



M*Y times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. (Psalm 31:15)*

F*OR he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (2 Corinthians 6:2)*

Time was created by God at the same moment He formed the atomic particles of matter. Like Matter, time is three dimensional reflecting the triunity of God encompassing all Creation. Time is past, present, and future. It is hard to imagine one of these dimensions without the other. Time past demands that there be a present, and time present requires a future. The moment I write these words, I have stepped from the present into the future and the past, though seconds past, is gone forever.

God does not operate in the envelop of time, He acts outside those bounds in Eternity. This is a concept of which mortal man cannot conceive, but an absolute truth nonetheless.

When I was a child, I received a good amount of coinage at Christmas. I felt rich with all those quarters and half dollars. For a while, I acted rich by buying ice cream and candy with every visit to the store; but, as the money reserve decreased and I was left with pennies and nickels, I became more conservative in my spending habits. When anything becomes scarce, its value seems to increase. The same is true of time. When we were young and full of life, the possibility of running out of time was the furthest from our minds. But with the advent of our Autumn and Winter months, suddenly time looms short and much more highly regarded. The Spring of our lives was full of joyful play, green life, flowers, and music. These continued through endless summers of entertaining games and happy pursuits; but when the leaves of autumn begin to fall, there comes a chilling stiffness that warns of a coming winter and a final day. "*C'est la vie!*" We squander our great reserve of time on fickle and trivial pursuits in our youth until we examine our accounts and discover that our time is running low.

Time is, indeed, finite, but God's eternity is neither bounded by time nor space. In the Mind of God, all things are present. We have heard the little axiom, "Time flies," and indeed it literally does fly as a bird on the wing. As the brilliant and classical Persian philosopher, Omar Khayyam, has said nearly 1,000 years ago:

*Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and, Lo, the Bird is on the Wing. (7th stanza)
and, again,*

*The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it. (71st stanza)*

Yes, it is true – "Time flies!"

If one reflects upon the subject just a short moment, he will realize that time is the most valuable element of the physical Creation, and what the Lord allots each of us is the only possession we have borrowed from our Maker. Our Lord dispenses our time in measure. He knows from beginning to end the expanse of time He has given us. What we do with that allocation makes all the difference in the destiny of our souls. Like the thief on the cross, we may splurge and spend our days to needless abandon and, at the last, go before our Lord in the garments of a beggar. But those who labor early, and until the setting of the evening sun in laying up treasure in Heaven, shall stand in joyful favor on that day.

We have all heard the indifferent admonition, "You are just wasting your time." Perhaps it was some unimportant matter, but all of life is definitely an IMPORTANT matter. What have we done with our lives, and what shall we DO with what life remains. Shall we grow old and cower behind our canes and crutches awaiting the impending call of the Angel of Death? Or shall we strike out with the spirit of a renewed and invigorated child of God seeking to invest our last penny of time in some Godly pursuit! Very few of us will become so incapacitated that we cannot speak, hear, or see. If we are immobile, we can witness to all who come near. If we cannot speak, at least we can behold the glory of the Lord in His works about us.

Every second, minute, hour and day of our lives, once lived, are gone forever. These become past. But what of the future? With the passing of each day, our number of days remaining are reduced by that measure. In a sense, we are spiraling toward a physical death from our birth. Each day draws us nearer the grave. But for those who believe and follow in the Way of Christ, that grave is merely the doorway to a wonderful future in eternity.

Anglican Bishop Phillips Brooks wrote: "A friend says to me, 'I have not time or room in my life for Christianity. If it were not so full! You don't know how hard I work from morning until night. When I have time, where is there room for Christianity in such a life as mine?' It is as if the engine had said it had no room for the steam. It is as if the tree said it had no room for the sap. It is as if the ocean had said it had no room for the tide. It is as if the man had said he had no room for his soul. It is as if the life had said it had no time to live. It is not something added to life; it is LIFE! A man is not living without it. And for a man to say, 'I am so full of life that I have no room for life,' you see immediately to what absurdity it reduces itself."

There have been wealthy men who, at the hour of death, have pleaded for the privilege of trading their fortunes for just one more day. As a great British Queen uttered, *"All my possessions for a moment of time."*

Queen Elizabeth I (1533 - 1603)

Here read the words of the great Anglican Bishop, J.C. Ryle (1816-1900):

"I dare say you are planning on a late repentance. You do not know what you are doing. You are planning without God. Repentance and faith are the gifts of God, and they are gifts that He often withholds, when they have been long offered in vain. I grant you true repentance is never too late, but I warn you at the same time, late repentance is seldom true. I grant you, one penitent thief was converted in his last hours, that no man might despair; But I warn you, only one was converted, that no man might presume. I grant you it is written, Jesus is *'Able to save completely those who come to God through him'* (Hebrews 7:25). But I warn you, it is also written by the same Spirit, *'Since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you'* (Proverbs 1:24-26). Believe me, you will find it no easy matter to turn to God whenever you please."

Each of us are the arbiters of what manner we spend our time. You may have found this devotion bland or meaningless and made the decision to read no more than the first few lines; or you may have found studying the Word of God to be too demanding and you have left off doing that. We all spend our days according to our whims or faith. You may not have time to pray every day, but I wager you will regret not investing that time when the curtain of death is drawing to a close.

I conclude by returning to one of the opening texts of this devotion:

FOR he saith, *I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* (2 Corinthians 6:2)