

VALUE OF THE HAND.

Dr. Talmage Calls It the Soul's Executive Officer.

Its Construction Illustrates Divine Wisdom and Its Right Employment Makes Manhood Better and Happier.

[Copyright, 1900, by Louis Klepsch.] Washington, Jan. 28.

The discourse of Dr. Talmage is a lesson of gratitude for that which none of us fully appreciate and shows the divine meaning in our physical structure; text, I Corinthians 12:21: "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee."

These words suggest that some time two very important parts of the human body got into controversy, and the eye became insolent and full of braggedo and said: "I am an independent part of the human system. How far I can see, taking in spring morning and midnight aurora! Compared with myself, what an insignificant thing is the human hand. I look down upon it. There it hangs, swinging at the side, a clump of muscles and nerves, and it cannot see an inch either way. It has no luster compared with that which I beam forth."

Fourteen hundred and thirty-three times, as nearly as I can count by aid of concordance, does the Bible speak of the human hand. We are all familiar with the hand, but the man has yet to be born who can fully understand this wondrous instrument. Sir Charles Bell, the English surgeon, came home from the battlefield of Waterloo, where he had been amputating limbs and binding up gunshot fractures, and wrote a book entitled: "The Hand; Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as Evidencing Design."

So we are all going on opening and shutting this divinely constructed instrument—the hand—ignorant of much of the revelation it was intended to make of the wisdom and goodness of God. You can see by their structure that shoulder and elbow and forearm are getting ready for the culmination in the hand. There is your wrist, with its eight bones and their ligaments in two rows. That wrist, with its bands of fibers and its hinged joint and turning on two axes—on the larger axis moving backward and forward, and on the smaller axis turning nearly round. And there is the palm of your hand, with its five bones, each having a shaft and two terminations. There are the fingers of that hand, with 14 bones, each finger with its curiously wrought tendons, five of the bones with ending roughened for the lodgment of the nails. There is the thumb, coming from opposite direction to meet the fingers, so that in conjunction they may clasp and hold fast that which you desire to take.

A skeleton of the hand traced on blackboard, or unrolled in diagram, or hung in medical museum, is mightily illustrative of the divine wisdom and goodness, but how much more pleasing when in living action all its nerves and muscles and bones and tendons and tissues and phalanges display what God invented when He invented the human hand. Two specimens of it we carry at our side from the time when in infancy we open them to take a toy till in the last hour of a long life we extend them in bitter farewell.

With the divine help I shall speak of the hand as the chief executive officer 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. God evidently intended all the lower orders of living beings should have weapons of defense, and hence the elephant's tusk, and the horse's hoof, and the cow's horn, and the lion's tooth, and the insect's sting. Having given weapons of defense to the lower orders of living beings, of course He would not leave man, the highest order of living beings on earth, defenseless and at the mercy of brutal or ruffian attack. The right, yea, the duty of self-defense is so evident it needs no argumentation. The hand is the divinely fashioned weapon of defense. We may seldom have to use it for such purposes, but the fact that we are so equipped insures safety. The hand is a weapon sooner loaded than any gun, sooner drawn than any sword. Its fingers bent into the palm, it becomes a bolt of demolition. Solomon speaks of the hands as the "keepers of the house," or the defenders. Surely such a castle as the human body needs such protection as the hand alone can offer.

What a defense it is against accident! There have been times in all our experiences when we have with the hand warded off something that would have extinguished our eye-

sight, or broken the skull, or crippled us for a lifetime. While the eye has discovered the approaching peril, the hand has beaten it back, or struck it down, or disarmed it. Every day thank God for your right hand, and if you want to hear its eulogy ask him who in swift revulsion of machinery has had it crushed, or at Chapultepec or South mountain or San Juan hill or Sedan lost it.

And in passing let me say that he who has the weapon of the hand uninfused and in full use needs no other. You towards who walk with sword cane or carry a pistol in your hip pocket had better lay aside your deadly weapon. At the frontier, or in barbarous lands, or as an officer of the law about to make arrest, such arming may be necessary, but no citizen moving in these civilized regions needs such reinforcement. If you are afraid to go down these streets or along these country roads without dagger or firearms, better ask your grandmother to go with you armed with scissors and knitting needle. What cowards, if not intended murderers, uselessly to carry weapons of death! In our two hands God gave us all the weapons we need to carry!

Again, the hand is the chief executive officer of the soul for affording help. Just see how that hand is constructed. How easily you can lower it to raise the fallen. How easily it is extended to feel the invalid's pulse, or gently wipe away the tear of orphanage, or contribute alms, or smooth the excited brow, or beckon into safety. O the helping hands! There are hundreds of thousands of them, and the world wants at least 1,600,000,000 of them. Hands to bless others, hands to rescue others, hands to save others. What are all these schools and churches and asylums of mercy? Outstretched hands. What are all those hands distributing tracts and carrying medicines and trying to cure blind eyes and deaf ears and broken bones and disordered intellects and wayward sons? Helping hands. Let each one of us add two to that number if we have two, or, if through casualty only one, add that one. If these hands which we have so long kept thrust into pockets through indolence or folded in indifference or employed in writing wrong things or doing mean things or heaving up obstacles in the way of righteous progress might from this hour be consecrated to helping others out and up on, they would be hands worth being raised on the resurrection morn and worth clapping in eternal gladness over a world redeemed.

The great artists of the ages—Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci and Quentin Matsys and Rembrandt and Albert Durer and Titian—have done their best picturing the face of Christ, but none except Ary Scheffer seems to have put much stress upon the hand of Christ. Indeed, the mercy of that hand, the gentleness of that hand, is beyond all artistic portrayal. Some of His miracles He performed by word of mouth and without touching the subject before Him, but most of them He performed through the hand. Was the dead damsel to be raised to life? "He took her by the hand." Was the blind man to have optic nerve restored? "He took him by the hand." Was the demon to be exorcised from a suffering man? "He took him by the hand." The people saw this and besought Him to put His hand on their afflicted ones.

His own hands free, see how the Lord sympathized with the man who had lost the use of his hand. It was a case of atrophy, a wasting away until the arm and hand had been reduced in size beyond any medical or surgical restoration. Moreover, it was his right hand, the more important of the two, for the left side in all its parts is weaker than the right side, and involuntarily, in any exigency, put out the right hand because we know it is the best hand. So that poor man had lost more than half of his physical armament. It would not have been so had it had been the left hand. But Christ looked at the shriveled up right hand dangling uselessly at the man's side and then cried out with a voice that had omnipotence in it: "Stretch forth thy right hand!" and the record is "he stretched it forth whole as the other." The blood rushed through the shrunken veins, and the shortened muscles lengthened, and the dead nerves thrilled, and the lifeless fingers tingled with resumed circulation, and the restored man held up in the presence of the skeptical Pharisee one of Jehovah's masterpieces—a perfect hand. No wonder that story is put three times in the Bible, so that if a sailor were cast away on a barren island, or a soldier's New Testament got mutilated in battle and whole pages are destroyed, the shipwrecked or wounded man in hospital would probably have at least one of those three radiant stories of what Christ thought of the human hand.

A pastor in his sermon told how a little child appreciated the value of his hand when he was told that on the morrow it must be amputated in order to save his life. Hearing that, he went to a quiet place and prayed that God would spare his hand. The surgeon, coming the next day to do his work, found the hand so much better that amputation was postponed, and the hand got well. The pastor, telling of this in a sermon, concluded by holding up his hand and saying: "That is the very hand that was spared in answer to prayer, and I hold it up, a monument of Divine mercy."

Again, the hand is the chief executive officer of the soul when wrung in agony. Tears of relief are sometimes denied to trouble. The eyelids at such times are as hot and parched and burning as the brow. At such time even the voice is suppressed, and there is no sob or outcry. Then the wringing of the hand tells the story. At the close of a life wasted in sin sometimes comes that expression of the twisted fingers—the memory of years that will never return, of opportunities the like of

which will never again occur and conscience in its wrath pouncing upon the soul and all the past a horror, only to be surpassed by the approaching horror. So a man wrings his hands over theasket of a dead wife whom he has cruelly treated. So a man wrings his hands at the fate of sons and daughters whose prospects have been ruined by his inebriety and neglect and depravity. So the sinner wrung his hands when after a life full of offers of pardon and peace and heaven he dies without hope. When there are sorrows too poignant for lamentation on the lip and too hot for the tear glands to write in letters of crystal on the cheek, the hand recites the tragedy with more emphasis than anything in "Macbeth" and "King Lear."

Worse than the wringing of the hands was the punishment that Cranmer gave his right hand when he put it in the fire of the stake and without flinching said: "Forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall therefore be the first punished. It shall be the first burned. This was the hand that wrote it."

Of course there is a wicked shaking of hands, and Solomon refers to it when he says: "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." Shake hands in conspiracy to damage individual or community or nation, shake hands to defraud, shake hands to stand by each other in wrongdoing. You help me stuff this ballot box, and I will see that when I am in power you shall have promotion. You help me in my infancy, and I will help you in your infancy. Oh, that is profanation of a holy rite; that is sacrilege against a Divine arrangement; that is gripping your own destruction. Pilate and Herod, though antagonists before, shook hands over Christ's projected assassination.

But shake hands the way William Penn shook hands with the Indians for their civilization. Shake hands the way Missionary Carey shook hands with the Hindoos, for whose salvation he became a lifetime exile. Shake hands the way Havoclock shook hands with besieged women at Lucknow whom he had come to save from massacre. Shake hands as David Brainerd did with the American Indians whom he offered a glorious Heaven through the Gospel. Shake hands as Lincoln shook hands with the agitated mother to whom he gave back the boy who had fallen asleep from overfatigue as a sentinel. Shake hands as during the civil war Anna Ross shook hands with the wounded soldier in Cooper Shop hospital, Philadelphia. Shake hands as Van Meter, the city evangelist, shook hands with the wail of the street coming penitent into the midnight mission. Shake hands as heaven shook hands with earth that night when a doxology in the gallery of clouds woke the Bethlehem shepherds.

But it is not always in such glad greeting that we can employ our right hand. Ais, that so often we have to employ the hand in farewell salutation. If your right hand retained some impress of all such uses, it would be a volume of bereavements. Oh, the good-bys in which your right hand has participated! Good-by at the steamboat wharf. Good-by at the rail train window. Good-by before the opening of the battle. Good-by at the dying pillow. We all needed grace for such handshaking, though our hand was strong and their hand was weak, and we will need grace for the coming good-bys, and that grace we had better seek while amid the felicities of health and homes unbroken. Thank God, there will be no good-by in Heaven.

Again, the hand is the chief executive of the soul when employed in benediction. No gesture of the human hand means more than the outstretched gesture. In many of our religious denunciations we are not permitted to pronounce an apostolic benediction until we have been regularly ordained as ministers of the gospel, but there are kinds of benediction that you may all pronounce without especial permission from presbytery or conference or convention. You have a right to spread abroad both right and left hand in bestowing a blessing of kindness and good will upon all you meet. With both hands bless the children. Take them in your arms and kiss their fair cheek. Take with them a round of merriment in the room before you leave it, and by prayer put them in the arms of the Christ, to go to whom in olden time they struggled to get out of the arms of their mothers. God bless the cradles and high chairs and nurseries all around the world.

Extend your hands in benediction for the aged. Take their counsel and ask their prayers, and smooth the path down the declivities. By neglect and unkind demeanor add no wrinkles to their brow, no more stoop to their shoulders. They have their hand on the latch of the door through which they will soon go out of sight of your homes and churches. May the mantles of Elijah fall upon the Elijahs! Spread your hand for the benediction upon all the men and women in the tug of life, many of them tired and buffeted and disheartened. Never go out of a store or shop or office or field without pronouncing a benediction.

And what better use can I make of my hands, which are the chief executive officer of my soul, than now to spread them abroad in the apostolic benediction which has been pronounced for centuries, and over hundreds of thousands of assemblages, at coronations and obsequies, at harvest homes and on fast days, by all the ministers of the Gospel in the past as it will be by all ministers of the Gospel until the church militant reaches up its right hand to take the right hand of the church triumphant; a benediction which, when it has its full away, will leave nothing for our world to want or Heaven to bestow: "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all forever. Amen."

DOINGS OF CONGRESS

WHAT OUR NATIONAL LAW MAKERS ARE CONSIDERING.

Some of the More Important Work of the National Congress—Bills That the Committees Report Favorably Upon—Washington Topics.

In the House Feb. 5 Mr. Shibley, of Pennsylvania, who made a speech last week defending expansion, was pointed into the announcement that the Democrats could consider his seat constructively on the Republican side.

The new treaty with Great Britain relative to the building of the Nicaragua Canal, was sent to the Senate February 5, read in executive session and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

The Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives has decided to report a bill establishing a tariff system for Puerto Rico on a basis of 25 per cent. of the rates in the regular tariff law. The committee also decided that the words, "United States" in the sections of the Constitution relating to taxation means the Federal States of the Union. The power of Congress to legislate for Puerto Rico and the Philippines is declared to be almost unlimited.

In the Senate Feb. 2 Mr. Allen, of Nebraska, renewed his criticisms of Secretary Gage and his dealings with New York banks. Mr. Daniels, of Virginia, delivered an extended speech on the pending financial measures. Daniel M. Randall, of Indiana, and Charles G. Bennett, of New York, were sworn in as Sergeant-at-Arms and Secretary of the Senate, respectively.

In the House the consideration of the Indian Appropriation bill was resumed Feb. 2, and Representative Shibley, of Pennsylvania, assailed his Democratic colleagues for their opposition to expansion, and received an impressive demonstration from the floor and galleries.

The Senate Committee on Commerce has practically decided upon a favorable report upon the bill creating a Department of Commerce.

The House Committee on Mileage has rejected the claim of Brigham H. Roberts, of Utah, for mileage in connection with his contest for a seat in the House. Mr. Roberts put in a claim for mileage from Salt Lake City to Washington, 2,587 miles and return, at the usual rate of 20 cents a mile each way, making a total of \$1,038.80. Mr. Cooper, of Texas, moved that Roberts was entitled to mileage, but on the vote, 2 to 2, this motion failed. Chairman Barnham will report this action which, he says, is equivalent to a rejection of the claim by the committee. As a result of suggestions in the committee, Mr. Barnham will confer with the Speaker concerning the recognition of any member who may seek to secure for Mr. Roberts the \$2,000 usually allowed in contested election cases. This, however, is not the committee action, but is due to a desire to afford opportunity to bring the matter before the House.

In the United States Senate Jan. 31 Senator Pettigrew sought to have read a resolution embodying a statement of Aguinaldo giving his version of an alleged recognition of the "Filipino republic" by Admiral Dewey. This led to a sensational debate, in which the actions of the South Dakota Senator were denounced as treason, and the statements of Aguinaldo branded as a tissue of falsehoods. Mr. Pettigrew insisted that Admiral Dewey had given recognition to the Filipinos by saluting their flag and cooperating with them in Subig Bay. Senator Hawley, in an excited manner, objected to having the statement read, because it was treason and would lend aid and comfort to the enemy. An angry colloquy was continued for some time between Pettigrew and several Senators in regard to the matter, when the point of order was raised that the statement could not be read because it was embraced in a resolution pending before the Senate providing for its printing, which was sustained by the presiding officer.

In the House Jan. 31 a variety of questions were discussed, including the Philippine policy, government of Puerto Rico and election methods and lynchings in the south. House Election Committee No. 3 has decided the Wise-Young contest of election case for the Second Virginia District in favor of the contestant, Mr. West. The Senate Committee on Elections heard several witnesses Jan. 30 in the Clark bribery case, whose admissions destroy the force of their testimony. During the last three or four hearings the attorneys for the contestants, the syndicate of Montana citizens, have put on witnesses who have seemed to be not exactly in touch with the complainants. They swore a man named Black, who disproved a large part of their case, contradicting effectively a preceding witness who had testified in a bold and careless manner to several instances of bribery. One witness was pursued relentlessly for an hour to make him disclose the state of his bank account and tell how he got his money. He answered that he won a good deal of money at faro and poker. Senator Faulkner, counsel for Senator Clark, said he would make his side of the case as short as possible, and when he began should push things as hard as possible.

**CRIMINAL.** Henry Walsh, clerk in charge of the Mailing Department of the Chicago postoffice, was arrested Sunday, being charged with robbing the mail. It is claimed he has robbed 5,000 letters. In an alley in the rear of Pearl street, Philadelphia, above Twentieth, the dead body of Hugh Dugan, 12 years old, was found in a pool of blood. His body and clothing bore marks of violence, and his death, it is thought, resulted from internal hemorrhage. Charles Weisenborn, 18 years old, a baker, with whom the dead boy had quarreled, was arrested, and it is said, confessed to the police that he had beaten the boy a few hours before the body was found. Winfield S. G. Walker shot Margaret Davis and then committed suicide in Philadelphia Feb. 4. Miss Davis, whom he was to marry, is now a widow.

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