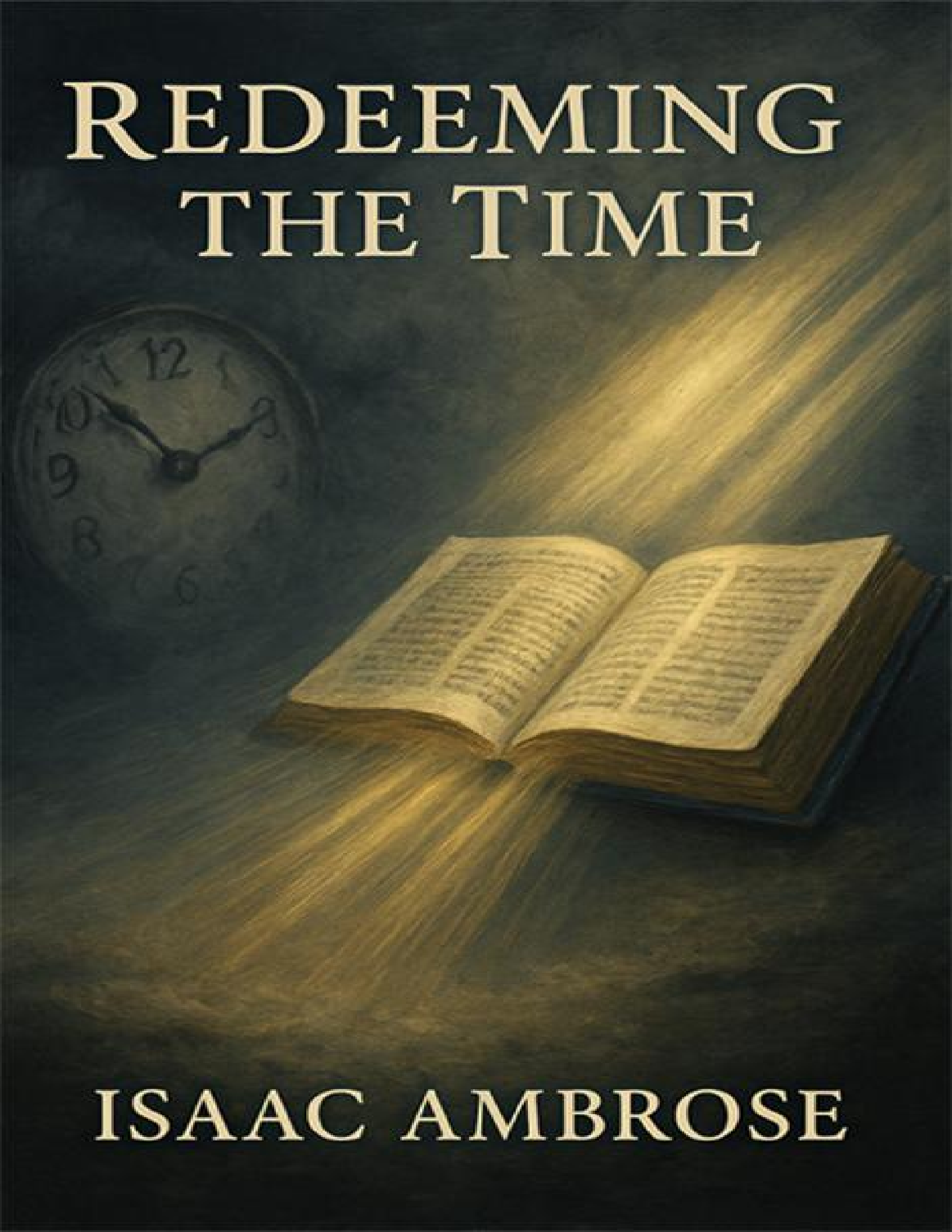
# REDEEMING THE TIME



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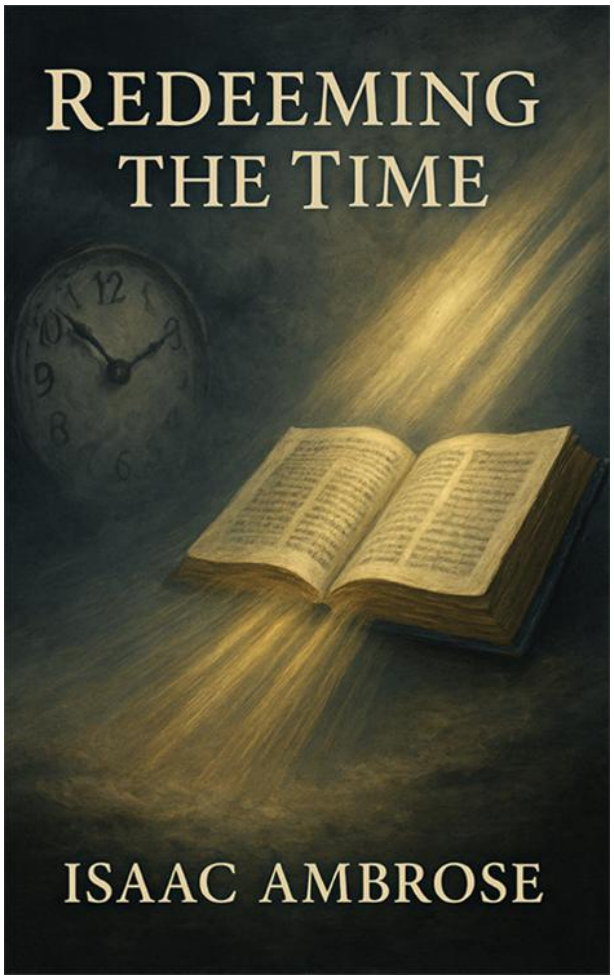
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A SERMON PREACHED AT Preston in Lancashire, January 4th, 1657, at the Funeral of the Honorable Lady, THE LADY MARGARET HOUGHTON.

Revised, and somewhat Enlarged; and, at the insistence of some Friends, now published.

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# Redeeming the Time

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Eph. 5.16.

The Apostle here gives many Lessons; exhorting 1. to love, Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us: 2. To avoid fornication, But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh Saints. 3. To avoid intimate, dear, or familiar conversation with graceless men, Be not, ye therefore partakers with them; for ye were sometimes darkness, but now are you light, walk as Children of light. 4. To walk carefully, exactly, circumspectly, See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. And this last he amplifies from an effect, which testifies a careful, exact, and accurate walking, to wit, Redeeming the time, etc.

I am only to teach you some part of this last Lesson; wherein you have 1. The instruction itself, See that you walk circumspectly. 2. The amplification of this instruction; and that is either from the reason binding to it, not as fools, but as wise; or from the effect testifying of it, Redeeming the time.

1. For the instruction itself, See that ye walk circumspectly, ἀκριβῶς, exactly, precisely; no word fits the Greek better than this; it comes of two words, ἀκριβῶς, which signify to go to the extremity of a thing: we must be willing to go to the utmost of every Command. To which purpose are those precepts, to be hot in Religion, Rev. 3.16. to be zealous of good works, Tit. 2.14. to be fervent in spirit, Rom. 12.11. to strive to enter in at the strait Gate. Luk. 13.24. with a holy violence to

lay hold upon the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 11.12. But this is not the point I shall now insist on.

2. For the reason binding to it, not as fools, but as wise. It points to us, that exactness, or preciseness in holy walking is a fruit of true Wisdom. Luther brings in the men of the World objecting against him, Num tu solus sapis? Num solus tu De places? What? are you the only Wise man in the World? do you only please God? The answer was easy from this Text, that exact walking, or a strict conversation, is the fruit of Wisdom. But neither is this the point that I shall insist on.

3. For the effect testifying of it, Redeeming the time. If I may explain the words, 1. By time is meant opportunity; which either is taken for the whole course of our remaining life, or for such and such particular occasions as God doth offer to this or that particular duty; and both these may be understood here. 2. By Redeeming the time, is meant either the avoiding of some hindrances, which would take us off from the opportunity; or the compensating of some former unfruitfulness, which hath been in the former part of our life: or a gaining, stretching, improving of time by embracing all the occasions of doing all the good we can do: and we shall discover soon, that all these may be understood here. In the meantime we lay down this Position as a necessary, fundamental, Evangelical truth, that time must be Redeemed. Look to it all ye that fear God; herein will your spiritual Wisdom, and exact walking appear, even in Redeeming the time.

In the prosecution of this point, I shall 1. give you the ἀκριβῶς 2. The. 3. The ἀκριβῶς. And then come to Application.

1. The necessity of redeeming time is even confirmed by the Heathens: It was the saying of Pittacus, one of the seven Wise-men,

"know time; do not waste a minute." Theophrastus had another saying similar to this, "Time is of precious cost." Pliny, upon seeing his nephew at leisure, taking some turns in his walk, was so strict that he told him, "You should not waste so many precious hours." When Titus, the son of Vespasian who avenged Christ's blood on Jerusalem, returned victor to Rome, remembering one night that he had done no good that day, he cried out to his friends, "Alas, I have lost a day!" Little do we think of wasting time, and isn't this our shame? If such men without God and Christ, without Law and Gospel, without all the promises of God and Christ in Law or Gospel, could say this much, how may they rise up in judgment against many of us?

But we do not cite them as though we need their learning; the Apostles themselves give it to us in charge, "Walk in wisdom towards those who are without, redeeming the time, and exhort one another while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." And again, "While it is said today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." And, "Pass the time of your sojourning here with fear, knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things—but with the precious blood of Christ." In other words, Christ redeemed you, and therefore you need to redeem the time. "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles—so that henceforth we should not serve sin—or no longer should we live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God—Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not; as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men." It is Jerome's saying upon these words, "O how short is this race of my life? How short is this time now at hand? My studying, preaching, writing, correcting, reading, what is it but a gaining or a losing of my time?"

2. What does it mean to redeem the time? I answer, it encompasses these particulars.

1. Avoiding anything that would hinder us from seizing the opportunity. If you ask, what are these hindrances? I answer, 1. Ignorance; many believe they are not so strictly accountable for time. It is a common opinion among the grossly ignorant that if they can just pass away time without doing any harm (as they say), they are well enough; as if no account of time might be given at all: they are ignorant of this principle, that they are to improve and redeem the time.

2. Slothfulness; this makes people heedless or careless of their time: As it is with the sluggard, "Yet a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the arms to sleep." So it is with the idle person, "Let this hour and this day be spent in doing nothing." Oh, the many golden hours, days, and years that many thousands spend, and yet cannot give the slightest account wherein either they have glorified God or served their generations.

3. Love of fleshly liberty: Alas, what care do they have for redeeming time who are set on their lusts and liberties to sin? All the care they have is merely to eat, drink, and play: sensual pleasures are the whole study of these men, and if they can but enjoy them, let time slip away as it will, they never regard it.

2. A compensation for some former unproductiveness: ⟨in Greek⟩ has this interpretation, it is a redeeming (as it were) of that jewel of time that has been formerly lost. As a traveler who has long stayed at an inn, when he finds the night coming upon him, he quickens his pace, and goes as many miles in an hour or two, as he did before in many. This, to me, comes closest to the word Redimo, to redeem, or to buy

back again. It is taken (say some) from the custom and practice of wise merchants or tradesmen, who tend to buy their commodities while the fit time of buying serves, and while the market holds; and having perhaps had great losses, or formerly spent their time idly or wastefully, they do by their subsequent diligence seek to redeem, and (as it were) to buy back again the time that is past.

3. An embracing of all occasions for acting graces, and doing good; and this agrees with the reason following, for the days are evil. Look to yourselves, for these are hard and dismal times; now there is much corruption, and great persecution, and the opportunity for good is exceedingly narrowed; and therefore it is very necessary to seize the time, and to lay hold on an opportunity, both to exercise graces, and to be doing as much good as you can, while the time permits. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day, says Christ, the night comes when no man can work: And, yet a little while and the light is with you, walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you: And as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith. Mark these sayings, while it's called today; and while the light is with you; and while you have opportunity. Thus you see what it is.

3. But why must time be redeemed? What necessity for that? I answer—

1. In respect of time past. Alas, many a golden season have we lost, how many hours, and days, and months, and years have we spent idly, and done little good? Is it not time then to seize every opportunity to redeem time past? When God brought us forth into this world, his commands were upon us to work in his vineyard, and to that purpose he designated to everyone his time; thus many days, or months, or years shall you everyone live, and while you live be

employing these and these talents; it is my command upon all the sons of men, in the sweat of thy face (i.e. of thy brow, or of thy brain) shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; and why then do ye stand all the day idle? Why are ye not in the work; and especially in the work of the Lord? Now if this be so, that there is such a command, and that we have broken this command at such a time, and such a time, is it not our duty, and is there not cause to redeem the time? A person who has loitered a great part of the day in his business, and yet must needs finish his work, will he not toil and sweat at it towards night? Will he not double his efforts, and put all his strength to it?

So we, having not only been slack in our business about God's service, and slow in the way towards Heaven, but even for many years having perhaps run in a quite contrary course, and done the Devil's work, how should we now towards the night of our natural life, and in the conclusion of the short span thereof, spare no pains, double our diligence, press hard to the price of the high calling with a holy kind of violence, lay hold upon the Kingdom of Heaven, with all zeal, courage, and resolution labor to redeem past, because it is past? This our reason.

2. In respect of the present time: It is but a moment on which eternal bliss or woe depends. If we have lost past time, and if we do lose the present time, we may be undone forever. In this respect, we may say of time, as Boaz said to his kinsman concerning Ruth, "If you will redeem it, redeem it: never think of redeeming it tomorrow, or the other day; or hereafter; for no time is properly yours but the present time. Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation: now while I am speaking and you hearing; now before the night is done or the next day comes on.

Oh why should we trifle away the time which is properly ours, and promise ourselves great things in a time which is none of ours? When Christ mourned over Jerusalem he bemoaned it thus, "If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things belonging to thy peace." So may I mourn over you, "if thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day." When's that? While ministers call and you hear, this is your day; and therefore he that never heard effectively, let him hear now; it is now high time to awake out of that cursed security wherein you lie; the Lord is now come near, Christ Jesus is calling, mercy is entreating, and wisdom is even hoarse with crying after you. If you lose this time, this hour of grace, who knows whether ever you shall enjoy such another season? Oh take time by the forehead! Post est occasio calva; it will be too late soon. Now the Lord calls, and now it concerns us to bestir ourselves upon these grounds.

1. Because now are evil days; the very reason in the text: these are the last times, which the Apostle calls perilous times; and why perilous? For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, etc. One would think it rather a history than a prophecy of our days. Oh, is it not time now, if ever, to redeem the time.

2. Because now are days of light: notwithstanding the evils of some or most in comparison, yet many glorious truths do now appear: the Devil, I know, now brings forth his ware, but withal God is now communicating many blessed truths. In respect of us, our fathers before, and since the Reformation were in great darkness; the candle of God now shines upon this nation with extraordinary light: And what then? Why therefore it concerns us to redeem the time: This is the Apostle's argument, "The time

of this ignorance God winks at but now he commands every man everywhere to repent." This is another reason.

3. In respect of time to come: I shall instance only in time of death, and time of judgment.

1. Death is at hand, and then we cannot redeem the time: So the Preacher says, "Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." In other words, if there is anything to be done, if there is any duty God requires, do it in life, for when death shall come there shall be no more preaching, praying, hearing. "The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee, they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth: the living, the living he shall praise thee, as I do this day."

2. Our fate for eternity of joys or woes approaches quickly, and is even at the door. Then I am certain, an account must be given for time, as well as for all other things. "Come," Christ will say, "give an account of your stewardship, of all things done in the flesh, and of every moment of time: how did you spend such a day, such a Sabbath? Was not such a day spent sinfully, or very unprofitably, and was it ever redeemed?" Here's a reason indeed to compel us to this duty. But of this and other reasons I shall speak more in the motives, when I exhort you to it.

Well then, is it so, that time must be redeemed? This may reprove several sorts of people: such as—

1. The idle; those who are so far from redeeming time, that they are perpetually losing time. This was the sin of Sodom, pride, fullness of bread: and abundance of idleness, was in her. Allow me a moment to expose this sin. Surely this sin is the source of all sins; by doing

nothing we shall be sure to learn how to do ill. It is said of Rome, that during the time of their Wars with Carthage, and other enemies in Africa, they knew not what vice meant; but no sooner had they achieved the conquest, than through idleness they came to ruin. Rust, you know, will corrode the hardest Iron, if it is not used; so vice will infect the best heart, if given to idleness. Standing water freezes sooner than the running stream; and he who sits is more prone to sleep than he who walks; so the idle man is far more susceptible to temptation than he who is profitably engaged. Idleness is the Devil's special opportunity; and we have an instance in David's idleness, who at that time, was tempted by the Devil to commit other sins of Adultery and Murder.

But this is a sin that even boys in schools can declaim against; and if it were not that I see many among us spend their time so very unprofitably, I would not have mentioned it. Oh think of it! If a Master should place a light upon a candlestick, and give his servant food, and time, and all things convenient with which to work, yet when he comes to see if his task is finished, he finds that the food is wasted, the time has ended, the candle has burned down to the socket, and little or nothing of the work is advanced, how would such a servant excuse himself to his Master? And is it not so with many of you? God has given you food, drink, and time; he has given you light, fire, and material; but what have you done? Is not the lamp of your life almost consumed, and yet you have not finished the work that was given you to do? Oh why do you stand here all day idle?

2. The hedonistic: these misuse their time as badly as the former. They take the tambourine and harp and rejoice at the sound of the organ, they spend their days in merriment. They squander the richness and vitality (as it were) of precious time, even the prime of their lives, in frivolity and foolishness. Lord, that men should live on

earth, like Leviathan in the sea, only to take their sport and pastime therein! We have seen the tragic end of some who have led such lives; and I believe there is still a generation of men, that unless they are continually engaged in a variety of pleasures, they are greatly troubled with time; what else is the meaning of all those pastimes (as they call them) but only a sequence of such delights as please the flesh, so that time may not be too tedious or wearisome to them? Little do these men consider that saying of Chrysostom, The present time is not for dissolving into merriment, but for lamentation and mourning; the Devil omits no time to harm you, for he knows his time is short; he is always laying his traps to ensnare men's souls; he prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to devour; he roars, and fumes, and spews out fire against your salvation; and do you sit still, and jovially jest it out? Listen! The present time is not for mirth, says Chrysostom; no, no, the present time is for virtuous actions, to do the great business for which you were born, to mourn, and sorrow, and seek your pardon, and not to spend it in jollity, and carnal delights. If a condemned man had two or three days granted him to seek his pardon, would that be a time for pleasure and sports? Surely the sentence of death is upon all flesh; In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die; only a little uncertain time is granted to seek our pardon in the name of Christ: why then do you let your time slip away sinfully, and will not redeem it?

3. The godly themselves: Alas, even the best fall short in this duty of redeeming the time. Did not the Lord complain against his own people, the stork in the heaven knows her appointed times; and the turtle dove, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people do not know the judgment of the Lord. Certainly God's own people do not so improve, as they should, those many gracious seasons of love which the Lord provides them. Oh, the omissions of duties, and commissions of evils for which we all stand

guilty! How many good hours have we wasted? I shall not need to recount our times of infancy when we knew nothing, nor of childhood when we knew very little, nor of youth when we knew not much of what we ought to know; but since our mature years, yes since the time of our regeneration, how wasteful have we been of this precious commodity of time? Those who keep exact diaries can easily tell you, such an hour lost, and such an hour ill spent; this day I did little good, and the other day I sinned against my God. If in this case I may speak out my own experiences, I must admit that many a day I have lost such and such an opportunity, and now that difficult days come thick upon me, wherein I would gladly redeem my days, oh how slow and reluctant am I still in this heavenly duty! My dear brethren, I shall not only reprove you, but myself in this: Oh why are you so dull, and listless, and heavy, oh my soul? Awake, awake! Stir yourself, and with redoubled diligence fall to the work of redeeming time, while yet the time, the day, the season, the opportunity of grace, of heaven, or of salvation lasts.

2. Must time be redeemed? Then let me exhort you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ to exercise this duty. Oh, redeem your time! Avoid all those hindrances that would distract you: compensate for your former unproductiveness with subsequent diligence; seize all opportunities to act with grace and do good. I could elaborate on all these points, but I shall condense them into these very words, "Redeem the time, oh redeem your time."

The motives, in addition to the previous reasons, may be these:

1. Time is always fleeting and waits for no one. The Scripture is very clear on this; we encounter many metaphors hinting at the sudden, invisible motion of time. "My days are swifter than a courier; they fly away; they have passed away as swift ships, as the eagle that hastens

to the prey." See how Job here multiplies comparisons, so that if we will not learn from the first, we might learn from a second, or a third: Go to the land, and there we see time in haste, in the swift-riding courier; go to the sea, and there we see time on the wind, in the swift-sailing ship; go to the air, and there we see time on the wing, in the swift-flying eagle. Hence the ancients symbolized time with wings, as if it were not only running or sailing, but flying. Oh how sad it is to see men live as if time had leaden heels and not swift wings; or as if time would at any moment wait for our convenience, and not be gone. Do not be deceived, you who are weary of time, either now redeem it, or you will one day cry out, "What has pride profited us? Or what good has wealth with our boasting brought us? All these things have passed away like a shadow, and as a courier that passes by; or as a ship; — or as a bird; — or as an arrow; — even so we, etc."

2. As time is swift, so our time is short. The heavens indeed are said to be of swift motion, but of long duration; but our time is otherwise. When the Corinthians proposed various moral dilemmas, after some answers the Apostle gives them this: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short," or "time is cut off." He alludes to seafaring men who have almost completed their voyage and begin to lower the sails. There was a time at the beginning of the world when men might say, "I may, by the course of nature, live a matter of six, or seven, or eight, or nine hundred years;" but now God has so determined the span of our lives that as soon as we begin our voyage, we are ready to lower the sails: we have but a little time; if I were to measure it out, what is it but a yard, a span, an inch, a point? And is it not then time to redeem the time?

3. Time is not only swift and short, but it is nothing, I say, a very nothing in comparison. As some creatures are said to be nothing in comparison to others. What is the ant to the elephant; or the shrimp

to the whale? What is the whole body of the Earth to the body of the Heavens? So is our time as nothing to all time; and all time is as nothing to Eternity. David, who found out a short dimension of his time considered absolutely, or in itself, said, "Behold thou hast made my days as a handbreadth;" yet he could find no dimension small enough for his time compared with God, "Mine age is as nothing before thee." God's being consists in one eternal now; but man's time is divided into past, present, and future; three nothings, which when added together amount in total to this sum, "Mine age is as nothing before thee." Oh, that we would consider this language of the Holy Ghost! Would it not be enough, do you think, to put us on this duty of improving and trading our time while the time is ours, and while this short time lasts?

4. Though time is swift and short, and as nothing in comparison, yet it is a commodity more precious than the Gold of Ophir. If we could hear lost souls utter themselves, oh what would they say? Or what would they give for a little of that little time they had on earth? If the Lord by divine and extraordinary dispensation would but grant them one month's time to come hither again, and to make a new trial, do you think they would not prize this grant? Would they not esteem that little short golden season of grace at a high and mighty rate? Would they not make use of every opportunity to lay hold of Heaven, and to escape those fires wherein now they are burning, frying, and flaming? Oh yes! If you would then tempt them, saying, "Come, spend this hour merrily;" would they not answer; "Alas, we have but one month's time to live here in this world, and then we must either return to Hell again, or if we improve our time well, we must go to Heaven; and what? Shall we trifle away this time of trial and of grace in offending God? Shall we cast away our souls again to gratify you, or to please our own flesh, for so little a time as we have now to live? Oh God forbid! Avoid Satan! Avoid all temptations! Welcome now all

those messengers of Heaven that will bring us the glad tidings, the tenders, the offers of Christ and of Salvation! Let not one sand in the hourglass run, but let us be doing some good; let this hour be spent in prayer, and the next in meditation, and the next in hearing God's Word, and the next in the exercise of this and that grace, and so on; but not one hour in sin." Surely thus would they prize and improve the time, those who know by woeful experience what it is to lose the time. And by this we may guess the worth of time; oh it is precious, so precious that if all the Earth were turned into Gold, it could not purchase one minute of it. It seems this motive should work, and now that we have a little time, it should prevail with us to redeem the time.

5. Our time has been a very sinful time. Ah, my brethren, think over your ignorance, unbelief, worldliness, covetousness, pride, malice, lusts, lukewarmness, impatience, discontentment, vanity, self-love, wandering and wicked imaginations: in a word, all your pollutions, disorders, estrangement from God in the time of your unregeneracy; oh, were not those sinful, abominable, and rebellious times? Or be it so that your gracious God has since those times wrought in you effectively his saving grace, have you not since then lost your first love, or at least grown remiss, and cold, and lukewarm in it? Say then, speak out your hearts and tell me, is it not time now to remember from whence you have fallen, and to repent, and to do your first works? Blessed Mr. Bolton has a saying that if it were possible that any uncomfortable passion were incident to a glorified Saint in Heaven, he would be sorry and transported with extreme anger and indignation against himself that he was not a mere greedy monopolizer (as it were) and improver of time for doing excellently upon Earth, and that every hour, especially after his Conversion, was not crowned with some rare and more remarkable exploit, with some more special and noble service for the glorifying of that most

bountiful and ever-blessed God, who has now honored him with such unspeakable glory in the Kingdom of Heaven. But if no such passion is in glorified Saints, I am sure we all have cause enough to loathe ourselves in our own sight for our iniquities and for our abominations. Oh come, let this be a motive to spur us on and to quicken us in this duty of redeeming the time because our days were evil.

6. The Scriptures speak of a remarkable set time of grace, a time of visitation, Luke 19.44, a time of Salvation, 2 Cor. 6.2, a time while God may be found, Psalm 32.6, a time when he holds out the Golden Scepter, Esther 5.2, a time wherein the Fountain runs, and the spirit proclaims, "Ho, everyone that thirsts come ye to the Waters," Isa. 55.1. Thus Jerusalem had her time; and all the several Churches in Asia had their time; and now England, Scotland, and Ireland have their time; and if we misuse this time, and walk unworthy of this grace and Gospel of Christ, this time will have an end, this Sun will go down at Noon, and set upon our heads. "This day, if you will hear my voice harden not your hearts," said God to Israel; but they hardened their hearts, and therefore God swore to them in his wrath that they should never enter into his rest. If it be so with us as it was with Israel in the wilderness, we do not know but this very day the Lord may clap an Oath upon our heads, that we shall never enter into his rest.

Oh then that we would learn from the Ant, that gathers her food in the Summer time! Oh that while we have this time of grace, we would redeem the time in praying, reading, hearing, meditating, and treasuring up the things belonging to our peace! This time is a set-time that hastens away: and we cannot with Joshua bid the Sun stand still. Oh then let us say, "This is our time, and therefore what we will do for our Souls, we will do it now." Surely better it is to

redeem it now than to wish in pain and torment for the time again when it is past redemption.

7. The time is coming, yes, it is near, even at the door, when time shall be no more. This is the voice of the seventh Angel, "And the Angel which I saw standing upon the Sea and upon the Earth, lifted up his hand to Heaven, and swore by him that lives forever and ever, that there should be time no longer." Who was this? A man? No, an Angel: and what, did he say it? No, he swore it: how swore it, by himself? No, he swore it by him that lives forever: and what? That time should be little? No, it should be no longer, time should be no more. This time must come, that has all these circumstances to confirm it. And what if this time should come even in your time? What if now the seventh Angel should lift up his hand to Heaven, and take this Oath? If this time is far off as to the general Judgment (which I cannot think) yet sure I am, and without all doubt, that it is not far off to you and me. It may be before this year, this month, this week, this night is done, that God may say to his Angel, "Go to such a man, and such a woman, I will give them no more time; bring them here, and here let them give an account of what they have done with all their time, for I must have a reckoning of all past time." And then comes in, firstly, so much time in Drinking and Reveling; secondly so much time in Idling, Sporting, playing, etc. "Oh," will God say, "were these things I gave you time for? No, no, it was for Heaven and Salvation you had your time; and if that time be misused, away, away time, and now enter Eternity upon these Souls." Is not here a motive to make us look about us? Oh my brethren, now, now if ever, redeem the time, for soon time will be gone, and then succeeds eternity, eternity, eternity.

But what are the means for redeeming time? I answer—

They are so many, that I may have no time to enumerate the Particulars; shall we instance in some? You must pray, read, hear the Word, meditate, and watch over your hearts with extraordinary diligence; suppress your members which are upon the Earth, such as pride, covetousness, lusts, etc. grow up in grace, clear up your evidences against that day when all shall stand naked before that great and glorious Judge, etc. And these, and all other Duties (of which soon) must be done while the day lasts. Here's a great work, and a little time; does it not concern you to bestir yourselves? If a man has much to write, and but a little Paper to write on, he must write small, and thick, and close as ever he can: So must you do. I truly believe there's not one Soul among us but he may find out hundreds and thousands of sins to repent of; he may find out many and many a Particular Duty that he should be exercised in from morning to evening, and from evening to morning; so that it's a wonder how he can spare any time at all for anything else. Well then, up and be doing; lose not a minute, but be in the use and exercise of some of these Duties. These are the means, and in the use of these means you may (by the Lord's help and grace concurring) redeem your time.

One Objection I would remove. It may be the day of grace is done, the gate of mercy is already shut; and if so, how is it possible for me to redeem the time? I answer—

1. By way of concession, I believe there is indeed a day of grace, and if that sun sets, it will never, never rise again. "If you had known, even you at least in this your day, the things belonging to your peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes." This implies that the gate of mercy is now shut, there is no means of grace or salvation forever hereafter to be hoped for. Just as there is no market or fair day that lasts forever; if the country will not come in, the tradesman will at

last pack up his goods. So the Lord's standing may be open, and his shop set wide for a certain time; but if souls will not come in, and buy without money and without price, he will at last pack up his goods (all his jewels of grace) and then be gone.

2. Although it is true that there is a day of grace, and that this day may set; yet in respect to us, the ministers of Christ, we cannot determine it; and therefore as long as you live we still call, "Oh repent! Oh redeem your time!" I may add, in respect to yourselves, it is not in you to know the times and seasons which God has put in his own power. And the commandment of faith standing in force on you as long as you live, therefore you are still to look to your duty of redeeming the time.

3. It may be this day, this night, this sermon, this very hour may be your day of grace. Listen! Is not Christ's Spirit now knocking? Is not Christ himself now offering mercy to your soul? Oh you sons of men who have misused your time, will you now at least in this your day be wise to salvation? Why now I call to your hearts; now I command you to open your everlasting doors, that I, the King of Glory, may come in; oh let this be the time of love! Come, give me your hearts, and now redeem the time. Away, away with all objections, doubts, quibbles that may hinder this duty, and now, even now, listen to this voice of Christ, or of the Spirit of Christ, that your souls may live.

4. Must time be redeemed? Then here are some rules or directions on how we must redeem it.

Rule 1. Avoid everything that would hinder us from seizing the opportunity. What those things are you have heard before; such as ignorance, sloth, and love of fleshly liberty. Many other particulars might be enumerated, but chiefly and especially we should forego these.

Rule 2. Repent of all former misuses of our time. There is no other way of compensating for former unfruitfulness but by repentance and subsequent diligence. This is the second chance after a shipwreck; in this way we may redeem, or buy back again the time that has passed. The very word "resipiscentia" signifies to be wise again, after all our former follies. Oh that anyone should ever be so unworthy as to decry this godly-Gospel-golden rule.

Rule 3. Live every day as if every day were the last day we had to live. This rule or direction is so comprehensive, that I must necessarily break it into particulars. Suppose then I were to begin this day, and that I looked on this day as the last day of my life, how should I redeem my time; or spend this day? I answer...

1. My first and morning thoughts should be on God, or on something in service to Him. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning. — O Lord, be gracious to me. I have waited for you, be my strength every morning. — I will sing of your power, I will sing aloud of your mercy in the morning. — It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto your name, O Most High, to show forth your loving kindness in the morning. — How precious are your thoughts unto me, O God, when I awake, I am still with you. These morning thoughts may be spent either in a way of meditation, or of prayer; and my duties lie in both.

2. I should meditate. I will not determine whether morning or evening may be more suitable for set, deliberate, and solemn meditation? Only this I affirm, that either a solemn or an occasional meditation is a morning duty. In some sort, meditation and prayer should always go together; and David thus couples them, Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation, hearken to the voice of my cry. — My voice shall you hear in the morning, O Lord, in the

morning will I direct my prayer unto you. Now these morning meditations (if occasional or ejaculatory) may be on such objects as these.

1. Upon my first waking, I may think on that morning of my Resurrection, when the Lord will awake me from the dust; it is but a while until the trumpet shall sound, Awake, and sing you that dwell in the dust, for your dew is as the dew of herbs; and then shall the earth cast out her dead.

2. Upon sight of the morning sun, I may think on that Sun of Righteousness that enlightens Heaven. The sun that shines on me was only created for this lower world, and yet how glorious is it? Oh then what light is there in that City above, that has no need of sun, or moon, or star, for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

3. Upon the putting on of my apparel, I may think on that garment of Righteousness with which my soul either is or should be clothed. Alas! What is this outward robe but a rag, or at best an excrement of dead worms, of which I have little reason to be proud? But my soul's robe is as a garment cut out of the sun, and put upon me. And there appeared a great wonder in Heaven, a woman clothed with the sun. Oh that I may be clothed with that Sun of Righteousness, or with that Righteousness of the Son of God, that I may appear before God as I am in Him, pure and spotless.

I shall not instance in any other objects of my morning's meditation; only if I find my spirit most active and fit for meditation at such a time. I should then go on, and spare more time for set, deliberate, and solemn meditations.

2. I should pray, and to this duty, I may join the reading of the Word. That this is a morning's duty, the Scripture is explicit: "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." — "And in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee." — "And evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice." It is true that prayer and reading of the Word are two distinct exercises, yet that they mutually help one another is most evident, and consequently are fit to be joined together; for the word ministers matter of prayer, and is the ground of our petition, who have no promise to be heard unless we ask according to God's word, 1 John 5.14. And the fitness of the morning for these exercises is evident, not only because the first of time belongs unto God, but also the heart being then most free from worldly thoughts, it is therefore fittest for holy exercises; and withal, when in the beginning of the day the heart of man is seasoned with holiness, and with the fear of God, he shall find himself better fitted to walk humbly with God all the day after.

2. All the rest of the day until evening should I spend my time in the duties of my particular calling, nor do I know the least reason why any man in the world, high or low, rich or poor, should be herein exempted. Adam must not eat his bread without sweat and labor. Abel was a keeper of sheep. Cain a tiller of the ground. Jabal was a tent-maker. Jubal the father of such as handle the harp. Tubal Cain an artisan in brass and iron. All the patriarchs of Israel were but shepherds; and Jesus Christ himself was a plain carpenter.

But you may object, may I not herein lose my time as to God's service? One would think, if this were my last day I should do no other work but pray, or hear, or read, or meditate, etc. I answer—

1. I grant there are such times wherein God calls us extraordinarily to such spiritual duties all the day long; as either in afflictions felt or

feared, or in some special mercies expected or received. And there are those times we call the Lord's days, wherein we are to do no work ordinarily but of a spiritual nature. And there are such times wherein God holds forth an opportunity of exercising graces, or of doing good; and so to embrace the occasion is one piece or part of our redeeming time. "As we have opportunity let us do good to all men." And "your care of me has flourished again," (said Paul to his Philippians) "but you lacked opportunity." It seems their care for the Apostle was intermitted for a season, for want of opportunity to send unto him, but now they put forth again as flowers in Spring. I doubt not but in such cases as these, we may, and must for the time dispense with our particular callings. Yet—

2. In my ordinary constant daily course I am to be in the exercise of my particular calling, with which I may either mingle some actings of grace, or ejaculatory duties, as suddenly to look up to Heaven, and to behold the face of God, to whom I am to approve myself in my particular calling; or if they clash, I am solely to follow my particular calling, and to leave other spiritual actings till their appointed season. Nor do I herein decline God's service.

For 1. I follow my calling out of an awful respect to the eye, presence, and command of God, who has said. "Six days shalt thou labor." Yes, I do what I do in civil business as the work of Christ, so that I may say at that time "now am I about the work of God, and of Jesus Christ."

2. Seeing myself working for him, I can easily understand that for that time I honor God as much, if not more, by the simplest servile worldly act, than if I were to spend all that time in prayer, meditation, or any other spiritual activity to which I was not called at such a time. It is noted, therefore, by some, of Peter's wife's mother,

that when Christ had healed her of her fever, she did not sit down at the table with Christ in communion with him, which (no doubt) was sweet, but she ministered unto them (i.e., she ran to and fro, and served him, and acted for him), wherein she showed more love and gave him more honor than if at that time she had enjoyed communion with him in a closer way.

But I hear others object, "May I not take up some little of this time in recreations? Must I always be on my calling? Is there not a time for every purpose under heaven? A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

I answer: There is indeed a time to recreate; but that time is then, I say only then, when our bodies or minds are wearied with our other tasks. Oh, what a sad thing it is to see many spend a whole day, it may be a whole week in unnecessary sinful recreations! What, is this to redeem the time? Or dare I thus spend the last day of my life in this world? Surely, God's people who are conscious of their duties should not engage at any time with recreations (though in themselves lawful) without true cause, and a just calling thereunto; nor should they use them any longer, nor for any other end, but only to quicken their minds or to revive their bodies so that they may return with some lightness and alacrity to their callings again. He who spends his time lavishly in recreations is like him whose garments are made of fringes, and his food nothing but sauces. I am not against recreations lawfully used, but God forbid that we should fritter away our time (more valuable than worlds) on foolish, vain, empty, and unnecessary toys.

3. The evening should be concluded with spiritual duties. If you ask what duties? I answer.

1. The evening is a time for prayer, "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." To this prayer, I join reading the Scripture and good books; for it is appropriate to end the day with the same duties with which we began it.

2. The evening was Isaac's time for meditation: "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide." It may be that this duty of meditation is not so suitable for some temperaments in the morning; but shall the evening pass without some spiritual holy meditations? Some believe the evening to be the very season of set and deliberate meditation; and in this case, how fruitful might I be in the use of that ordinance of looking unto Jesus, as he carries on the great work of our salvation from first to last? Oh, that this duty of meditation, either on that or any other spiritual subject, were not so neglected as it is by Christians themselves! The Lord gave Joshua a charge, that he should meditate on his law day and night; and David's character of the blessed man is, that his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law does he meditate day and night. And David's own practice was to remember God upon his bed, and to meditate on him in the night-watches. And Paul's charge to Timothy was to meditate upon spiritual things, and to give himself wholly to them. Or if you want another proof for the evening-season, not only was it Isaac's time, but David's time, "Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word."

3. The evening is a time for self-examination. This is another wonderful practice that many Christians occasionally use, but to set aside time for this every evening, as conscientiously as they do for reading the word and prayer, is rare. I am certain it was David's charge. "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." And in line with this was his practice, "I call to remembrance my

song in the night, I commune with my own heart, and my spirit made a diligent search." Chrysostom, on these words of David, "What does this mean (says he) commune with your own hearts upon your bed?" thus answers himself, "After supper-time, when you are going to sleep, and are ready to lie down on bed, and have great quiet and silence, without the presence or disturbance of anyone, then erect a tribunal for the conscience. And when neither friend disturbs you, nor servants provoke you, nor multitudes of business press upon you, then take an account of your life, what you have done in the daytime before." And Dorotheus lays it down as a rule that the Christians of his time had learned from their forefathers, that in the evening they should question themselves about how they had spent the day. Oh that Christians now would sum up their accounts at the end of every day, I mean, that they would scrutinize themselves every evening when they are ready to sleep, as if it were a little image of death!

4. The evening is a time to consider my privileges in Christ. When David was ready for bed, "I will lay me down in peace, and sleep," says he, "for you Lord alone make me dwell in safety." See how he speaks of peace, rest, sleep, and safety: all these were privileges. It seems to me a sweet conclusion of a good day's work, and a blessed farewell to the world if this evening were my last, and that immediately I must go to God, to consider some of those glorious privileges in God and Christ. I might consider my peace, rest, sleep, and safety, by virtue of a promise, or covenant of grace; or I might consider my election, redemption, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification, glorification. But because these are commonly discussed, and our communion with God and Christ, and the spirit of Christ is the most exhilarating privilege in this world, my soul leads me to focus on this. One of our worthies has written eminently on it;

and for a taste of his excellent work, the sweetening of my last thoughts with such an excellent subject, I shall summarize it thus,

1. I would consider my communion with God the Father in love. This the Father peculiarly bestows upon the Saints; and this they are immediately to regard him in, "God is love." Christians often walk with exceedingly troubled hearts concerning the thoughts of the Father towards them; they are well persuaded of the Lord Christ and his goodwill; the difficulty lies in what is their acceptance with the Father, what is his heart towards them? Now here is the work of the Gospel to reveal the love of the Father: this is the will of God, that he may always be regarded as kind, tender, loving, indeed as the fountain and spring of all gracious communications and fruits of love; and when Christians understand this, that "God is love," and so rest upon him, and delight in him as such, then they have communion with the Father in love.

Now for the exercise of my soul in this blessed communion, the directions are such as these.—

1. I must regard the Father as Love. I must not look on him as one who is always angry; but as one most kind and tender in himself, and as one who has had thoughts of kindness towards his Saints from everlasting.

2. I must regard the love of the Father in such a way as to receive it by faith; I must believe in this love of God as being for myself. Certainly, His love is not mine, nor will it be mine in its sweetness, until it is received in this way. Either I must know it, assent to it, embrace it, and have all my affections filled with it, or it will be in vain concerning my communion with God the Father.

3. This love must have its proper fruit and effect upon my heart in a return of love to Him again. To this end, God loves so that He may be loved: this is the return that He demands, "My son, give me your heart," your affections, your love. Oh, the privilege of saints! They have food to eat that the world knows not of; they have close communion and fellowship with the Father; they deal with Him in the exchange of love; so that each one of them may say, "If I have hatred in the world, I will go where I am sure of love; though all others are hard to me, yet my Father is tender and full of compassion, I will go to Him, and satisfy myself in Him."

4. I would consider my communion with God the Son in grace. So the Apostle, speaking of our communion with Him as Mediator, concludes his Epistles, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Not to mention any other grace but His purchased grace of justification, or acceptance with God. The directions for this communion are such as these —

I must regard Christ's deeds and sufferings; not as for Himself but for His saints, and for their righteousness. "He was made under the law," that we might receive the adoption of sons, "And he bore our sins in his body on the tree." This was the end of Christ's life and death, to work out a complete righteousness for believers, as to a perfect acceptance before God.

I must approve of this righteousness of Christ as that alone which is absolutely complete, and able to make me acceptable before God. Of this I am convinced, that if I die this night, there is a necessity of righteousness, with which I must appear before God; and if I have nothing to commend me unto God but my own righteousness, oh how should I appear before His glory? There is no other name but Christ whereby I can be saved; and there is no other righteousness

but Christ's whereby I can be justified. "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

3. I must make an actual exchange with the Lord Jesus as to my sins, and His righteousness. And to that purpose

1. I must listen to the voice of Christ calling me to Him with my burden, "Come to me, you poor soul with your guilt of sin, for that is mine; this agreement I made with my Father from all eternity, that I should come, and take your sins and bear them away; they were my lot, give me your burden, give me all your sins, you know not what to do with them, I know how to dispose of them well enough, so that God shall be glorified, and your soul delivered."

2. Upon this call, I must lay down my sins at the cross of Christ upon His shoulders. This is faith's great and bold venture upon the grace, faithfulness, and truth of Christ, to stand by the cross, and say, "Ah! He is bruised for my sins, and wounded for my transgressions, and the chastisement of my peace is upon him: He is thus made sin for me; here I give up my sins to Him who is able to bear them; He requires at my hands that I should be content to throw my sins upon Him, and to this I consent."

3. Having thus given up my sins to Christ through faith, I must approach and accept the righteousness that he has achieved for me. For this purpose, he offers himself and his righteousness to be my righteousness before God. By accepting it, I complete this bartering and exchange of faith, and enter into communion with Jesus Christ, as to my acceptance with God by grace. He was made sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

3. I would consider my communion with the Holy Ghost in comfort. We often read in the Gospel that he is the Comforter. Oh, the

condescension of the Holy Ghost! He willingly proceeds or comes forth from the Father to be our Comforter; he knew what we were, and what our dealings with him would be; he knew we would grieve him, provoke him, quench his motions, defile his dwelling place, and yet he chose to come to be our Comforter. Now for my communion with the Holy Ghost herein, the directions are these.

1. I must ask for him from the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. This is the daily work of believers; they look upon and consider the Holy Ghost as promised to be sent, and in this promise they know lies all their grace, peace, mercy, and comfort; for by him so promised are these things communicated. Oh then how should I ask for him from the Father, who is as ready to bestow him on me as I am to give my children bread? If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

2. If comfort comes, I must learn to act faith distinctly on the Holy Ghost, as the immediate efficient cause of all my comfort. It may be that the Spirit is given, and he offers or administers consolations, but then I do not consider him as the Comforter, why surely this grieves him: a lively faith will take notice of his kindness; upon every work of consolation that I receive, I should write this motto, "This is from the Holy Ghost, he is my Comforter, and the God of all my consolation."

3. I must return praise and thanks, and honor, and glory, and blessings to him on account of those comforts I receive from him. When I feel myself warmed with joy, supported with peace, or established in obedience, I should then ascribe to him the praise that is his due. And this praising of him is no small part of my communion with him.

Say now, isn't this a privilege worthy of my consideration? Wouldn't a thought of this, and my acting on this, leave a sweet flavor in my soul when I am going to my bed as if to my grave? David could say, "Your statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage; I have remembered your name, O Lord, in the night. And my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise you with joyful lips." But when must this be? He answers, "When I remember you upon my bed; and meditate on you in the night-watches." And he fastens it as a duty upon all saints, "Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds." And the Church resolves upon it, "With my soul have I desired you in the night, and with my spirit within me will I seek you early." Surely it is God (says Elihu) who gives songs in the night. And "in the night" (says David) "his song shall be with me." And it was a blessed remedy to his heavy soul, "I call to remembrance my song in the night." Oh, that with such thoughts and considerations of my communion with God, and Christ, and the spirit of Christ, or of some other privilege, I might every night go to my bed! For then like the nightingale should I sing in the night; yes then would my soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth would praise him with joyful lips.

I might instance in many other duties which would then be seasonable, but these are the main; and if this day were my last day, or if this night I must sleep my last in this world, yet I should comfortably hope that in the doing of these duties in a spiritual manner, I had in good measure redeemed my time; and that when I awake, though I never awake until the Resurrection day, yet then should I see God face to face, and I should be satisfied with his likeness: Psalm 17:15.

I have now finished; only before we part, I would say something of the deceased party for our edification, and so an end.

You know I have been sparing in this way, because of many abuses, and especially because all indiscriminately look for praises at their death, however they spend their life. But now God has removed me from this pastoral charge, and I shall not here perform many of these last offices of love, probably never more than this; and therefore at this time I shall crave your patience and attention to what may be spoken without any prejudice to truth or harm to you.

The duty I am pressing on you is to redeem the time; and this I believe of the deceased party, that she redeemed her time. I shall not speak of her birth, education, progeny, nobility: Stemmata quid faciunt? Alas! What's all this to a funeral sermon? Nor shall I speak of her youth or flourishing time; as I am a stranger to it, so I believe she had, or might have had her failings in that time. The temptations of honor, riches, prosperity, and youth are stronger than most imagine; and therefore prayed David, "Remember not the sins of my youth: Psalm 25:7." And all that are honorable may pray, "Remember not the sins of my honor, nobility, and greatness in the world." For my part I shall not take notice of these things, or of those times, but rather speak of her redeeming the time, since that time that forsaking the world in great measure, she gave up herself in a more retired and solitary way to serve her God.

Now then if here I begin; She has for these many years redeemed her time; as thus,

1. In life,

2. In death.

1. In life, it will appear in her general and particular calling.

Firstly, every morning and evening she was engaged in the duties of meditation and prayer. This was her routine, not sporadic, but daily. In her pleasant walks or private room, she spent both her early and late hours in communion with God. I do not speak of this from hearsay alone, for due to her kindness and generosity, she invited me to her house every spring. This allowed me to become familiar with her consistent routine. Indeed, I was more than willing to accept her invitation because her house seemed to me like a college for religion, or a retreat from the noise and frequent temptations of the world. This provided her, me, and anyone else who wished, a wonderful opportunity to continue our devotions without interruption. She had some books for contemplation, others for holy conversation, others for meditation, and others for devotion. She made use of all types of books, but for constant use and practice, she preferred the Bible. She often told me that other books had their use and delight until they became more ordinary with frequent reading. Then they seemed to lose their former brilliance, glory, and excellence. However, the Bible was always fresh, green, and new in her frequent readings. She found in it such continuous streams of holy, heavenly, and spiritual delights that (as Tertullian said) she could not help but admire and adore the fullness of the Scriptures.

Ordinarily, she spent the rest of the day working with her needle, with her maids around her. Or if other household tasks intervened, she was never so carried away with honor as to scorn her duty in the way of a specific calling. She had learned well that idleness was the rust and canker of the soul, the devil's cushion, pillow, chief reposal, his very high tide of temptation. Therefore, she was diligent in her specific as well as general calling with conscience and faithfulness. Now and then, she would visit poor cottages and relieve their

necessities. She was always courteous to the neighborhood and careful in the affairs of her own house. All things considered, for all I know, she might be a model for most of the ladies in our nation, or at least a bright morning star among other stars.

She redeemed her time in death, or near her death. Now indeed she was taken off her specific calling, and therefore this time she spent (as she could due to sickness) in the exercise of spiritual duties and spiritual graces. She was much involved in duties, of which we spoke before, and she shone most prominently in such graces as these. Such as—

1. In meekness: She had a meek and quiet spirit. Rarely have I seen her excessive in passions, but often have I seen her quiet, meek, gentle, and easy to be entreated amidst provocations. In her sickness, she behaved like a lamb; not a word of passion or irritability came from her lips, as far as I observed. The very image of Christ was, in this respect, beautifully portrayed within her, "Learn from me, for I am meek: Matthew 11:29." Christ is a meek Christ, and she was a meek creature.

2. In humility: She was of high descent and of royal blood, yet humble in heart and lowly in spirit. She never scorned the poorest creature but often stooped to remarkable condescensions, as I perceived. In her sickness, as well as death, she laid her honor in the dust. She was far from the opinion of those who think humility is a debasement and meekness a derogation from their reputation. No, no, she had learned otherwise from Christ; humility was her ornament, and with it she adorned herself (in the Apostle's language 1 Peter 5:5), or clothed herself, both in health and in sickness, when she could put on no other clothing. Hence, she was referred to by some as the humble, harmless lady.

3. In patience, submission, and contentment of spirit, she was at God's disposal. She had a severe sickness, and because of her previous health, it was even more severe for her. For many years before, she had not been sick in bed for a single day. She had taken many turns in her walks and gallery, and through much exercise in that way, she had the advantage of both her health and communion with God. But now the Lord laid her on a bed of sickness, not for a day, or two, or three, or four, but for a long while. She who had walked with God was now God's prisoner; and such was the nature of the sickness, that she could not stir nor move one foot. Yet she was patient and submissive to God's hand; she kissed the rod, she learned the Church's lesson, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him: Micah 7.9." She never murmured nor repined one bit, but as she was taught, she learned and conformed to the frame of Eli and David, "Lord here I am, do with me as seems good in your own eyes."

4. In faith. She was always acting in faith during her sickness. Often she acknowledged her own nothingness, vileness, wretchedness; that she had little faith and no ability to help herself. Indeed her weakness in faith, in grace, and in all performances was her constant complaint; and this made me remind her of that promise, that "he would not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed until he brought forth judgment unto victory: Mat. 12.20." Some others I have seen most confident in their sickness of salvation, whom though I dare not censure because I am unacquainted with their grounds, yet I honestly acknowledge that I dearly appreciate a humble, trembling, self-condemning frame. I am sure that those who are vilest in their own eyes are the ones in whom God most delights. I remember how Paul in Scripture besmirched himself, but aren't those passages his beauty spots? Give me a man among you who will lick the dust of Jesus's feet, and I dare say of such a one, that Christ will take him

into his arms and lay him in his bosom. It was her condition, she was all in confession of her spiritual poverty, yet she cast herself into the blessed bleeding arms of Jesus Christ; yes, she lay at his feet crying, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief," and again, "I rest upon Christ, and upon Christ alone for Heaven and Salvation," and again, "Though the Lord slay me, yet will I trust in him," and again, "He has delivered, and he does deliver, and I trust in him that he will deliver me still," and again, "Hold out faith, and soon you will come to vision." This last word, "hold out faith," was one of the last words she spoke on the last day of her life.

5. In her love for Ministers. Her heart was wholly set on Christ; and as a true sign of it, she loved Christ's image, especially in his Ministers. And now I speak of my own loss; among others she was pleased to cast her affections on the least worthy of all my Master's messengers. In her lifetime she preferred me to this place; the Lord made her the first wheel of his providence in bringing me here, and it was some trouble to her spirit that I left this pastoral charge before she left the world. Indeed she honored all the Ministers of Christ, yes, the very function itself for Christ's sake. Oh, how will she rise up in judgment at the last day against those who make it their work to reproach, vilify, and scorn the dispensers of God's word.

6. In her love and charity towards all. Many discords have occurred in these sad times, and she has suffered greatly in many respects, yet as she approached the confines of Eternity, I urged her to forgive others, as she desired God to forgive her; at which she proclaimed very affectionately, that she freely forgave all the World; and she asked all whom she had offended to forgive her. Her children then kneeling around her, she gave them a blessing, as Jacob gave to Joseph and his children: this blessing was pronounced with such cheerfulness, heartiness, and fervency of spirit, that it melted hearts,

and caused a flood of tears around her bed; so much so that she was forced to rouse herself, and to address them, as Christ did those weeping women, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves; why should you weep for me who am going to my Christ, and to those joys prepared by Christ?" And then she gave a charge; the subject of it was a relative, respective duty to be performed by brethren; it concerned him most who was the beginning of her strength, or the excellency of her power: Gen. 49.3. and so far as Justice, or Religion calls, I presume it will never be forgotten by him.

7. In her desire to die, and to be with Jesus Christ, which was best of all. Sometimes she cried, "Oh when will that good hour come!" And again sometimes, "Oh that I were dissolved, that I might be with Christ!" But telling her of her duty, that she must wait, for waiting was a posture fit for servants; Psalm 123.2. "Behold as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their Masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her Mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until he have mercy upon us." "Why then," said she, "I will wait, why Lord I will wait until my change shall come." Only she remembered that promise, Heb. 10.37. "For yet a very little while, and he that shall come will come, and he will not tarry." One thing troubled her, she was afraid that her strong heart would not yield without much struggling to the stroke of death; of this she told me and others once and again; her reasons were best known to herself, but she prophesied truly; for indeed when death came to her heart, she uttered such groans that she outgroaned all our prayers. At last death by degrees overcame the strength of nature, and then she calmly and quietly left the world in the midst of our prayers; just in that passage, that her soul might be taken up by the Lord Jesus Christ into the Bridegroom's chamber.

You see now how she redeemed the time in life and death. As Christ said to the Lawyer, so I say to you, "Go thou and do likewise," Luke. 10.37. It is but a while that all of you have to live, and therefore I beseech you improve time, lay hold of every season to get to Heaven. Live every day as if it were your last on earth. Walk accurately, exactly, circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Soli Deo gloria.

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