

it can in no degree execute its biddings ; but the hand is the great agent and minister of the soul, which not only reveals her inmost affection and feeling, and, in conjunction with the tongue—and these two in connection are either the most beneficent or maleficent of all our organs—declares her will and purpose ; but is also employed by her to execute them. Thus HEART and HAND, the principle and the practice, have been united, in common parlance, from ancient ages. The earliest dawn of reason in the innocent infant is shown by the signs it makes with its little *hands* ; by them it prefers its petitions for any thing it desires, and, in imitation of this, God's children are instructed *to lift up holy hands* in prayer.* Love, friendship, charity, and all the kindly affections of our nature, use the hands as their symbol and organ ; the fond embrace, the hearty shake, the liberal gift, are all ministered by them. Joy, gladness, applause, welcome, valediction, all use these organs to represent them. Penitence smites her breast with them : resignation clasps them ; devotion and the love of God stretch them out towards heaven.

But the hands are not employed to express only the kindly affections of the soul. Those of a contrary and less amiable character use them as their index. Anger threatens, and more violent and hateful passions destroy, by them. They are indeed the instruments by which a great portion of the evil, and mischief, and violence, and misery, that our corrupt nature has introduced into the world, are perpetrated.

The hand also, on some occasions, becomes the spokesman instead of the tongue. The fore-finger is denominated the *index*, because we use it to indicate to another any object to which we wish to direct his attention. By it the deaf and dumb person is enabled to hold converse with others, so as not to be totally cut off from the enjoyment of society ; and by

* 1 Tim. ii. 8.