

Hand of God

No. 22

Introduction.

I. Jennie Wilson once penned the hymn, “Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand.” The first stanza reads:

Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved can stand,
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God’s unchanging hand!

II. This is one of many hymns that speak of the “the hand of God.”

A. The expression “hand of God” also occurs many times in the holy scriptures.

B. It is an expression referring to the Person, power and activity of God. God’s omnipotent hand works in many wondrous ways.

I. **Creation** - The hand of God is seen in creation.

A. The universe is a big billboard which spells “God.” Everywhere you look there is evidence of divine power.

1. This fact was aptly stated by the Psalmist. (Psa. 19:1).

2. This fact was also aptly stated by a **French peasant**. Once an infidel said to him: “We will tear down your churches. We will destroy everything that reminds you of God.” The humble peasant replied, “But you leave us the sun, the moon, and the stars; and as long as they shine, we shall have a reminder of God.”

B. **Astronomers** today, with the aid of high-powered telescopes, are able to see more than 100,000,000 stars on a clear night. Photographic plates reveal hundreds of millions more than the telescope. Some of the stars are more than one hundred quadrillion miles away and all of this is a very tiny speck of the vast, endless, universe.

1. **Robert Ingersoll**, the infidel, was once visiting a friend and picked up a globe and asked, “Who made this?” The friend answered, “Nobody. It just happened.”

a. Ingersoll refused to accept this ridiculous answer, but he and all atheists affirm that something that is even more ridiculous. They try to tell us that the innumerable stars perfectly grouped together in endless space all happened by blind chance.

b. It is far more reasonable to accept “the hand of God” in creation than it is godless evolution.

2. It is also more comforting.

a. One time I read about a **dog that was crated in a box in the Railway Express office**. A gentleman said, “Where is that dog going?” The manager, thoroughly disgusted, said, “I don’t! You don’t know. He don’t know. Nobody don’t know! Because he has already gone and chawed up his tag.”

- b. I submit to you that the atheist had “chewed up” his tag. He does not know from whence he came, why he is here, or where he is going. This is frustrating and leaves a person with tattered nerves and fearful hearts. Let’s lift up our eyes to God who gives meaning and direction to life.

II. **Affairs Of Men** - The hand of God can be seen in the affairs of men.

A. **A little girl was once taking a journey on a train**, and in the course of the trip the train was obliged to cross a number of rivers. The water in the distance always awakened doubts and fears in the child. She did not understand how the train could safely cross. As they drew near the river, however, a bridge appeared and furnished the way over. Several times the same thing happened and finally the child leaned back and with unwavering confidence said, “God has built bridges for us all the way.”

1. **This little girl uttered a great truth!** God has built bridges for us all the way. He guides, blesses and protects those who love Him and keep His commandments. He governs in the affairs of men in such a way as to bless His children and to accomplish His will.
2. This thought was expressed years ago in the constitutional convention of this country when **Benjamin Franklin**, the noted statesman, rose and said: “I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. If a sparrow cannot fall without his notice, is it possible that an empire can rise without his aid?”

B. There are **four big reasons** why I believe in God’s providence.

1. In the first place, I believe in God’s providence because **it is reasonable**. We live in a world which was created primarily for man. Man was created as God’s crowning work and the animal, vegetable and material worlds were placed under his dominion. It is not reasonable to believe that God would exercise so great of concern for man and then go off and ignore his needs.
2. In the second place, I believe in God’s providence because **God is our Father**.
 - a. God has great care for His children.
 - b. God cares for His children even more than earthly fathers care for their children. (Matt. 7:11; Jas. 1:17).
3. In the third place, I believe in God’s providence because **I have experienced it**.
 - a. There are many things that happened in my life that I do not believe can be explained apart from God’s providence.
 - b. Others have also experienced the providence of God.
 - 1) **Joseph** was an outstanding example of God’s providence. Joseph was beaten by his brothers and sold as a slave. Later he was falsely charged of a crime by Potiphar’s wife and cast into prison. In prison Joseph may have asked the question, “Why has all this happened to me?”

Later the answer came. Joseph was made head over Egypt with only the king above him. As head over Egypt he became a blessing to his people who were suffering extreme hardships in the land of Canaan. Joseph said to his brothers who begged his forgiveness. (Gen. 50:20).

- 2) Another thrilling example of God's providence in the **story of Esther**. Through the providence of God Esther, a Jewish maiden, became queen of Persia. Later Haman, who was above all the king's princes plotted to destroy the Jews and offered the king 10,000 talents of silver for the right to destroy them. It was only by the courageous intercession of Esther on the behalf of her people that they were saved. It is impossible to read the book of Esther without being impressed with the providential workings of God.
4. In the fourth place, I believe in God's providence because the **scriptures declare that God governs in the affairs of men**. (Psa. 23:1,2; 37:25; 84:11; Matt. 10:29-31; Phil. 4:19; Rom. 8:28).
 - a. In this last verse a great and precious promise is given to the child of God. It does not say that God makes all things happen, but it does assure the Christian that God makes all things work together for good. This is sometimes very difficult to understand. A baby dies and the parents wonder why? A Christian loses his health and he asks, "Why did this happen to me? I am trying to serve God." Before we can even begin to understand these things, we must first understand man's primary purpose in life. Why does man exist?
 - b. Man's primary purpose in life is to honor and glorify God and be as God-like as it is humanly possible to become. Now this being so, everything that brings man toward God is good and everything that takes him away from God is evil.
 - c. With this objective in mind we can see why it is necessary for suffering and tragedy to fall upon Christians. It is often necessary for Christians to suffer in order that they may be brought back to this eternal objective and thus be saved.

1) The Hebrew writer wrote:

HEB 12:6 \For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines\, \And He scourges every son whom He receives.\

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HEB 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom {his} father does not discipline?

HEB 12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

HEB 12:9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

HEB 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He {disciplines us} for {our} good, that we may share His holiness.

HEB 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

- 2) Several years ago there was a **Christian man who was stricken with tuberculosis** and spent two or three years in bed. During this time he did some very serious thinking and had enough faith to say, "Well, in the long run it is a blessing. It has enabled me to study the scriptures more than I would have ever been able to study them in any other way." Then he added, "I

have memorized many passages that I would never have known except for this illness.”

3) One is reminded of the statement of David. (Psa. 119:71).

III. Salvation - The hand of God can be seen in salvation.

- A. For countless centuries man stood condemned because of his sins. He had to learn by experience that his goodness, his wealth, his education, his works or nothing else could atone for his sins.
- B. It was not until God sent His Son into the world to die for man that he had any hope of salvation. God through the atonement of His Son, reaches into the horrible pit of sin and lifts the sinner on the firm rock of salvation. This, of course, is not without the sinner’s consent and assistance. The sinner must accept God’s hand of salvation by obeying the gospel of Christ. (Acts 2:40; Jas. 1:21).

IV. Retribution - The hand of God is seen in retribution.

- A. God’s hands are not only wondrous, but they can also be terrible. The Hebrew writer made a statement that we must never forget. (Heb. 10:31).
- B. The picture of the sinner in the hands of the angry God is terrifying and ought to put fear in our hearts. (Heb. 2:2, 3).

Conclusion.

- I. Let’s determine to live in such a way so that one day we can say as Jesus did, “Father into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Lk. 23:46).
- II. In Romans 10:21 Paul states that God stood with outstretched hands continually ready to receive Israel, but they only disobeyed Him and refused to come to Him.
- III. God still stands with outstretched hands. Don’t be like the hardened Israelites. God wants to save us. Come and place yourself in the hollow of God’s hands as we stand and sing.