *"is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us"* (Ephesians 3:20). We can have confident assurance when we're leaning on the everlasting arms!

How Much Is Jesus Worth To You?

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44).

Few things are as effective in opening up our billfolds or motivating us to pick up our car keys as a good old-fashioned sale. When we hear about those bargains and see great values, it is hard to pass up the opportunity.

When we come to understand the priceless value of Christianity – when we get a glimpse of the unfathomable riches of God's matchless grace – we must fully-invest in this opportunity of a lifetime.

God makes no high-pressured sales pitch. He includes no hidden charges in the fine print of the sales contract. He offers eternal life to all who will accept His Son in obedient faith. It is a gift of grace brought on by an act of love. There is nothing we could ever do to deserve it. There is nothing we could do to purchase it. We accept God's gift by faith and manifest our appreciation for it through a life of faithful devotion and unselfish service (Ephesians 2:8-9).

How valuable is your hope of heaven? Can it hold its own next to the pleasures Satan is promising you in the world? Do you love Jesus more than anything or anyone else in the world? Jesus asks, *"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26). Just how much is Jesus worth to you?

--Glen Elliott (Greenbriar, AR)

Only God can Make a Man

A few years ago we visited with a man who helped design a life-size robot of Abraham Lincoln. Not only did it look realistic, but it could even stand up and make a speech. The designer showed us the schematics of its inner workings – a true marvel of human intelligence and engineering.

The designer made the robot, but God made the designer. And what a design it is! As David said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). Using his God-given faculties, David was able to sling a stone with precision, play the harp with skill, and contemplate his Creator. What David wrote 3000 years ago about the wonders of the body we can now say with even greater conviction, knowing what we do about the intricate DNA coding with each cell. Who could possibly create such complexities but God?

With sonogram we can see what David could only imagine: *"For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb . . . 'Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well'"* (Psalm 139:13-14).

--David Gibson (via *Power for Today*)

Is Being Quiet Being Good?

A baby is considered a "good baby," meaning a well-behaved baby, if it doesn't cry a lot. That overlooks the fact that babies often cry for good reason.

The carol, "Away in a Manger," referring to Jesus being sinless, contains the line, "The little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes." But I expect the baby Jesus cried on occasion when He was wet or hungry; but that doesn't mean He was bad or that He sinned.

As God incarnate, Jesus was fully human; and human babies can only communicate by crying. Doing so does not mean they are bad.

--Cecil May, Jr. (via *Preacher Talk*)