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ADDRESS GIVEN BY MR. L. S. B. HYDE ON SATURDAY 11TH MAY, 1974 at the Annual Meeting of the Trust.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. I would like to direct your attention to a few words you will find in Ephesians 5 verse 16 - "Redeeming the time because the days are evil."

If the apostle was moved in his day to speak of the days as evil how much more may we in our day pronounce the same. Yet we know this, in the history of the people of God reference is made to evil days. We would remind ourselves of the words of Jacob when he said "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been (Genesis 47 v 9); then again if we turn to the 90th Psalm we find Moses saying "Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us and the years wherein we have seen evil. (v.15). So these two quotations may be sufficient to show to us that the people of God in all ages are attended by evil times.

Then again we may recall the words in Amos where we read "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done." We need, therefore, to distinguish between evil and that which is sinful. Sometimes this word evil is used in the Scriptures to speak to us about adversity, afflictions, trying circumstances, bad tidings which are indeed sad for us to receive. We are also aware of the other meaning of evil which is the predominance of the evil one in this present evil world.

Well, now the apostle here draws our attention to these words, "Redeeming the time because the days are evil." It may be, perhaps, to our advantage to look at the last part of the verse first prior to coming to the exhortation in the first part of the verse.

The days are evil. Paul, in writing to Timothy said "in the last days perilous times shall come." The days in which we live are perilous times and perhaps so in a different way to formerly. We read in the Old Testament of such perilous times prevailing on one occasion that it was very unwise and very unsafe for people to venture out after dark. (

We may say the same today in many respects, certainly in some areas.

Because of perilous times presenting themselves we find certain petitions uttered by the Psalmist: for example we read "The Lord shall preserve thy

going out and thy coming in from this time forth even for evermore. (Psalm 121 v. 8) I have no need to remind you of the very many dangers which surround us all, even as we travel from place to place and I am sure it is a source of comfort at the beginning of each day to be able to commit our cause unto the Lord having a blessed confidence in that sweet word of the Psalmist. But he also says in the Psalm "The Lord shall preserve thy soul." (v. 7) I feel that the times which are ours today are more perilous in respect to the preservation of the soul. We live in dangerous times, in times when iniquity abounds; and that iniquity is not confined to open vice, desperate profanity, but it has also spread to cover onslaughts upon the validity of the Word of God by the introduction of various versions which to many people may seem to be an advancement perhaps. We would warn you particularly concerning the Living Bible which is blasphemous in many respects. Perilous times! If you should come up against these suggested versions of the Scriptures and are taken with them, be reminded of this that you are in perilous times. "Can a man take fire into his bosom and not be burned. (Proverbs 6 v.2). The Holy Bible has been the foundation of the faith of the saints of God for many, many years and I am sure there are those with us this afternoon who can bear their testimony to the support, the strength, the glory, the richness and the beauty which is contained in this authorised version. It has not been unto us merely a word written but it has been a word, a living word, a word wherein Christ himself has been revealed and therefore, we would prize this word. But the days are evil and there are many men who are sparing nothing to put over other versions as being on equal terms or better. Now may the Lord preserve us, preserve our souls because I feel sure of this that, if you get involved, your soul will be greatly damaged, greatly wounded, and it may take a long time for that wounded spirit to be made whole again.

These are also evil times because there are many supposed gospels which are preached. But there is only one Gospel. The apostle was very clear in his day that if any should preach otherwise let him be anathema maran-atha. (I Cor. 16.22). Solemn it is for men to stand up and declare those things which are not agreeable to God's truth which bring honour and glory to His Person and name - the Lord Jesus Christ. We live in perilous times. There is a need to warn you - though perhaps you may feel you do not need to be warned - against the subversiveness of other editions or translations

of Scripture in the first place, and of the promulgation of these scriptures, in the second place, by men of error. When we speak of men of error we mean those before whose eyes there is no fear of the Lord. The times are perilous because these men sometimes may go so far as to put black for white and white for black. We have to remember that the Word of God speaks to us about Satan appearing as an angel of light and deceiving many. At first sight the new idea looks alright, it is very close to the truth. Ah! but things may be very close to but not actually the truth and we need to guard against this. So the days in that respect are days of evil. Again they are evil days because they are days of apathy. This spirit has taken possession of the whole world, the general feeling being 'you hold to your opinion and I will hold to mine.'; but someone has embraced error and this is serious, especially when we see some religious men clinging to error but being certain in their own minds that they hold the truth. No wonder we have the word of exhortation: "Examine yourselves to see whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. (II Cor. 13. 5).

The days are evil because, as we have noticed with reference to Jacob and Moses, they are days of affliction, days of sadness, days of sorrow and are there any taught of God that can say it is not so? We know that some of our beloved friends suffer in their bodies but our sympathy often is lame since we are not able to enter into their feelings exactly. Others have been afflicted and are afflicted in their minds and how much understanding, how much patience we need to exercise towards them. Then there are others who know something about Jacob's affliction and Jacob's sorrow - what is sometimes referred to as soul trouble. Paul describes it when in Romans 7 he says "O, wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death." (v. 24). The people of God find these to be days of evil because they find in their body two natures. that which is born of the flesh and that which is born of the Spirit. There is no doubt in their minds that these are contrary the one to the other. As Daniel Herbert says: "The old man struggles hard to gain the conquest over grace; and oft he seems to gain the field when Jesus hides his face." So we live in days of evil because there are times when the lust of the flesh and the pride of life seem to be so powerful even in the hearts of the people of God that they become alarm -

ed and the issue hangs in doubtful scales. They discover the alarming truth - this should be an alarming truth to you and me - that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." (Jer. 17. v. 9). Now if that is the truth as it is, then the days are evil. So we may well recall what Jacob said: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." The days and the years of his life were marred by these evil times. No doubt he had them in remembrance: when he stole the birthright from Esau and had to leave home; then years after being commanded of God to return to his land he was suddenly informed that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men and this brought his sin to his remembrance and it was a time of evil. He separated his flocks and his people into three bands and he went over the brook and was alone. O, alone in a time of evil, alone when his sins seemed to come with vivid force to his remembrance - what a day of evil. Has such a day been with you and me sometimes when we have been in a great strait, former sins have been brought to our remembrance and we have been greatly afraid. Oh the days of evil.

The days of evil also in respect to the low state of Zion generally. How many waste <sup>wonder</sup> places there are - we cannot deny it, it is too apparent. Perhaps we may ~~xxx~~ sometimes if there will be any soon that will be manifest as the people of God. However, we must believe that while the earth remaineth the Lord will call one here and another there, two of a family and one of a city and as the word so powerfully says, "I will bring them to Zion" (Jer. 3 v. 14). In spite of the days being evil, in spite of the force of those days I will bring them to Zion. So this is our consolation in the days of evil.

If we should consider affliction in all its various forms, then there is another precious scripture in relation to it for our encouragement - "I am the Lord that healeth thee." (Exodus 15 v. 26). But the days are evil. I was reading recently about the case of Asa. In his earlier life he served the Lord with all his heart but then, as the time went on, he sought assistance from another king when his enemies rose up. Well, this seemed reasonable didn't it? How easily we may fall into this snare. I mention

it because the days are evil. So Asa goes to battle and he gains the conquest; but then God comes to him through the prophet who tells him that he has done wrongly. Remember, before when he was in a great strait and surrounded by his enemies he called upon the name of the Lord, the Lord wonderfully delivered him, but now, alas, he has put his trust in an arm of flesh which was clearly denounced in the Word of God. So we find him apparently prospering for the time but there was to be a time of reckoning. There will be a time of reckoning for us, you know. How easily we may slip into this; we may sit down and endeavour to plan our campaigns against our enemies; we say we will call on So and So and if they can help us then the two of us together will win through. If we know our own hearts how easily we may fall into Asa's sin. The days are evil. Well, we follow along in his life and we find him sick. What does he do? We read that he sought unto physicians and not unto the Lord. We do not understand that he should not have sought after physicians at all for some advice but the fault layed in this, he reposed his confidence in them and the Lord was not in his thoughts. See what days of evil these are and doubtless there are some with us that are sick or we know some that are sick. We find it necessary to approach others for advice. But you know the Lord looketh on the heart. What does he see in your heart or in mine; does he see you putting more confidence in the physician than in God? The days are evil. So many unsuspecting things arising from unsuspecting quarters in these days of evil.

Now the exhortation of the apostle here is "Redeeming the time because the days are evil." In the word of God that prayer, which is often referred to as the Lord's prayer, has in it this verse, "Lead us not into temptation." I remember a godly friend telling me what his godly father used to say in respect to that word. "My boy," he said, "when God says 'lead us not into temptation', the meaning is this, see that you are not in a place where you will be tempted." The days are evil because it is so easy for us to say, Well, it could be alright; I might get injured, my soul might get impoverished, but there is a good possibility that it will not. Now may I remind you that the days are evil. Perhaps some of us have got our fingers burned in these things.

Now, redeeming the time. In the first place we will consider redeeming the time as reading the word of God. When the apostle Paul wrote to his son in the faith, Timothy this was one of his commendations: "Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation and to doctrine." We cannot know the word of God apart from reading it. I know that there are the exceptional cases where God, perhaps, has brought a word of scripture to your mind or to some heathen's mind who has not even seen the Word of God. These words in the first instance are addressed to the Church at Ephesus, therefore, it is instruction and warning to believers. "Redeeming the time." Reading the word of God but not reading only for the apostle goes on to say "Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them that thy profiting may appear unto all; take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. (I Timothy 4 vv. 15 and 16). There is a great benefit to be derived from the reading of the Word of God. It is a defence. If we just look back to the point just recently raised, being in a place where we were tempted, perhaps we should not have been there if we had been cognisant with that Scripture in the Thessalonians <sup>Abstain from</sup> "~~Avoid~~ all appearance of evil. (5. v. 22). Remember, dear friends, that these are evil times so therefore, the appearance of evil needs to be avoided, abstained from. Evil is something which is contaminating, that is sinful evil. There is another benefit from reading the Word of God. Whilst you are reading the Holy Bible you cannot be reading anything else. I know we have to give attention to certain matters which require reading but with a good many there is what is called 'spare time.' "Give thyself to reading." Reading the Word of God is redeeming the time. Read it from the first verse of Genesis 1 to the last verse of Revelation 22 consecutively. You will sometimes find an answer to your problem or anxiety which you would never otherwise have known or found, an answer which your adversary will not be able to gainsay. So redeeming the time which we understand to mean making the best use of your time is a constant attendance upon the Word of God. I want to say this, too, that it will not be adequate to your defence merely to salve your conscience by reading a chapter in the morning and at night. We need to read the word of God more

than that. After all, are we not professing to be followers of Jesus Christ and shall we not find it necessary to make constant reference to the Word of God in order that we may know our Lord's will? How many times we read in this precious Book, "Thus saith the Lord," and that is the answer. You will remember, I am sure, that when the Lord Jesus was tempted in the wilderness the only answers that he gave to Satan were from the Scriptures. "Thus it is written; thus it is written," and may we have grace to make this our simple answer to those who may ask us questions, awkward questions, questions intended to catch us in our talk. Because the days are evil and our hearts are deceitful we try to go round instead of coming to the point hoping that we shall overcome by verbosity. We shall gain the victory when we are able to say "Thus it is written." The Lord Jesus uses the expression when he spoke to his disciples on the way to Emmaus in their troubled state: thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer these things, "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24, vv. 25 -27). Redeeming the time. In the 109th Psalm we read of the Psalmist being surrounded by enemies, but we also read this; "I give myself unto prayer." When? the next verse tells us, "And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love." Now what are you going to do when this happens to you as it may do? Are you going to submerge yourself in self pity, say how hard done by you are and how unkind people are? or will you follow that which you will discover if, by the Spirit of the Lord you are able to redeem the time by reading the Word. You will discover, "for my love they are my adversaries." My love - you see these are people to whom David had shown kindness but in return they became his adversaries. Now he say, "I give myself unto prayer." It will be good for us then to follow this example and give ourselves unto prayer in similar or indeed any circumstances. Now I am fully aware as I make these remarks personal deficiency in these matters; but because we are personally deficient does not prevent our mak-

ing the point especially in view of the exhortation, "redeeming the time because the days are evil." The devil will always find mischief for idle hands to do. The devil is quite willing to see you sit idle. How much of our time is spent in idleness - occupied with idle chatter? This is a question for you to ask yourself and to answer it. How much time is wasted, frittered away? We overlook the fact that the times are evil.

Redeeming the time is giving oneself unto prayer. If you should raise the objection that the power of sin in you is so strong and your nature is not religious, then let us turn again to the benefit of redeeding the time in reading the Word of God for there it is written, "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2 v. 13). I am sure, dear friends, that His good pleasure is to find you and me reading the word of God, and praying unto the Lord in a time when he may be found. "I give myself unto prayer."

Thirdly, redeeming the time is that mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is." (10. v. 25). Now I want to make this point - I feel it is important - that worship is to be distinguished from any other, shall I call it, christian work. Sometimes I have heard it said that because a certain person was in a certain place, in that place he would be able to exert a christian influence upon other people; so that it was an adequate excuse for him to be absent from the House of God - he was engaged in the service of God in another place. But we are not redeeming the time, making the best use of it when we fail to be in the House of God for the worship of God as often as opportunity affords. If our motives are right we shall come to the House of God for the purpose of worship. Christian service, however worthy, must not be confused with it.

Days of evil and redeeming the time are also to be considered in the light of the solemn truth that we are drawing nearer and nearer to eternity.

Now we need to give constant attention to our lives as in the prospect of our death. "As a tree falls so shall it lie; as a man lives so shall he die; as a man dies so shall he be throughout the days of eternity." Now



that living may be changed as it was in the case of the dying thief late in a man's life; but it ill becomes you and me to wait and put off that day and say, well, I can live as I list at the moment because death is a long way off. We don't know, do we? Who knows that we shall see tomorrow morning's light? The days are evil in that respect, we are hastening on to the time when we shall have to stand before God; we shall have to face death. It will be a sad matter won't it if we have put off the question of our soul's concern and safety for too long. "If only I had given attention to this important matter before" we may hear one and another saying on their dying bed, "but now it is too late."

Redeeming the time. We need to redeem the time continually, early in life, in middle life, and late in life. Some, perhaps, have been favoured by God's grace in their childhood to redeem the time. What a mercy.

Then there is another way whereby we can redeem the time - by thinking upon His name. (Malachi 3 v.16). You may say you have not much opportunity to read; you may even say that because of pressure of business you have not the opportunity to give yourself unto prayer; but surely if the life of God is in your soul there must be time to think upon his name. I would just digress here to speak to any who would say that business presses that they have not time to pray. I commend you to the book of Nehemiah when the King asked Nehemiah an important question: before the good man answered it is written "And I prayed unto the Lord" as he stood there, in the midst of his duty. We shall never be able to offer the excuse that we have not had time to pray in the light of this circumstance. But to return to those that thought upon His name. Now these thoughts upon His name may steal into our hearts, as it were, very quickly, the work of the Holy Spirit. Can we picture some of you coming to the end of a busy day, being faced with a trying experience; some of you wending your way home, others having been at home all day wrestling with various problems: have you ever thought upon His name, been compelled to think upon His name thus redeeming the time because the days are evil. What a reviving may sometimes be felt when the thoughts are suddenly lifted above this earthly scene to heavenly realities thinking upon the glory

of His name, its sweetness and the attractiveness of it. "For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow." (Phil. 2. 10). What a blessing to be found in humble worship before Him as evidently that man out of whom the devils were cast was. He sat at the feet of Jesus; his desire was to learn of Him. Redeeming the time will culminate in this that we shall want to know Christ more and have more of His spirit. Sometimes I have wondered how often people have been hypocritical (and I have cross examined myself sometimes) when they have sung the lines: To know my Jesus crucified by far excells all things beside; all earthly gain I count but loss and triumph in my Saviour's cross." Sometimes it is real isn't it? Now be assured, dear friends, that represents a life time of seeking "to know my Jesus crucified." The fulness of it can never be reached this side of the grave. It will be redeeming the time as you seek to know Him in the reading of His word, by prayer at the Throne of grace, in the services of the sanctuary. And this is the evidence that you possess eternal life, it is eternal life - "to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." (John 17 v.3). [Now redeeming the time in these evil days in this way will bring you down to your dying day in peace. You do not want to come down to your dying day unprepared do you? How much better to come there and be found reading the word of God, praying though in weakness and trying to think upon that Name which means everything to you. It is very solemn and sad when we see people getting older and they seem disinclined to read the word of God. "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6. v 21.) We may say, well, their infirmities are increasing and we would not be unjustly severe. However, we do want to know their soul condition. What do we do? We feel their spiritual pulse. Perhaps some of you have visited some dying friend in great weakness. Yet at the mention of the name of Jesus there has been a revival upon their spirit, a smile upon their face, a movement in their very soul that has declared so plainly and clearly that, though they have been irresponsive and unresponsive in other things, yet because they were born again of the Spirit, even in this sad place, this low place,

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this infirm condition, they were redeeming the time. At the name of Jesus their spirit revived. Does your spirit revive, does my spirit revive at the name of Jesus? If so, it will revive sometimes when we utter those words:-

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds

And drives away his fear.

(John Newton).

Redeeming the time because the days are evil. These are a few remarks; I am sure there are many more considerations. We leave these with you. The Lord grant that they may prosper in your souls as you meditate upon them. The Lord bless you.