

Yielded Bodies

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CHAPTER SIX

THE HANDS OF THE HUMAN BODY

"And mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isaiah 65:22).

In speaking of the hands of the human body there are many verses we could choose and use from the many pages of the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of GOD. But we select these -- and upon these, in the vast domain of Scriptural declarations, we ask you to pitch your mental tents and "bide a wee":

"Cleanse your hands" (James 4:8).

"Study . . . to work with your own hands" (I Thessalonians 4:11).

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Timothy 2:8).

"That they may do evil with both hands earnestly" (Micah 7:3).

"Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts 20:34).

Paul, ever counting all things but loss for CHRIST, walking any rough road where duty called, sailing any stormy sea as an ambassador of GOD, said: **"Yield your members unto God."** Paul meant the members of the body.

Paul exhorted us to let our lives be a doxology unto GOD, to glorify GOD in our bodies. *Doxasate*: the very word which is used, or translated "glorify" is the one from which we get our word "doxology." Thus does GOD teach us that we are not only to sing the doxology in worshipful assembly but to be a doxology wherever our bodies go, not only with our lips but with our lives to glorify GOD.

Sad it is to learn that so many have such poor, even sordid conceptions of the glory of the human body which can be and should be a channel through which the divine becomes articulate.

Some who should think deeply and speak wisely show no more wisdom when they speak of the human body than did the boy in his essay entitled "Anatomy." He wrote:

"Your head is kind of round and hard, and your branes are in it and your hair on it. Your face is the front of your head where you eat and make faces. Your neck is what keeps your head out of your collar. It's hard to keep clean.

Your shoulders are sort of shelves where you hook your suspenders on them. Your stumick is something that if you do not eat often enough it hurts, and spinach don't help it none.

Your spine is a long bone in your back that keeps you from folding up. Your back is always behind you no matter how quick you turn around. Your arms you got to pitch with, and so you can reach the butter. Your fingers stick out of your hand so you can throw a curve, and add up rithmatick.

Your legs is what if you have not got two of you can not get to first base, neither can your sister. Your feet are what you run on. Your toes are what always gets stubbed. And that's all there is of you except what's inside, and I never saw it."

But, with no levity or leering, let us remember that the body in which the soul lives is the climax of all beauty, all completeness, all adaptation.

Our bodies are bought with a price. What price? The price paid was the precious blood of CHRIST, the LAMB without spot or blemish. That had to be shed in order that our bodies might become places of worship -- temples of the HOLY GHOST. Appropriating the finished redemptive work of JESUS to our own hearts and lives by faith, the regenerating work of the HOLY SPIRIT takes place. He then takes up His abode in the hearts of the born-again -- and their bodies become temples of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Of this temple -- this body -- in which we are to glorify GOD, the hands, having a language as well as the mouth, are a most important part. The construction and synchronization of the human body is marvelous beyond the understanding of all scientists, because the human body, male body and female body, is the crowning glory of all GOD's creations.

And of all its members, so vital, so perfectly strung, the hands can be called the precision instruments. Most anyone can have an odd-looking nose, a wart, a dish face, bow legs, freckles, birthmark, pigeon toes. There is only one kind of fingerprint to a person. No two alike. That fingerprint is precision perfect and when all other means of identification fail, the fingerprint method proves infallible. Even identical twins do not have the same fingerprints. So we see that, in the final analysis, we are really identified by our hands.

Our hands tell a story. They identify us with the kind of life we live -- whether sacrificial or selfish, strong or weak, ornamental or instrumental for GOD. Yes, our hands commend us or condemn us. Lady Macbeth, haunted by the ghosts of her crimes and boldly placing all the guilt upon her hands, said -- being horror-stricken -- "All the perfumes of Arabia could not sweeten this little hand." Hands can haunt and condemn because they are the instruments of perverted thinking; and when they have served the wild schemings of the mind, they become hateful and grim reminders. Thus we see the wisdom of our yielding our hands to GOD as instruments of righteousness.

Let us, standing in awe in the holy and white sanctuary of the human body, consider the

WONDERS OF THE HANDS

Though we see hands often, we seldom think much upon the wonder and dignity of the hands. Do we not take the hands for granted, even though every normal human being is implemented with two of them? Do we not think of them as ordinary, prosaic, crude instruments until someone analyzes the structure and function and the marvelous mechanism of the hands? The hand has one million occupations.

Quintilian, great Roman authority on oratory, points out the limitless language of the hands in the memorable words: "Do we not ask with them, promise, call, dismiss, threaten, supplicate, detest, fear, interrogate, deny, show joy, grief, doubt, confession, repentance, and point out measure, abundance, number, and time? Amid the diversity of the languages of all peoples, the hands speak the common language of all men."

Long and technical discussions could be given of the structural character of the hands -- the parts of them, the working of them, the movements of them, the skill of them, the strength and adaptability and co-ordination of action as between and among its several digits -- notably the thumbs and fingers.

Virtually exhaustless is the versatility and expressiveness of the hands -- mentioned about 1,440 times in the Bible. Though we are all familiar with the hand, who among us would declare that he fully understands this wondrous instrument with which man can receive or reject, beckon or repel, direct or confuse, caress or kill, soothe or stab, signal a threat or betoken a benediction?

Who but GOD could conceive the hand's anatomy -- so complete, complex, intricate, symmetrical? Who but the eternal GOD could make a hand "capable of the swift sweep of the keys, or that quick feeling of the pulses of a flute or the twirl of the fingers amid the strings of the harp?"

Who but GOD, who set the members of the body where it pleased Him to set them (I Corinthians 12:8), could give man the hands with which he constructs the lyre and the lute, with which he erects shrines and altars, with which he forms the various nets and snares and harnessing devices which give man dominion over the creatures of the sea, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field?

Who but the omniscient GOD could conceive and construct the hands -- weapons sooner loaded than any gun, sooner drawn than any sword -- and make them to be "the chief executive officers of the soul," whether lifted for defense or extended for help or busied in the arts or offered in salutation or wrung in despair or spread abroad in benediction?

Who but the eternal GOD could conceive and create the hands with which man can feel the invalid's pulse, gently wipe away the tears of a child, or cool the fevered brow, drop money into the beggar's cup, ward off missiles of injury, or, with the fingers thereof bent into a knuckled fist, become "a bolt of demolition"?

Who but the eternal GOD could make the human arm a scepter of dominion over the world, and

the hand of the arm the wonderful organ, simple in construction, the useful and indispensable instrument of the farmer, the mechanic, the artisan, the artist, the builder?

With the hands -- enabling man to climb and to descend, to lift and pull down, to push and pull, to invite or drive away, to grasp or release, to weave and untie, to cleanse and besmirch, to humble and exalt, to soothe and hurt, to help and hinder, to deny and consent, to imprecate and pray, to bless and blight -- man has grasped nature and subdued nature and brought out of nature all the physical conditions of civilization.

GOD has not given us the strength of the horse or the elephant, but He has endowed us with intelligence to apply our strength so as to surpass the power of all other creatures.

GOD has not given us the swiftness of the eagle; some of us "fly too high" as it is.

GOD has not given us the hearing of the elk; some of us hear too many things now.

GOD has not given us the sight of the panther; some of us see too much already.

GOD has not given us the keen scent of the fox house; some of us are too busy now sticking noses in other folks' business.

GOD has not clothed us with the dazzling plumage of the peacock; some of us now strut altogether too much in the vain shows of life.

But -- because of the brain having cooperation from the hand -- we command forces that transport us where birds of the air cannot fly.

Formed to make and guide the plow and to construct and manage the most complicated machinery, formed so as to bring earth and rock and wood and metal into shapes and adjustments such as supply all the needs and conveniences of life, the hand subdues the earth and fashions matter into the multiform purposes of intelligent occupancy and convenience.

Wielding the chisel upon shapeless marble, the hand brings forth a Venus -- and "children are raised unto GOD from the sterile womb of stone."

Manipulating a brush, the hand creates paradises upon canvass -- meeting the high demands of taste and sentiment.

Waving the baton, the hand "makes surging seas of tone subservient to its rod."

Using tools, the hand builds ships and adjusts magnets; it spans continents criss-crossed with rivers and furrowed with valleys and bulging with mountains with iron rails over which plunge massive juggernauts of steel and steam.

Using the instruments that the hands construct, man mounts up on steel wings that are tireless -- above where soars the eagles with feathered wings that tire.

Seizing a pen, the hand writes -- and the thought and wisdom and folly of the age inhabit our

libraries.

When the mind desires to disseminate news and to bring the happenings of the world to our doorsteps, the hand creates type and press -- and the rivulets of literature swell into rivers, flooding the world, even as the blind alleys of ignorance are changed into endless highways of wisdom.

Men, smitten down with disease in the inward parts, seek to be brought back to life from the edge of the grave -- and the hands of the surgeon, wielding surgical instruments, stay the onslaught of death-dealing disease.

Without the hand man's lordship over the animal kingdom would be as naught.

Without this imperial instrument -- the hand -- man's effort to maintain supremacy would be as futile as to expect language from a tongueless wax figure.

But with the hand -- and by usage of the hand -- man is the throned monarch of the earth. As saith a wise man, "The hand singles man out as being designed for destinies incomparably higher than those of any species of living creature upon the earth." Yea the hand of man sets man up and apart in exceptional and solitary dignity and distinction -- placing him in such an elevation as to justify the expectations of exalted destiny in his care.

Consider the

USE OF THE WORDS "HAND" AND "HANDS" IN THE BIBLE

Everywhere in the Bible the hands are regarded as having a sacred and holy function. So in Psalm 90 the Psalmist exalts the hands as sacred, God-given instruments.

"And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it" (Psalm 90:17).

We have in the Book of Acts, the story of the beginning of that beautiful service, the laying on of holy hands. It is in the New Testament, too, that we hear of wedlock, celebrated and sanctioned by the joining of hands and consecrated with the words: **"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,"**

A noted journalist said: "The greatest word in the English language is 'service.' This is true; and the hands are largely the means by which service is rendered."

The hands of the artist are skillful to serve mankind through the medium of beautiful pictures. The hands of the musician are delicately sensitive that they may serve mankind through the medium of inspiring music.

The hands of the laborer are scarred and hard that they may serve mankind through the medium of manual labor.

The hands of the doctor and surgeon are wonderfully sensitive and accurate that they may serve

mankind through the medium of medical and surgical treatment.
The hands of the mother are soiled and worn with the loving work of the household.

Truly hands are the agents of service. What sort of hands have you -- clean or dirty? -- helpful or hurtful?

Pearl Boyd speaks of both kinds:

Some hands have souls, it seems to me
They clasp yours so comfortingly:
You know they wish to give you cheer
And hearten you as you draw near.
Some hands are dead -- with clammy chill --
As if they somewhat wished you ill --
As if they grudged the bit of touch
Which might have meant so very much.
Some hands present their finger tips . . .
And even done with smiling lips,
Can never, though well-meant, replace
The firm hand-clasp, of old time grace.

Yield your hands -- with their thirty muscles for moving the fingers of each hand, the muscles placed in the forearm and only the slender tendons running down to the fingers -- as instruments of righteous service unto GOD.

The Bible speaks of the "**hand against every man**," of "**the power of the hand to do hurt**," of the wealth-getting hand, of the sword-yielding hand, of the bribe-receiving hand, of the hand strengthened in GOD, of the striking hand, of the "**good hand of God**," of the working hand, of the stretched-out hand, of the cunning hand, of the folded hands of those who desire sleep, of the slack hand, of the withholding hand, of the hand of evildoers, of the feeble hand, of wounded hands, of holy hands, of hands "**stretched out with scorners**," of hands that offend, of clean hands, of those who "**do evil with both hands earnestly**" (Micah 7:3).

And, thinking of these hands, and others hands mentioned in the Bible, we have

A VISION OF HANDS

Some years ago, Dr. Frank Crane wrote this of the hands: "Think of the hands of them that do the world's dirty work. Hands of the maid who scrubs the floor, of the Slav woman mopping the hall in the office building, bleached hands of the dishwasher; strong, red hands of the washerwoman slapping, soaping, and wringing the linen; muscular hands grasping the iron, the broom-stick, the mophandle, the dust cloth, the posts and skillets. Hands upon the locomotive throttle, upon the automobile steering wheel, upon the motorcycle handle, upon the aeroplane gear -- hands which if but negligent or awkward a second would bring death. Hands drawing back the bow string, pressing the trigger of the automatic revolver, manipulating the army rifle, loading the eight-inch cannon, swinging the sandbag and the lead pipe, holding the brass knuckles, the dagger, the club. Hands of crime, individual and national.

"Hands plying the whip upon little children, the cat-o-nine-tails upon the naked backs of seamen, instruments of torture upon heretics, scourging of CHRIST, Hands of hate.

"Hands of the surgeon creeping among the mazes of life, feeling the pulse, delivering the child, holding the hypodermic syringe, the lancet, the stethoscope.

"Hands of fair women, combing and twisting the hair, powdering the face, penciling the eyebrows, tying ribbons, patting furbelows, buttoning, hooking, marching, arranging.

"Hands plump and baby-fat; hands dry, old, veined, like a tree-trunk. Hands manicured and soft as velvet; hands gnarled, twisted, hard as leather. Hands gloved and tender; hands brown, tree-fingered, scarred.

"Hands hoeing, plowing, driving, wheeling barrows. Handling pitchforks, cleaning stables, digging ditches, making gardens, cultivating farms. Hands of mothers caressing the child's cheek, of nurses smoothing hot brows, of lovers piddling palms. Hands folded in prayer, upraised in benediction, extended in excommunication. Busy hands, myriad functioned, spirit-moved, soul-impregnated, the moving semaphores of life. Swarms of hands, fluttering as birds; beneath them spring up giant buildings, monuments, bridges, railways, the wonders of the world."

It would be terrible to be without hands -- to have not those wonderful instruments to minister to the needs and comforts of the body in a cleansing and protective way -- bathing the body or clothing the body or warding off hurtful attacks upon the body. But it is more terrible, viewed in the light of the judgment hour when we must give an account of "**the things done in [the] body**," considered in the recognition of the blessedness of the service hands can render and of the good they can perform, to have two strong and supple, uninjured, unimpaired hands -- and to have yielded them to do the Devil's bidding in the Devil's work.

How awful to have two functioning hands and not yield them to GOD as instruments of righteousness! Terrible it is to have no hands or just one hand or mangled hands or twisted hands or three-fingered hands or hands ruined by rheumatism! But more terrible it is to have two hands unwithered and unmarred, and they be hands defiled, unclean, greedy for unrighteous gain, dishonored in business dealings, performing the service of Satan, or of them who do Satan's will as those blinded by his devices and deceived by his wiles.

How we need always and everywhere, to bear in our hands what Paul calls "**the dying of the Lord Jesus**" that it may be known of our hands on earth and recorded of our hands in Heaven that they are instruments of righteousness unto GOD.

If we yield our hands unto GOD as instruments of righteousness -- hands "**holy, acceptable unto God**" -- we will so live as not to be ashamed to give answer in the closet or to shout answer from the housetop to GOD's question:

"WHAT IS THAT IN THINE HAND?"

GOD asked that question of Moses when Moses hesitated to become the LORD's messenger. Moses mentioned difficulty after difficulty which, he thought, would excuse him from entering on his allotted task. When Moses seized the serpent by the tail -- in obedience to the command of GOD -- it became a rod in his hand again. He was taught that what was formidable to weak faith might become an element of power.

Joshua, what is that in thine hand? A spear. And GOD told him to hold it aloft -- and stretch it toward Ai. Joshua, extending the spear as the signal agreed upon with the men who were in ambush, had a great victory.

Shamgar, what is that in thine hand? In his hand, Shamgar had only an ox goad -- a clumsy and rude weapon. But six hundred Philistines fell when Shamgar, with strong hand, wielded it -- and Israel was delivered.

Gideon, what is that in thine hand? In their hands Gideon and his men had only lamps, pitchers, trumpets -- strange weapons all. But against the countless Midianites GOD made these feeble instruments mighty for the accomplishment of His divine purpose.

Samson, what is that in thine hand? In his hand Samson had only the jawbone of an ass -- after "**the Philistines shouted against him.**" But, when the SPIRIT of the LORD came mightily upon him, he "**put forth his hand**" and took that jawbone "**and slew a thousand men therewith.**"

David, what is that in thine hand? In his hand David once had only a harp. But with the harp he subdued for a while instincts as low as hell in the soul of King Saul. In his hand again David had only a sling and a pebble. But with that, with aim unerring and with hand made strong in the LORD, he felled Goliath and gave victory to Israel's armies.

Young lad, what is that in thine hand? In his hand a young lad had five loaves and two small fishes. "**What are they among so many?**" -- so many hungry people. But with them, JESUS supplied the wants of the multitude -- even as today He can take "**the things which are not, to bring to naught the things that are;**" even as now He can make "**the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and... the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.**"

What is that in thine hand, Mary? In her hand, Mary had an alabaster box of ointment -- very precious. Though Judas misinterpreted the act, though others complained critically about her deed, she, with it, the blessed CHRIST anointed. And JESUS, pronouncing a eulogy that forever linked her name above every name, caused the fragrance of that ointment to perfume the world.

What is that in thine hand, dear widow woman? In her hand the little widow, with a body not so well-fed beneath poor raiment, dropped in two mites that day when JESUS "**sat over against the treasury**" and watched the people put in their gifts. And JESUS took those two mites of money, made silver and golden chariot wheels out of what was in her hand -- and has taken her up and down all the highways of the world for nearly two thousand years.

What is that in thine hand, Dorcas? In her hand Dorcas had a needle. That needle she used for the LORD's poor. But that needle, empowered of GOD, "*wrought for her an inscription more*

durable than brass or marble"; and "her eulogy will be read when the victories of Roman armies and the glories of Grecian arts are forgotten."

What is that in thine hand, Martin Luther? In Martin Luther's hands were a thin parchment and a tiny hammer. "It is enough," answered Luther. Then he nailed his famous protests upon the doors of the Roman church -- and the era of Reformation broke like a sunrise at midnight upon darkened Europe.

What is that in thine hand, John Bunyan? In his hand a one-time dissolute tinker, John Bunyan, languishing in jail, held a goose quill pen. But that pen, wielded by a hand that was yielded to GOD as an instrument of righteousness, wrote a book that crawled out from between the bars of the Bedford prison and walked, even as now it walks, more bypaths and traveled, and even as now it travels, more highways, knocking at more doors and speaking to more people in their mother tongue than any book, save GOD's Bible.

What is that in thine hand, Carey? In his hands, Carey held only some pegs and a cobbler's hammer. But, with heart aflame with love for the heathen world, and with hands yielded unto GOD as instruments of righteous service, he bannered the missionary idea into the churches -- and world-wide missions is the result.

No matter what is in your hands -- whether pen or broom or typewriter or kitchen utensil or painter's brush or carpenter's hammer or woodsman's axe or manicure set or grocery basket or barber's razor or tool of iron -- yield your hands to GOD as instruments of righteousness.

What is that in thine hand? Let it not be the dirty book -- with its dirty leaves, its foul statements, its lustful insinuations, its licentious suggestions, its sewerage from some God-dishonoring presses.

What is that in thine hand? Let it not be the wine cup with its contents which mock. Let it not be the liquor bottle or glass containing that which at the last stingeth like the adder and biteth like a serpent.

What is that in thine hand? Let it not be the gamblers' tools with their "hearts" that are often the means of bruising hearts, with their "spades" which often dig down and get man's last dollar, with their "clubs" that have sometimes been the means of clubbing men into suicidal attitudes or actions, with their "diamonds" that have sometimes etched the pictures of disgrace and shame upon multitudes who never found life long enough to erase them.

How many with beautifully adorned and bejeweled hands need to pray:

Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love.

How we need to remember these words:

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn

deceitfully" (Psalm 24:3-4).

How we need so to see to it that our hands are instruments of righteousness in service to GOD and to humanity that we can, without self-righteous boast, say:

"The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight" (Psalm 18:20-24).

What is that in thine hand? Let it not be a pen that writes slander or forgeries or lies. Let never your pen be dipped in the wicked man's mind or the Devil's sewerage. Let never an author write obscenely, skillfully veiling the evil in subtle language and suggestive phrases.

What is that in thine hand? Let it not be a typewriter that falsifies love when love is far from the heart. When I think of certain books printed and of certain pictures painted, I say that if some people do not go to hell it will be because that institution is burned out before they die. The Devil just as surely has held and does try to hold the hands of men for evil purposes as the hands of Elisha were held upon the hands of young King Joash in the long ago for righteous intent.

For his fidelity to the truth, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was sentenced to die at the stake. But every day during his imprisonment he was offered life and liberty if only he would sign the deed of recantation. Every morning the document was spread out before him and the pen placed in his hand. Day after day he resisted the temptation. But at last Cranmer yielded.

But as soon as the horror of cruel death had been removed, he felt that he had bought to boon of life at too great a price. The death with which he had been threatened was the death of a lion. He felt it better to be a dead lion than a living dog! He held himself in contempt and abhorrence. He cowered before the faces of his fellow men. Life on such terms was intolerable. He made a recantation of his recantation. As a token of remorse, he burned to a cinder the hand with which he signed the document, the cowardly document. And then, at peace with his conscience, he embraced a fiery death with a joyful heart.

I know a man in the penitentiary for written blackmail. It would have been better for that man if he had done as Cranmer did.

I know a young man today who is a victim of Ingersoll's infidelity. It would have been better for that young man if Ingersoll had taken the hand with which he wrote his hellish matter and had done with it as Cranmer did.

I know a man who is serving a sentence in jail because of obscene letters he wrote. How much better it had been for him had he done with the hand that wrote the obscenity what Cranmer did.

I know men who have robbed themselves of the riches of a good name through forgery -- and some of them are working for Uncle Sam behind gray walls and in certain distinguishable

clothes. It would have been better for them if they had done with their hands what Cranmer did.

It is so terrible to CHRIST that one should be besmirched by evil that He plunges into that terrific metaphor, surely the most heart-shuddering thing in Scripture, about the right hand being cut off and the right eye torn out -- anything, everything -- to be saved from the foul and festering pollution of sin.

"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:29-30).

As we think of GOD's goodness, we must say that hands yielded to GOD as instruments of righteousness will, as to GOD's causes that require money, be

GRACIOUSLY GENEROUS HANDS

Wicked hands had Eli's sons -- greedy for gain:

"And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment" (I Samuel 8:3).

It is good for us to read these words:

"Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee" (Ezekiel 22:13).

GOD speaks condemningly of hands greedy to get and miserly to give:

"For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right" (Amos 5:12).

And GOD teaches that we can burglarize our own lives -- can be highwaymen holding ourselves up and robbing ourselves -- by having hands greedy for gain. Hearken!

"And they lay wait for their own blood: they lurk privily for their own lives. So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof" (Proverbs 1:18-19).

And GOD promises reward to those who hate the gains of oppression and deal honestly with hands yielded to GOD as instruments of righteousness.

"He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure"

(Isaiah 33:15-16).

When Pompeii was unearthed, a man was found with his hand clutching a bag of gold. The supposition is that he had a chance to flee and turned back and perished with his money. **"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"** (Matthew 6:21).

How many of us have hands that drop *one tenth* into GOD's house? Benevolence and liberality is not something that drops into our lives like a Christmas present while we sleep. It is something we develop -- a grace we grow. It comes like an education, like efficiency in music, like skill in painting or speech. It grows, but what a dwarfish growth in some lives.

There are oaks in Japan two hundred years old which are still standing in flower pots. Such is the grace of giving in some lives. While others have grown to wide-branching, sheltering pavilions they are the stunted pigmies of selfishness and illiberality.

The cigar man can say they spent more for cigars.

The theater man can say they spent more for shows.

The beauty parlor lady can say they spent more for waves.

The Coca-Cola man can say they spent more for drinks.

The homes of many could say that many are willing for their church to have carpets they would not think of putting on their floors.

Sam Jones said: "If GOD makes you, old sisters, wear in Heaven what you gave to the poor on this earth, you won't go calling much the first few days." The lawyers who make out wills could say when they notice how some people never think of remembering the church in their wills, that our hands need to learn the grace of giving.

Hands yielded to GOD as gracious hands of generous and Scriptural giving will not withhold the tithe from GOD's treasury, will not hesitate in bringing that tithe to GOD's treasury, remembering that the liberal soul shall be made fat, remembering that we should **"honor the LORD with [our] substance and with the first fruits of all [our] increase."**

And now soberly would I ask you to remember that whether you let the devil use your hands to do his works or whether you yield your hands to GOD as instruments of righteousness to do GOD's will, your hands, the hands of all of you, will be

EMPTY HANDS AT DEATH

"Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him" (Psalm 49:16-17).

"And said, Naked came I out my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

"There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and

there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?" (Ecclesiastes 5:13-16).

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things: and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (I Timothy 6:6-11).

We are strangers and sojourners here as were our fathers. We are on a pilgrimage here -- on a journey. And the less baggage we are hampered with the better off we are. Shrouds have no pockets. And if you do have pockets in your shroud, your arms will be too stiff for you to put your hands in them. Alexander, the Great, came to die: "Thrust my hands through my shroud that the people may see that they are empty."

I buried a man once in New Orleans who did not have a single flower on his casket, or a single mourner. I buried a man once on whose grave were flowers enough to fill an acre garden. But their hands were alike -- *empty*. I have held the hands of paupers when they died. I have held the bejeweled hands of rich women when they were walking down into the waters of death. But all were alike -- *empty*. Nothing but a cry we bring with us. Nothing we take with us as, with a gasp, we go. No man ever flies through the valley of the shadow in an airplane. No man ever rides through in a limousine. GOD help us to see our hands as they will be when folded in death -- *empty*.

Now, let us find out, in the use of our hands for GOD,

OUR INSPIRATION

What is that inspiration -- if we be not altogether carnally minded? The inspiration is the serving and nail-scarred hands of JESUS. All through His earthly life the hands of JESUS were servants of His loving will, the representatives of His kindly thoughts, the tender ambassadors of His great heart, even as now, in His glorified body, they remain still the messengers of His grace and love. He never made His hands into a fist to strike others. He never had on His hands any finger to point in scorn at GOD's law. He never had the grasping hand -- open to getting, closed to giving. He never had a lazy hand that wanted no work to find.

What mountains of human misery and woe would be nevermore possible if all human hands were like the hands of the Man of Nazareth. Oh, that the whole wide human race might join hands, and that His tender and holy hands might touch ours and transform them all into hands like unto His own.

Would that the cruel hands of this world, so careless and inconsiderate, were blest with His

gentleness. His hands were sturdy and strong from labor in the carpenter shop, where He worked with saw and hammer and plane and chisel; but how soft and gentle were those hands to take the little children in His arms, to touch the aged and infirm with a kindness that thrilled them with new courage and new happiness. Would that the scornful hands of this world, so ready to accuse and throw stones of hate, were as ready as His to forgive and lift and help. Sinners loved Him because He was not high-handed; He was ever reaching down a hand of hope to reach and save some struggler almost lost beneath the waves of life's stormy sea.

Those holy hands red with the scars of the crucifixion -- those hands deep-wounded by the iron spikes that nailed Him to the Cross -- were not clenched hands. They were open on the Cross, open on the Mount, open by the sea, open in invitation, open in warning, open in ascension, and are now gloriously open in welcome.

By His hands touching the eyes of the blind into sight, -- let your hands be yielded as instruments of righteousness to Him.

By His hands touching the ears of the deaf until the sound waves came rushing in, I beseech you to let your hands be yielded to Him as instruments of righteousness.

By His hands touching the fevered brow into coolness, let your hands go forth as servants of sympathy.

By His hands held out to sinking Peter on the water, let your hands be reached to the man and woman who is down.

By His hands placed upon the loathsome leper, go thou to take the unclean, to bring them to JESUS.

By His hands breaking the bread for thousands, let your hands feed the hungry.

By His hands placed upon the dead, let your hands wipe away tears of sorrow.

By His hands placed upon little children, let your hands lead them in the right way.

By His hands that plied the scourge, let your hands be ready to serve against the Devil.

See His hands on the Cross! Place your hands in the nail-scarred hands -- the hands that set the pillars of the earth in their socket and drew the blue curtains of the night across the windows of Heaven and pinned them together with star clusters. The now-pierced hands set the stars on their thrones in space and laid the first foundations of the waters. CHRIST's hands, holy hands, black with the bruises of the hammer, broken with nails, bloody with sacred pourings of His blood, held the weight of His body while every breath He drew was a pang of pain and every beat of His heart was a throb of agony. O, may these hands make us to say:

LORD, when I am weary with toiling
And burdensome seem thy commands,
If my load should lead to complaining,
LORD, show me thy hands,
Thy nail-pierced hands,
Thy Cross-torn hands,
My SAVIOUR, show me Thy hands.

~ end of chapter 6 ~