

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

THE HAND.

'The hand of man.'—Gn 9⁶.

1. *Hands.*—I have a very distinct recollection of three pairs of hands. They were the hands of my brothers. Long ago, when we played together, I never noticed that there was any great difference between the hands of the four of us. It was not till we grew up, and each had his own distinctive characteristics, that the difference struck me. I can imagine I see them now; and if they were held up amongst twenty other pairs, I believe I could pick them out. You are not grown up yet, so I don't suppose you have thought about hands and what they mean. But your mother knows ever so much about yours. I've seen a very proud mother holding a baby boy; and when he closed his wee hand firmly, she said, 'See! that's going to be a man with some force about him.' It is really very delightful to hear mothers on this subject.

But, while you have never given the matter a thought, you must have noticed certain things. For instance, the hands of a labouring man are not in the least like those of a watchmaker, or an engraver, or of a person who writes all day. And some of you little ones, who get your faces washed, know that there are very hard hands, as well as nice soft ones. A real nurse's hand is both strong and soft. A doctor's may be the same, but it must also have a very delicate touch. Then perhaps some of the boys have seen men who had tremendous strength in their hands. There is a well known cartoon of the German Emperor, called the 'Mailed Fist.' He is holding up a clenched hand covered with iron. But it was just a boy of whom we are told in the Bible that he killed both a lion and a bear. How strong his hand must have been! It was delicate as well; for—think of it—that boy could play the harp most beautifully. Sculptors have often tried to represent him in marble, sometimes as a boy, oftener as a man. But with their cold dead medium, they could never show us the living hand of the Bible. Read the story of David again to-night, and you will, in your mind, have a picture of that hand, comforting the unhappy king with music. Then, picture it to

yourself clenched as he led on his army to battle, and again, covering his face as he wept for Absalom. With us older people, David's hand is oftenest remembered as having something of the little child in it; for when it was lifted up before God, it was to say, 'I've done wrong: forgive me' ('I have sinned . . . take away the iniquity of thy servant').

2. *Her hand.*—You remember the first hand you ever noticed? It was your mother's, wasn't it? You know every line and mark upon it—the first finger of the left hand, with the marks that the needle has made, the knuckles—perhaps they tell of hard work—and the palm. You never saw a hand quite like it. It can do all sorts of things—brush your hair, iron the frocks for the picnics, perhaps even scrub the floors. There have been men who, when they were away in foreign countries, loved to think of that hand. It comforted them. And there have been others who could not bear to think of it. They had done what was wrong, and felt they could not look their mother in the face.

3. *My hand.*—Now, there's your own hand—'my hand.' It has a little history written on it already. The mark of that cut you got two years ago, and that big joint on your forefinger—it was caused by a chilblain. But these are just trifles. Speaking seriously; what is your hand for? For service—for doing things with. Who is its master or mistress? You are. No wonder, then, that the hand is mentioned in the Bible oftener than almost anything else; for the Bible is just written about men, women, and boys, and girls; what they do, and how they are rewarded or punished. It is, in fact, a great book about the hands. Think of this yourselves. Each of you has a pair. They may, at your bidding, do either good or evil. *They are really yourselves.* If you have a careless mind, then, according to the Bible, your hand is the same. It speaks of 'the hand of the diligent,' the 'slack hand,' 'clean hands,' the hand that is 'cruel' and the hand 'stretched out to help.' There's a hand I should like to speak to the girls about. It is an old-fashioned, but a very beautiful one—the hand of the virtuous woman. 'She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.' I wonder, girls, if any of you

have begun to learn drawing. It is when you try to draw a woman's hand that you discover how beautiful it may be. I remember once seeing a letter written to a girl by one who loved her very, very much. The only sentence in it that I can recall now is, 'I cannot think of that pretty little hand ever doing anything but kind actions.'

4. *His hand.*—A few years ago I went to see an interesting church with a lady. We had been out a walk together and had talked to each other just about ordinary everyday things. But in the church was a picture of Jesus Christ. As soon as my companion saw it, in deepest reverence she knelt down to pray. And a feeling like that comes when one tries to think of 'His hand.'

We hesitate to speak, lest we spoil the marvelous story of the New Testament. From beginning to end it is a story of love. 'Jesus put forth his hand'; 'He laid his hands on them' (you remember that was when the little children were brought to Him); 'He took her by the hand.'

I know what many of you thought of when I came to this part of our sermon. My dear children, it was the *hands* of men that raised the cross. But there were those whose eyes had been opened to know Jesus Christ. They loved Him, and were His devoted followers. Between them and their Master there was a beautiful friendship, deepened no doubt during the days following the resurrection, for then there was an element of sorrow in it. Even in the joy of seeing Him again, they must have felt sad, for 'he shewed unto them his hands.' If you heard of a life like the life of Jesus Christ being lived now, wouldn't you, like young soldiers, be ready with your right hands to take an oath of allegiance to him who lived it? And were your fathers and mothers but willing, I believe you would follow such a man to the ends of the earth. You can enter the service of Jesus Christ now.

THE CARPENTER'S SHOP.

'Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?'—Mt 13^{55, 56}.

1. Carpentry is a very ancient trade. Long before the time of Christ there were joiners and carpenters in Egypt, Assyria, Persia, and Greece, who could do beautiful work and had invented a

variety of tools, as we can tell by those which have been discovered. Carpenters are sometimes mentioned in the Bible. The prophet Isaiah describes a carpenter who cuts down a tree, and makes the figure of a man out of it for an idol, which he falls down and worships, and of the rest of the tree he makes a fire to warm himself, and to bake his bread and cook his meat on. His 'heart is deceived' so that he does not see how foolish it is to make a god out of the piece of wood which he burns. We see the folly of it, but we must remember that it is done still in many places.

Then there were the carpenters who worked for king Solomon. He got them from the king of Tyre, because they were more clever than his own. King Hiram gave him wood as well, cedar trees and fir trees, and the carpenters, along with those of king Solomon, made the wood-work of the Temple and of the king's palaces. All the inside of the Temple was lined with cedar wood, carved with flowers and cherubim and palm trees, and the doors were made of olive wood carved in the same way, and then it was all covered over with gold. And in Solomon's own palace there was one hall which had rows upon rows of pillars all made of cedar, so that it was called the House of the Forest of Lebanon. All this was the work of the carpenters.

In our own land we find that the ancient fraternity of English carpenters existed in the time of Edward IV., while those of the 'joiners and cellers,' whose motto is the honest one, 'Join truth with trust,' were not incorporated until the reign of Elizabeth. Their old hall, near London Wall, one of the few large city buildings which escaped destruction during the Great Fire of London, still has in it some curious Biblical frescoes representing the first workers in wood: Noah humbly listening to the Lord's commands concerning the building of the Ark, and in another part of the same picture are shown the patriarch's three sons all busy at the task; we have king Josiah directing the repairs of the Temple, or Joseph working in his carpenter's shop at Nazareth, the crowd wondering concerning the new teacher—'Is not this the carpenter's son?'—the subject of each picture being made clear by black-letter inscriptions.¹

2. Not only in temples and palaces, however, but wherever people live, workers in wood are needed. Houses must have doors, and fishermen must have boats, and the boats must have masts and oars. In Palestine the ploughs and yokes and goads and other agricultural implements were made of wood, and were the work of the carpenter.

¹ C. L. Matéaux, *Wonderland of Work*, 146.

And if it was a humble trade, it was considered an honourable one, and a carpenter could be chosen as High Priest.

The carpenter in Palestine was not a man who merely made articles in a workshop, but one who went about the district repairing doors and windows, going sometimes as far as the lake, twenty-five miles off, to repair boats and make masts and oars. He also made yokes for the oxen, tables, chairs, and wooden utensils, so that there would be hardly a house in which Jesus would not be known by virtue of His work.¹

3. This then was the kind of work that Joseph did. It was not building and carving kings' palaces. It was common work for common people, in a little country place. And it was this work that our Lord learned to do, and did, till He was thirty years of age. But however plain the work might be, we may be sure it would be perfectly done. When the time came for Him to stop His work, and He came to John the Baptist to be baptized, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' We may be sure that the work of all those years was always what God could look on with pleasure. He could never be pleased with bad work. So our Lord, doing simple tasks, unknown by those He worked for, taught us the dignity of work, and made all honest work honourable.

We are accustomed to speak of our work as a vocation or calling. 'Let every man,' says St. Paul, 'abide in that calling wherein he was called.' Some are called to be servants, some to be masters, some to administer five talents, others one; but every man is as truly called of God to his life-work as the painter to paint, or the physician to heal. What counts in God's sight is less the actual work we do than the way in which we do it. What we make, makes us. The slight gauze on which the mantle of the incandescent light is formed flares away in a moment, but the firmer fabric wrought on it by chemical agents will be luminous for a thousand hours. So the things we make in the world pass quickly away, but the motives with which we do them go to make us for better or worse. If you do your work perfunctorily, you become a hypocrite; if you work carelessly, you become a sloven; if you work only to please men, the sense of God will die out of your life. At the close of life's working day we shall be rewarded, not according to the results we have accomplished,

¹ A. Schofield, *Where He Dwelt*, 107.

but according to the faithfulness with which we have done the work God hath given us to do.

In all He did He was an artist, not an artisan. You ask the difference? I will tell you. The artist is he who strives to perfect his work, the artisan he who seeks only to get it done. The artist would fain finish too, but with him it is to 'finish the work God has given him to do.' It is not how great a thing we do, but how well we do the thing we have to do, that puts us in the noble brotherhood of artists.²

4. And Jesus' work as a carpenter was not only good in itself, but it helped to fit Him for His public work later on. In His ministry He had to walk long distances, over bad roads, under a burning sun. He was often surrounded and followed by people who wished to hear Him, or to be healed of sickness, till He had no leisure to rest or even to eat, and after a long day of work for others He passed the night in prayer. It was His hard, simple life in His early years that made His body strong to endure all that fatigue, and that gave Him sympathy with all weary toilers. If He had been a learned Rabbi in Jerusalem He could never have understood the feelings and the needs of poor people in the same way.

The little children knew Him, and had often gone to play about His shop and never received an unkind word. Many a poor old body who had come to pick up the chips and shavings said, 'Oh yes; we know Him right well, the Carpenter.' Everything about Him made Him one with the people. His very disciples were simple fishermen who by their presence encouraged the people to draw near. He wore the dress of the people, not that of the Rabbis, and told His disciples not to put on the long robes of the Pharisees. His look and tone and manner were all simple and homely.

There is a pretty story told by Martin Luther of a good bishop who earnestly prayed that God would reveal to him something more than the Bible tells about the childhood of Jesus. At last he had a dream. He dreamed that he saw a carpenter working with saws and hammers and planes, just like any carpenter, and beside him a little boy picking up chips. Then came a sweet-faced woman in a green dress, and called them both to dinner, and set porridge before them. All this the bishop saw in his dream, himself standing behind the door, that he might not be perceived. Then the little boy, spying him, cried out, 'Why does that man stand there? Shall he not eat of our porridge with us?' Thereupon the bishop awoke. This charming little dream-fable carries with it a beautiful and an important truth. It is the

² W. A. Newman Hall, *Do Out the Duty*, 3.

carpenter's child who wanted all the world to share His porridge with Him who has conquered the heart of humanity.¹

6. The people of Nazareth were offended at being taught by a carpenter. Very likely He had worked for many of them and they knew His parents and His brothers and sisters. We might not have known better. We are apt to despise poor people and people we know, or think we know—for we really know nobody as God knows them—and we should remember that, where the people of Nazareth saw only the village carpenter, God saw His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased.

They said, 'The carpenter's son.' To me,
No dearer thing in the Book I see,
For He must have risen with the light,
And patiently toiled until the night.
He too was weary when evening came,
For well He knoweth our mortal frame,
And He remembers the weight of dust,
So His frail children may sing and trust.

We often toil till our eyes grow dim,
Yet our hearts faint not because of Him.
The workers are striving everywhere,
Some with a pitiful load of care.
Many in peril upon the sea,
Or deep in the mine's dark mystery,
While mothers nor day nor night can rest;
I fancy the Master loves them best.

For many a little head has lain,
On the heart pierced by redemption's pain.
He was so tender with fragile things,
He saw the sparrow with broken wings.
His mother, loveliest woman born,
Had humble tasks in her home each morn,
And He thought of her the cross above,
So burdened women must have His love.

For labour, the common lot of man,
Is part of a kind Creator's plan,
And he is a king whose brow is wet
With the pearl-gemmed crown of honest sweat.
Some glorious day, this understood,
All toilers will be a brotherhood,
With brain or hand the purpose is one,
And the master Workman, God's own Son.²

Chinese Sidelights upon Scripture Passages.

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II.

THE PORTAL OF THE SCRIPTURES.—In the forefront of the Hebrew Scriptures we find a grandly

¹ H. Halsey, *The Beauty of the Lord*, 220.

² Myra Goodwin Plantz.

decisive utterance ('In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth') which serves as a great coupling text to two distinct, yet related, accounts of Creation: (a) in general and (b) of mankind—a literary form that is suggestive of the Greek letter II. And, further, in the account of Creation in general (Gn 1²⁻³¹ 2¹⁻⁸) we find the same literary form—three progressive statements being set over against three other progressive statements, which are alike crowned with a final statement of completion. Is it likely that this doubly occurring literary form is a mere coincidence?

Where Western nations are mostly content with a 'front door' (larger perhaps than the average) as a chief entrance to public buildings, the ancient nations gave great prominence to portals. In Greece and Rome the portico of a temple was generally its chief architectural part. And we of west Europe have unconsciously followed a venerable and wide-spread custom in the erection of our Marble Arch, Arc de Triomphe, and the like. From the Egyptian pylons to the Japanese torés, there are unnumbered instances of the portal being, in and of itself, a highly important object in ancient architecture. In China (besides monumental arches) stone portals are erected to mark important precincts. On the river front, before a chief city gate, we often find a separate portal, inscribed with parallel mottoes on the two uprights, and a general motto on the lintel. And is it by accident that the literary form of the great opening-portion of the Scriptures so closely resembles such a portal?

Our knowledge of pre-Babylonian Chaldea, and of the Babylonian realm under Hammurabi and his successors, is singularly full as regards many of its manners and customs, but somewhat lacking as regards the specific architecture of those times. Yet, from all analogy, we may gather that portals were much in evidence there; and that those portals were often inscribed with mottoes—from the fact that Moses commanded the descendants of Abraham to write sacred mottoes 'upon the doorposts of their houses and upon their gates' (Dt 6⁹). He may possibly have had an Egyptian precedent in mind. But the genius of Hebrew motto-writing (as in the Proverbs), and poetic composition generally, follows the lines of parallelism and antithesis, as among the early Chaldeans, and the ancient and modern Chinese. And his exhortation is likely to have had a Chaldean precedent also.

From the vantage-ground of an East Asian land of ancient survivals it seems more than possible, then, that the Elohist poem of Creation was intentionally based on the model of an inscribed portal—whether by the Hebrew writer himself, or by some more ancient Chaldean writer, from whose composition it may have been revised and edited.

But whether intentionally thus written or not, this poem of Creation (Gn 1²⁻³¹ 2¹⁻³) coincides in its structure with the literary decoration of a stone portal, or gate of entrance, from of old until modern days throughout East Asia, the essentials of which are a strophe, an anti-strophe, and then a sentence to couple or crown both.

On the one side of this Scripture portal we find¹ the creation (1) of light, (2) of air and water, (3) of land, and the climax of inanimate nature. On the other side we find the creation (1) of lights, (2) of life in air and water, (3) of life on land, and the climax of animate nature. And on the lintel, the Divine repose of accomplished enterprise.

It is through this Porta Triumphalis of sublime achievement that we enter the sacred precincts of Divine workmanship upon the less tractable chaos of human passion, cheered by the hope that even this age-long enterprise will in the end be crowned with a like rest, for God and for man (cf. Is 40²⁸ 42¹⁻⁴).

THE NUMBER SEVEN.—The numerical sign of perfection in China is usually ten, as in Egypt of old.² All the more striking, then, is the fact that in that ancient book of divination, the *Classic of Changes*, which so fascinated Confucius that he longed for fifty more years in which to study it, there are passages to the effect that 'the revolution of all things is completed every seventh day.'

This primeval division of time into periods of seven days is traced in China, as in old Chaldea, to the 'seven regulators'—the Sun, Moon, and Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Saturn (which 'five stars' are conceived as 'regulating' the 'five elements': metal, wood, water, fire, earth).

There is a weird parable of Creation given in

¹ The parallelism in the Elohist account of Creation was pointed out by Professor Elmslie in the *Contemporary Review*, December 1887.

² Hence, while the Israelites were yet under Egyptian influence we read of ten plagues, Ten Commandments, and, as late as the days of Eli, 'ten sons' (1 Sam 1⁸).

the works of the Taoist mystic Chuang Tzu (third and fourth century B.C.):

'The *Yang* lord (of brightness or radiation), he of the southern seas, and the *Yin* lord (of obscurity or receptivity) of the northern seas often met in the realms of the lord of the centre, whose name was Chaos. He always treated them well, and so they consulted together to find some means of recompense, saying: "Every man has two organs of sight, and two of hearing, one of taste and one of smell. Chaos alone has none of these. Let us try and pierce some for him." Accordingly the first day they succeeded in piercing the first aperture' (*i.e.* giving him *light*), 'but by the time that *seven days* had elapsed, Chaos died.'

METAPHOR AND MYTH.—Over against the Hebrew metaphor בָּרָא, 'to brood' (Gn 1²), we have the Chinese conception of a primordial egg, pictorially represented as divided in its substance by a curved line, on one side of which it is black, and on the other white, from the incipient Yin and Yang principles.

All ancient writing was once pictorial. And while the Hebrew word בָּרָא, 'to create,' seems to have the root idea of cutting or carving out, the corresponding Chinese word *ts'ang* (or *ch'uang*) contains the 'knife radical' and has the same root meaning. This might hardly be worth a passing reference but for the fact that, in China, the verbal metaphor anciently grew into a full-fledged myth of one P'an Ku, an impossible stone mason who, being evolved in the midst of a highly solidified chaos, set to work with his hammer and chisel hewing out heaven and earth (as recorded, if somewhat apologetically, in Chinese history). His breath became the wind, his voice the thunder, his left eye the sun, his right eye the moon, his blood the rivers, his hair the trees and herbs, his flesh the soil, his sweat the rain, and the parasites which infested his body the human race! A crude instance this, of the misuse of metaphor, which, in a more refined form, has not been entirely absent from some of the great scriptural or doctrinal controversies of Christendom.

LITERARY PARALLELISM.—The first of the ancient Odes, or folk songs of China (dating from about Solomon's time, and edited by Confucius in

the fifth century B.C.), exemplifies the literary parallelism which marks the average Hebrew poetical composition, and indeed much resembles a passage in the Canticles :

Waking and sleeping he sought her,
Sought her but found her not ;
Waking and sleeping he cherished her,
Long, long he thought upon her,
Turning from side to side.

The Chinese, with their monosyllabic words, and mosaic-like character blocks, have developed their scheme of literary parallelism to an extreme of refinement. In one of the best poems of China, by the painter-poet Wang Wei (d. 750 A.D.), the five-word lines translate almost literally thus :

Declining day-beams light each rustic home,
Along the lanes the flocks returning come ;
The aged men their herdsman sons await,
And staff-supported stand beside the gate ;

The wild birds fly o'er fields of ripening corn,
The silkworms sleep on mulberry twigs half-shorn ;
With shouldered hoe the farmers homeward stride,
To spend in social chat the eventide.

The general scheme of parallelism in the whole will be noted, but in the original of lines five and six there is also a complete parallelism of character to character, as well as the real antithesis of wild wings in motion and of worms in repose, and the further apparent antithesis of fulness and scarcity (crops and tree-twigs), with the actual blending of felicitous thought. This is fine art, such as is prized in mottoes for doorways and guest-rooms. And not a few Hebrew couplets are found to have a basis of very exact parallelism. Thus Ps 126^{6, 8} might be read in terser form, as though in Chinese :

Going forth, sorrowing, scattering good seed ;
Coming home, rejoicing, gathering much grain.

Fulfilment of the Law.

BY THE REV. W. T. WHITLEY, M.A., LL.D., PRESTON.

OUR Lord announced that He did not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil. What exactly did He mean ?

To 'fulfil the prophets' is a phrase used extensively by Matthew, who evidently meant, To match prediction by accomplishment. The other half of the phrase might by analogy be understood, To match an order by obedience. But it has received much less attention, and lately it has been quoted in very illegitimate connections, with untenable senses put on it, to support positions open to grave challenge. Because of the practical proposals made, it seems desirable to examine the Biblical basis of these proposals, and to inquire rigorously into the meaning of the phrase, To fulfil the Law.

The Law in question is the Jewish Law, and nothing else. Our Lord's horizon in most of His prophetic ministry was national, and Matthew emphasizes this aspect of it. The Sermon on the Mount was spoken to Jews, and they attached very definite meanings to the terms "Law" and "Prophets."

The inquiry therefore is as to the verb Fulfil, which is used ninety times in the N.T., while a noun derived from it, generally translated Fulness,

occurs seventeen times. We may compare these passages and derive from them the various meanings of the Greek verb, then test which meaning best suits the present passage. The result may be checked by a wider induction from the N.T. as to the actual relation of our Lord to the Law, and by another inquiry as to the present status of the Law.

I. THE USAGE OF THE WORD FULFIL.

To Fulfil is literally to Fill full ; as a valley is levelled up with earth and stones from a mountain, for a highway ; as a net is filled with fish, or a measure with corn ; as a hole in a coat is filled with a patch, or baskets are filled with fragments of bread and fish. By a slight extension from material things, as a house is pervaded with the presence of the Spirit, or Jerusalem with teaching about the Lord.

The literal meaning is rare, and it is the derived meanings that need to be examined. We may pass instances of the active voice, men being filled with joy, sorrow, knowledge, comfort, unrighteousness ; and may study passages speaking of some object being fulfilled. These fall into three groups, which are typically Lucan, Johannine, Pauline.