

No.
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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE
RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

REDEEMING THE TIME.

An Address (revised) at

65, St. Mary Axe, E.C.

June 8, 1915.

by

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Correspondence welcome:

Scriptural literature for Believers

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REDEEMING THE TIME.

Message by Mr. P. W. Heward
At 65, St. Mary Axe, E.C.
June 8, 1915.

OUTLINE:

1. "Our times", Psalm 31:15.
 2. The brevity of life.
 3. What is time?
 4. Godly order.
 5. How to use moments for the Lord.
 6. The excusing of the flesh.
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Our subject, beloved friends, is "Redeeming the time". We remember that in an epistle we have these precious words, and the Holy Spirit adds, "Because the days are evil". The context, moreover, should be noticed. Let us turn to Eph. 5:14, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light". The believer BEING alive, should not live as a dead one. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, REDEEMING THE TIME" - literally, Buying out the appointed time, because the days are evil. "Buying out". Now if we are to buy we must spend, and if we are to buy out we must buy so that someone else may not possess. We must buy completely. The days are evil. We must spend ourselves to buy out the appointed time, and use that appointed time fore our gracious Lord. So far as to our heading. The first Scripture is Psalm 31:15, there we read, "My times are in Thy hand deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me". How blessed it is to remember this verse. Our times are in the Lord's hands. We have here brought before us the two hands, Thy hand and the hand of mine enemies. The Psalmist's great joy was that God knew all about him, and that God arranged all about him. It is delightful, beloved friends, to feel that we are dwelling in the secret places of the Most High and that our concerns are the Lord's concerns. He knows just how long His people are to live, He knows what they are to do. All their circumstances are before Him. "My times are in Thy hand". To some who do not have an easy position in life, the psalmist speaks in verse 4, of a net laid to catch him. In verse 11, of himself as a reproach. Indeed fear was on every side, verse 13 tells us. Lying lips, the pride of man,

and the strife of tongues surrounded him, but he said, My times are in thy hand. I will not be anxious, I will not say, What will happen to me? God knows. "My times are in Thy hand". Here is the resting place of simple faith. My times are in Thy hand. It is our privilege, beloved friends, to seek increasingly how we may live up to this. Yes, it should be our realized privilege to live as those who know that God's arrangements and God's appointments are best. We do not want to plan for ourselves. He knows just that which is wisest for us. We are not put on earth to arrange our lives, we are put there to take His arrangements, and if we trust the Lord, He will look after us. We shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord. Moreover, we look beyond the present time to the times and seasons, and is, by grace, we are saved by the Lord, when the times and seasons arrive, we shall be with Him Whom our soul loveth. Everything is in His hand. The Father hath put all events in His own authority. What a restfulness for the child of God. He need not feel fretful against the workers of iniquity. It is sufficient for Him that the Lord lives he does not feel concerned about tomorrow, because there is not tomorrow with his Heavenly Father. He does not feel concerned about the events of this age, because this age is only a stepping stone to that age. There is a plan Divinely arranged and Divinely worked out. We need not be alarmed, it is written, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

Though we have this resting place, we must remember, it is well to stir up our earnestness, - we must remember that time is short. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that now appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. The psalmist said, We spend our years as a tale, the days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away. Man's life is only comparable with a watch of the night. When we think of God, a thousand years are one of God's days, but our life is very brief. Some of us can look back a few years ago, we can remember certain circumstances and we perhaps say to ourselves, Oh how

little I have done for the Lord since then, and we total up. Perhaps ten years have passed - there may be those present who have known the Lord as their own precious Saviour for ten or twenty years and they think, Oh how brief life is, - those ten years, those twenty years, are soon gone, and how little has been done; ah, the brevity of life.

We look for the Saviour. We long to see Him face to face, but if it pleases God that we should live out our appointed threescore years and ten, I mean MAN'S appointed threescore years and ten, OUR ~~own~~ appointment is eternal life, - if our Heavenly Father has thus extended earthly life, some of us feel that a fair proportion has gone, even though we are not very aged. It seems not so far ahead to look to the threescore years and ten, when we see how quickly years go by. Sometimes we have another view of life it is true. We sometimes are permitted a view of a month or a year and it seems such a long time, - to show the vastness of opportunities - and then follows the other view to prevent any error in this connection, and one sees how brief all is, - before God very brief. Each day flits by so soon, ah, the brevity. Both aspects make us think all the more of redeeming the time. If we had two earthly lives, we might rejoice with a prospect of another opportunity, but we shall not have another life in which we shall be able to suffer for our Lord, we shall not have another life to witness for our Lord amid a rejecting world. Last year has gone, never to come back, and this year is passing, never to return. Life is brief, and it cannot be repeated. God is very merciful. He graciously causes His people often to be roused up, and to seek in measure to make up the time lost, as we put it. He restores the years that the caterpillars have eaten. And yet there is always the reminder; - that day, that week, that month, that year, gone, - gone forever, gone with its obedience, gone with its failures, gone with its paucity of real Christian work, gone with its incompleteness of service to others. If only I had done this - If only I had done that. - But it is gone. Life, earthly life, is brief, and we cannot deal with the past, except to confess our failures. THE PRESENT BELONGS TO US. Our TODAY

is to be used for the Lord. Nothing belongs to us. We are not our own. Bought with a price, our times are, in this sense, in God's hand, and we want, not simply to use the time, but to be used by the Lord in the time that remains. It is His time! Oh how great is our privilege, how real are our responsibilities.

And this leads on to the thought: what is time? I am persuaded that we often make a mistake because we take an illogically logical view of what time is. There is nothing more illogical than "logic". We have the theory: there are 24 hours in a day, and night. there are seven days in a week. And so people say, I have not time for this, I have not time for that, cannot make more hours in the day, and so forth. Are we not taking a wrong view of time? Let us look at food from two standpoints. There is some food (shall we say?) in front of us, but we do not eat it. It is not food TO US. It is on the table, it may be our possession, but it is not ours, unless we take it into ourselves, unless we appropriate it. People talk of having 24 hours in the day. I never met the person yet who has had so many. WE ONLY HAVE WHAT WE APPROPRIATE. People talk about making time, they ought to talk about not losing time, about not unmaking it. We often LOSE such an amount of time, we do not appreciate God's gift of the 24 hours which belong to Him. The time is very short; we often make it shorter. You find put on a gravestone how a man died aged so many years. I wonder how old he really was. We often talk about man's working week, or how many hours he works; by work signifying his daily employment. The child of God realizes that he is to do his daily employment unto the Lord, but he never gives over work. His working week is the whole week which he appropriates to the Lord. He always rejoices when he can use some more time for the Lord. How long is your Bible, and how long is your week? Those are important questions for children of God. Some believers even as to reading, have a Bible even only half the length. Some almost New Testament length, they know little of the earlier Scriptures, and likewise how many children of God have only a few hours in their day. They complain that they cannot get more time, but all the while they lose what the Lord has given them. What

we want, by grace, is to take what is ours, and to delight in that which God has graciously granted to us. There is no more chance with God, there is no mere accident with God. He has given to us time that we may use it. Oh, you say, such and such a man has a great responsibility, he is a Christian, and he has a trust of thousands of pounds left him by a relative, how will he use the trust? Or you remark, he has an income of thousands of pounds coming in per year. But beloved friends, you and I have an income of thousands of hours coming ~~in~~ in per year, and how do we use the trust? If you saw a man throwing away sovereigns in the street you would say the man was mad. But because we cannot see the throwing away of hours we do not realize how mad this is. Time is not merely a mechanical calculation, it is what we USE for Him Whom our soul loveth, - and children of God need grace to use their time more. But what is using the time? This brings us another thought. Suppose, for example, we sit down to do some work and our restless mind is half on the work and half elsewhere, can we truthfully say "That work took me such and such a period"? We have powers which God has given us that we do not fully use. GOD has given us our mental powers. God has given us a complete frame that we may present OUR BODIES a living sacrifice, and unless we do what He desires with the WHOLE heart we are wasting time. Have you not sometimes done in an hour what on another occasion would take you two hours? And have you not blamed yourself when it took two hours, and rightly felt there was something wrong, that you have not put your whole heart into it. Perhaps you felt SLEEPY. Perhaps this was physical, it may have been connected with a lack of spirituality. Is there a child of God who feels satisfied that when he prays, for example, he puts his whole being into it. "Pour out your soul" is a Scriptural expression. Is there a child of God who feels satisfied he does this? Beloved friends, I am not pleading for brief prayer, - except oftentimes in public there is spiritual power in a number of brief prayers. But with respect to private prayer, if only we had a moment of definite wholehearted fellowship with the Lord, it would be often worth ten minutes of some of

our praying. But SUCH a moment would make us long for more. Oh how often we fail to put our whole heart into prayer and to pray in the Holy Spirit, and so is it with everything. "Oh" you say, "I have this to do, I have that to do", and at the end you say "I have done this, I have done that ". DONE IT, beloved friends? Can you say you have DONE it? They shall come and declare His righteousness to a people that shall be born, because He hath DONE". "I have FINISHED the work which Thou gavest Me to do". We always seem to leave our work HALF-finished. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might", is the statement as to that which is under the sun. Those who are above the sun are not to be less intense, but to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Do everything as with the soul, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not to men. You remember how the Jewish servant was to be worth a double hired servant, and the believer should put his whole heart into all that he does, so that he is worth two men of the world. There should be such energy and such enthusiasm in the child of God, - there should be something about him which is strange. I am aware that it is not for children of God in the present time to have Daniel's position, nor to be as Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. But, beloved friends, we should be such that the only thing which hinders our promotion to such a height is our faithfulness to the Lord. We should be so enthusiastic. How often we fall short in this respect. We fail to realize what time is.

A few words therefore about godly order. Godly order is important. Let all things be done decently and in order. It is very blessed to please the Lord even in these details. Disorder is not fitting when dealing with God, Who is not the Author of confusion. We find how Moses worked in an orderly way. *He* was looking after the people from morning to night. We remember how the work surprised Jethro, and Jethro gave him very common advice against overworking himself. There are plenty of Jethros today. But Moses was working in an orderly manner, getting through that which God had appointed him to get through. There was no mere confusion. A child of God does not resent having plenty to do, or should not object to this pri-

vilege. There should be great care as to a due proportion. One does not want to have a disproportion of direct work for the Lord, or of indirect work for the Lord. EVERYTHING should be unto the Lord. One wants to have a due proportion of sleep, a due proportion of food, a due proportion of everything, because our bodies belong to Him and we should pray about this dividing up; not that I mean we can exactly get out a time sheet and say so many hours in the week for sleep, so many for food, so many for other things. What we want is to have a measure of care lest we surpass a prayerful estimate for sleep, lest we surpass an estimate for food, etc. If we pray unto the Lord that with a right heart attitude we may know how to use all the time, He will answer. A child of God does not want to be simply doing that which pleases the Lord with a "must be" appearance. Do it HEARTILY as to the Lord. Yes there must be godly order with godly joy. We often waste time by disorder. If a building were built with some of the upper stories before the foundation, if there were confusion in this arrangement, the building would not stand well. There must be a due arrangement of our life, a godly order. Children are sometimes busy doing nothing, and older children too. It is quite easy to fall into this snare, to do a great deal of work in making work, and then do a great deal more work in putting it straight; and this leads to a deeply important thought. Only that which will abide the TEST at the Judgment Seat of Christ is real work. If we build hay and stubble, it is less than nothing, only less than nothing! One sometimes thinks, when looking back on a day. I worked this hour thus, another hour thus, - what if it is all a minus? What if it was not unto the Lord? Ah, the hint is heartsearching; we want that the Holy Spirit should take these thoughts into our hearts, for if we merely have come together for a talk on arrangements, without the Lord Himself applying the Truth that we are not our own and that we should glorify God in our body, - if we have come together and go away without a spiritual blessing, we shall go away worse and not better. We need to pray that God may show us how we may have godly

order. We find that children of God in ancient times rose up early, - there is a stress on this, and we should have a stress upon similar zeal today. And there needs to be an arrangement throughout. We find this in all Scripture. We see in the life of our beloved Lord though He was willing for the multitude ~~to~~ break in upon His quietness, though He was willing to have no leisure even to eat, though He was willing to speak with the naturally-despised Samaritan woman when wearied on that well at Sychar, though He was pleased for Nicodemus to disturb His sleep, and ready in the garden of Gethsemane to pray with an intensity into which His disciples could in no wise enter, yet He had a wondrous order. When He appointed the feeding of the five thousand, they had to sit down by hundreds, and by fifties. There was an arranging, a planning. There was no mere confusion. So should our life have a Divine appointment.

How to use moments for the Lord: I feel it difficult to speak upon this, for we must realize how much time one wastes in moments. Believers want to do this, and want to do that, - often the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. We dare not excuse such failure, but we cry more heartily: Who will deliver me out of this body of death? And thanking God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we look forward to the time when this corruptible ~~x~~ shall put on incorruption, and when the Lord's redeemed shall praise Him perfectly without distraction. The mark of glory is "His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads", and again we read of glorious beings who have no rest day nor night. Oh what a wondrous continuance of worship. But we, how do we use our moments NOW for the Lord? The moments of railway trains, the moments of walking along the streets. The moments of waiting for a meal, the moments which seem too small for use. Do we use them in reading, or in learning, or in meditating, or in speaking a word for our Lord? Oftentimes we must confess we lose an OPPORTUNITY. I do not think God wants us always to be openly active. It is possible to meditate with quietness, which is more profitable than talking. We are not always to be speaking to souls as we

walk along the street. We are not always to be tract distributing, - we can think of the Lord and wait on Him. But often we must feel that our walks along the street are wasteful, wasteful of time which belongs to Him. Oh how we should cry unto God for strength to use our moments and to value the tiniest fraction of time. Let us not excuse the flesh. Let us not plead that we cannot do this, or cannot do that. Let our failure, and our "I have not time", rather humble us to our knees that God may grant when we pray we may pray with power, and when we speak we may speak with power. 'Tis not the quantity of work, but the quality. 'Tis not the work out from us, but the work unto the Lord. 'Tis not the one who does it, but the One unto Whom it is done, and in Whom, and in Whose name it is done. Beloved friends, our beloved Lord's life was a FULL life. We read that if all He did were written, the world could not contain the books. Do you call that hyperbole? It is literal fact, for every one of His actions was so full, and every second of His life was so complete. He slept, it is true, for the Psalm says, "God giveth unto His Beloved sleep". We are not above physical frailty, and God often teaches thereby, but we want to be aware of any settling down in this world, any pleasing of the flesh, any excusing or amusing of the flesh. We want to realize what it is to present our bodies a living SACRIFICE unto God, which is our reasonable service. We want to feel that our time is what we use, and that if we only have a half-hearted energy, 60 minutes is divided by two, because it is only half-heartedly spent - it is but 30 minutes. But more often we have that which is a quarter-hearted, and less, and we need to pray unto God that our hours may become longer, lest our hours only have about five minutes in them! Oh how we might use the whole of the time more unto Him Who used His time for us, and how we might spend our strength for Him so as to enter in some measure into the words of God's servant of old. "I have fought a good fight. I have finished a course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but also to all them that keep

on loving His appearance". **HERE** is the prospect. **HERE** is our desire, that day unto day we may prove the Lord's mercies and His compassions which fail not, and that day unto day we may go from strength to strength as we know what it is to seek His testimonies, and to please and serve Him with a whole heart. Oh that we might know what it is to lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, that we might not be dilatory nor slothful, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promise. God has set in front of us a prospect. God has given to us a privilege. Our beloved Lord has died to blot out our sins, and His Holy Spirit indwells redeemed ones to enable them to appropriate that which is Divinely given, and to appreciate the exceeding great and precious promises. We have hidden resources, the olive trees supply the golden oil through golden pipes that the lamp may burn continually. God's stresses of mercy are not winter torrents. We may draw water out of the wells of salvation which never run dry. Out of Christ's fulness have we all received, and still do and may receive, that as we go through each day of our life it may be fuller of praise, fuller of worship, fuller of that which is real service. Beloved friends, the subject is a vast one. The thought is deeply important. It is not merely doctrinal, but the speaker and the hearers alike must surely feel they fail. From my standpoint I confess it is so. But with our gracious God there is forgiveness that He may be feared, and if, in mercy, we desire to please Him Who hath chosen us, and not to be entangled in the affairs of this life, He will prevent distractions. He will prevent the idleness of the sluggard. He will prevent the overburden of daily toil, and grant that our life may be mapped out in a way to bring HIM, both now and in that day. **PRAISE AND HONOR AND GLORY.**

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