

UNDERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS

(A Funeral Meditation)

The last chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy is also the last chapter in the life of that great man Moses. There we read these words: “So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab - according to the word of the Lord – and God buried him in a valley.” Chapter 34:5-6

That was the end of the one who had been for many years the strong man in Israel. It seems that Moses had almost carried the nation of Israel in his arms. Out of the land of oppression he led the people of God – through the Red Sea they went – down into the wilderness they fled - and when it seemed that the testing would be too great for the people to bear, Moses was right there to keep the nation from falling apart.

Moses, like every man, had his virtues and he had his vices. He had his moments of strength, and he had his moments of weakness. There were times of defeat – there were also times of victory. And now the one hundred and twenty years of his life were at an end. The hour had now come for him to say goodbye to the people he loved. As the realization of their earthly promised land lay before their eyes – Moses was departing.

Soon he would slowly wend his way up the steep slope of Mt. Pisgah and from her lofty heights God would let him view the land. But reach it, he would not. He had completed his task. There on the Mount he would lay down his life and God would soon bury him in a place that would never be known to men.

Before he left his people, and before he loosened his grasp upon the nation, Moses had final words to say – and they were words of encouragement to the people and words of comfort to his own soul. Listen to them now: “The Eternal God is your refuge – and underneath are the everlasting arms.” 33:27

My, what wonderful words of assurance and hope – and what a marvelous promise to the people of God. These words are favorites of yours and favorites of mine. And to our minds today comes a better understanding of this truth, as we in our sorrow and loss seek comfort.

Listen again to the words of Moses.

“The Eternal God is your refuge – and underneath are the Everlasting Arms.”

Such a statement is the evidence that one knows the peace and the comfort of God – and the forgiveness of sins through His Son, Jesus Christ. Such a testimony is evidence to us that “he who is absent from the body is present with the Lord.”

William Allen Zulker