

Our Hands

The Present Truth – December 15, 1898

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Think what a wonderful little instrument your hand is, how many things you can do with it, and how helpless you would be without it. To every one of His creatures God has given just the organs that it needs to express itself with, to put its thoughts into action. But we do not find any of the animals with a hand, like the perfect hand of man, because God has not given them the wisdom to use it.

The elephant, one of the most intelligent of creatures, has a long trunk which it uses skilfully, as you may have seen, in something the way that we use our hands. It can pick up things with its trunk, and by bending it into different shapes can do many different things with it. God has put the different members in the bodies of all the animals according to the power and wisdom that they have to use them.

But when we come to man, the highest and most intelligent of all living creatures, we find that God has given him this perfect little instrument, able to meet all the needs of his mind which directs them, in any kind of motion or work.

This gives man great superiority over all other animals; he has been called "the animal with the thumb." You will perhaps at first think it strange that so much notice should be taken of this little member; but see how few things you could do well without your thumb, and how many you could not do at all. Try it for a little while, and you will learn something of the wisdom of Him who "hath set the members in the body, every one as it hath pleased Him."

In the hand and arm there are thirty bones and fifty muscles all connected by nerves with the brain, which sends messages along them to tell the hand just what to do. If these nerves are injured the hand is quite useless, for it can do nothing of itself; it is only the servant of the mind which moves and works through it. The number and wonderful arrangement of these bones and muscles make it possible for the hand to be put into any position, and to do whatever work the mind wants it to.

Besides the many different kinds of work that you can do with your hands, think how dependent you are upon them for feeling. The hand is the principal organ of touch or feeling. Some of the nerves that we spoke of send messages from the brain to the hand, telling it what to do, and others send back message from the hand to the brain about the things that it touches. So the brain feels things with the hand, and a great deal of knowledge can get into your mind through your fingers.

When the nerves connecting the brain with the eyes are destroyed or injured, as in blind people, the brain makes the hands do the work of the eyes. You know that if you go into a very dark room where you can see nothing, by feeling with your hands you can find what you want, and move about without getting hurt or doing any damage. And then, too, you may have seen blind people using their fingers to read with, by feeling the raised letters in the books specially prepared for them, so making their fingers do the work of their eyes.

When one is deaf and dumb, he makes his hands do the work of his tongue, and by making different signs with them he can make people understand what he wants to say.

When we are separated from each other we can still talk together by using our hands to write with. You will think of many other ways in which we use our hands, and see how much you have to thank God for, for putting these most useful members in your body.

But although we may all have hands just alike, just as perfect and beautiful in shape and structure, how much more skilfully some are able to use their hands than others. This will show you that the hand needs training to make it the perfect servant of the mind, able to do exactly what the mind wants done.

You have, I am sure, already found this out in your writing, drawing, and other hand-work. What your hand puts onto the paper is often very different from the beautiful copy that you have in your mind, is it not? But the more the hand is used in useful work, the more skilful and able will it become.

Remember what we have learned about our bodies being the temple of God, and all our members for His use and glory, not ours. Then let your hands be trained for His use, for the more skilful they are, the better He can use them in His service. Let Him have your hands, that He has made for His own use. Ask Him to take them and use them to do kind, helpful, loving deeds, and to keep them so that Satan cannot use them to do naughty, unkind actions with.

“Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.”