

My Times in God's Hand

by Octavius Winslow

Our times, both good and bad, are in God's hand, and we should trust in His guidance and providence.

Scripture: Psalm 31:15, Isaiah 41:10, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "God's Sovereignty", "Trust in God's Plan"

Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes that our times are securely held in God's hand, providing comfort in both prosperity and adversity. He reflects on the importance of recognizing God's sovereignty over our lives, including our times of soul-distress and even death. Winslow encourages believers to trust in God's plan, live in daily dependence on Him, and not be anxious about the future, as all is under His divine control. He reassures that both the joys and trials we face are part of God's loving providence, guiding us towards spiritual growth and eternal security. Ultimately, he calls for a personal relationship with Christ, urging the unconverted to seek salvation and peace in Him.

Transcript

"My times are in your hand." Psalm 31:15.

Outline

INTRODUCTION

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Our future

An individual truth

A comprehensive truth

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Our Father's hand

Our Redeemer's hand

UNCONVERTED READER

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Don't be anxious about anything

Live a life of daily dependence upon God

All is in God's hand

Trust God implicitly for the future

What confirmation would the precious truth contained in these words derive from the personal experience of the man of God who penned them? Reviewing the past of his eventful history, he would trace the guiding and overshadowing hand of his heavenly Father in all the circumstances of the checkered and diversified scene; and as memory thus recalled the strange and momentous events of his life, with what overpowering solemnity would the conviction force itself upon his mind, that for the form and complexion of that life how little was it indebted to himself! Circumstances which chance could not originate, events which human sagacity could, not foresee, and results which finite experience could not determine, would at once lift his grateful and adoring thoughts to that God of infinite foreknowledge and love, whose overruling providence had guarded with a sleepless eye each circumstance, and whose infinite goodness had guided with a skillful hand each step. With this retrospect before him, with what intensity of feeling would the aged king exclaim: "My Times Are In Your Hand."

But if David felt this truth- that all his interests were in God's keeping, and under His supreme direction- so consolatory, as life drew near its close, how much more cheering may it be to us just entering upon a new year of life, all whose history is, to our view, wisely and beneficently enshrouded in obscurity, and all whose events, from the least to the greatest, are happily beyond our control. "My times are in your hand." Who can give us the heartfelt, soothing influence of this precious truth but the Holy Spirit by whose divine inspiration it was uttered? May He now unfold and apply with His sanctifying, comforting power this portion of his own holy word to the reader's heart!

The declaration that "our times are in the Lord's hand," implies that the future of our history is impenetrably and mysteriously veiled from our sight. We live in a world of mysteries. They meet our eye, awaken our inquiry, and baffle our investigation at every step. Nature is a vast arcade of mysteries. Science is a mystery, truth is a mystery, religion is a mystery, our existence is a mystery, the future of our being is a mystery. And God, who alone can explain all mysteries, is the greatest mystery of all. How little do we understand of the inexplicable wonders of a wonder-working God, "whose thoughts are a great deep," and "whose ways are past finding out."

To God nothing is mysterious. In purpose, nothing is unfixed; in forethought, nothing is unknown; in providence, nothing is contingent. His glance pierces the future as vividly as it beholds the past. "He knows the end, from the beginning." All his doings are parts of a divine, eternal, and harmonious plan. He

may make "darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies, and to human vision his dispensations may appear gloomy, discrepant, and confused; yet is he, "working all things after the counsel of his own will," and "at the brightness that is before him, his thick clouds pass." and all is transparent and harmonious to his eye.

And why this obscurity thus investing all our future? Would it not make for our present well-being; would it not be a satisfaction and a blessing, could we pull back the mystic veil, and gaze with a farseeing and undimmed eye upon "our times," yet awaiting us this side the grave? Remembering the past, you are, perhaps, ready to say: "Could I but have foreseen, I would have fore-arranged. Had I anticipated the result of such a step, or have known the issue of such a movement, or have safely calculated the consequences of such a measure, I might have pursued an opposite course, and have averted the evil I now deplore, and have spared me the misery I now feel." But hush this vain reasoning! God, your God, O believer! had in wisdom, faithfulness, and love, hidden all the future from your view. "You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years." How has he guided, counseled, and upheld you! He has led you by a right way. In perplexity he has directed you- in sorrow he has comforted you- in slippery paths his mercy has held you up, and when fallen he has raised you again. From seeming evil he has educes positive good. The mistakes you have made and the follies you have committed in the blindness of your path, and in the sinfulness of your heart, have but led you to a closer acquaintance with, and to a stronger confidence in God. They have opened up to you new and more glorious views of his character and his government; while in leading you closer to the feet of Jesus in self-knowledge and self abhorrence, they have unlocked to you spring of spiritual blessings, fresh, sanctifying, and, unspeakable.

Beloved, God has placed us in a school in which he is teaching us to lay our blind reason at his feet, to cease from our own wisdom and, guidance, and lean upon and confide in him, as children with a parent. The goodness of God to us, combined with a jealous regard to his own glory, constrains him to conceal the path along which he conducts us. His promise is, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

Could the scenes of this year's history rise in their shadowy outline before us, or were an angel permitted to divulge a single page in the momentous volume of events just opened, how might we shrink from the revelation, and closing the book again, calmly wait until he should unfold its leaves, "in whose hand our times are!" How unfitted should we be to discharge our duties, to sustain our responsibilities, to meet our trials, cope with our difficulties, and bear with our sorrows, were they all to confront us this moment! Oh! how kindly, wisely, and tenderly does our Father deal with us! And in no part of his providential dealings is his goodness more clearly seen than in veiling all our future from our reach. Let us sit down at Jesus' feet, thanking him that the "life which we now live in the flesh," we live not by sight, but by "faith in the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us."

But our "times" all wrapped in impenetrable mystery, are yet in the Lord's hand. The words are emphatic. Our times are not in the hands of angels or of men, still less in our own- they are in the Lord's, hand. It is an individual truth. "MY times." We deal too timidly with our individuality- with, the truth of God as individuals- with Jesus as individuals- with the covenant of grace as individuals- with our responsibilities as individuals. "What," you exclaim, "I, a poor worm of the dust, not worthy of his regard, too insignificant for his noticed, who have a heart so cold, a nature so, depraved, a will so perverse- "are my times in the Lord's hands?" Yes, dear reader, you may humbly adopt these words as, your own, and exultingly exclaim: "My times are in his hand."

How comprehensive, too, is this truth, "My times are in his hand!" Diversified as they may be- whatever the shape in which they are developed, or the complexion which they assume, attractive or repulsive, bathed with light or draped in gloom, all are there, exclusively and safely lodged in the Lord's hand. Let us specify a few of these "times".

Our time of PROSPERITY is in the Lord's hand. There are no circumstances of life in which we are more sadly prone to indulge in self-complaisance than those of earthly prosperity. Industry is enriched, and perseverance rewarded, wealth increases and blessings accumulate, and the "heart grows fat and kicks against God." The merchant-ship returns freighted with treasure- the acres of the tiller are fruitful, and his barns are filled with plenty, or prosperity in some form smiles upon our path, and then, alas! God is forgotten. We arrogate to ourselves the praise of our success. "My hand and the might of my power has gotten me this." But what is the language of God's word? "Beware that you forget not the Lord your God . . . lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and dwelt therein; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God." But, oh! let us remember that all our past and all our coming prosperity, if indeed he shall so appoint it, is in the hand of God. It is his wisdom that suggests our plans, it is his power that guides, and it is his goodness that causes them to succeed. Every flower that blooms in our path, every smile that gladdens it, every mercy that bedews it, yes, "every good and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights." Oh! for grace to recognize God in our mercies, for a heart lifted up in holy returns of love, gratitude and praise! How much sweeter will be our sweets, how much more blessed our blessings, and endeared our endearments, seeing them all dropping from the outstretched, munificent hand of a loving, gracious, and bountiful Father!

But there are times of ADVERSITY, and, they too, are in the Lord's hand. As every sunbeam that brightens, so every cloud that darkens, comes from God. We are subject to great and sudden reverses in our earthly condition. Joy is often succeeded by grief, prosperity by adversity. We are on the pinnacle today- tomorrow at its bottom. Oh! what a change may one event and in one moment create! A storm- a conflagration- a slight oscillation of the funds- the morning's mail- the casual meeting of a friend, may clothe our life in mourning. But, beloved, all is from the Lord. "Affliction comes not forth of the dust, neither does trouble spring out of the ground." (Job 5:6). Sorrow cannot come until God bids it. Health cannot fade, wealth cannot vanish, comfort cannot decay, friendship cannot chill, loved ones cannot die until he in his sovereignty permits.

Your time of sorrow is his appointment. The bitter cup which it may please the Lord you shall drink this year, will not be mixed by human hands. In the hand of the Lord is that cup. The cloud that may lower on your path will not gather at a creature's bidding. "He makes the clouds his chariot." Some treasure you are now pressing to your heart he may ask you to resign- some blessing you now possess he may bid you relinquish- some fond expectation you now cherish he may will you should forego- some lonely path he may design you should tread, yes, he may even bereave you of all, and yet all, all is in his hand.

His hand- a Father's hand- moving in the thick darkness, is shaping every event, and arranging every dispensation of your life. Has sickness laid you on a bed of suffering? has bereavement darkened your home? has adversity impoverished your resources? has change lessened your comforts? has sorrow in one of its many forms crushed your spirit to the earth? The Lord has done it! In all that has been sent, in all that has been recalled, and in all that has been withheld; his hand, noiseless and unseen, has moved. Ah! yes, that hand of changeless love blends a sweet with every bitter, pencils a bright rainbow on each dark

cloud, upholds each faltering step, shelters within its hollow, and guides with unerring skill, his chosen people safe to eternal glory.

Dear child of God, your afflictions, your trials, your crosses, your losses, your sorrows, all, all are in your heavenly Father's, hand, and they can not come until sent by him. Bow that stricken heart, yield that tempest-tossed soul to his sovereign disposal, to his calm, righteous sway, in the submissive spirit and language of your suffering Savior: "Your will, O my father! not mine, be done. My times of sadness and of grief are in your hand."

Times of SOUL-DISTRESS, spiritual darkness, and conflict, are in his hand. Many such are there in the experience of the true saints of God. Many the hard fought battle, the fiery dart, the desperate wound, the momentary defeat in the Christian's life. Taking advantage of the spiritual mist which may hover around the mind in the time of perplexing care and of gloomy providences, the foe, with stealthy tread, may rush in upon the soul like a flood. And when to this surprisal is added the suspension of the Lord's manifested presence, the veiling of his smile, the silence of his responsive voice, oh! that is a time of soul-distress indeed! But it is in the Lord's hand. No spiritual cloud shades, no mental distress depresses, no fiery dart is launched, that is not by him permitted, and for which there is not a provision by him arranged.

There is nothing which the Lord has taken more entirely and exclusively into his keeping, than the redeemed, sanctified souls of his people. All their interests for eternity are exclusively in his hand. In the infinite fulness of Jesus, in the inexhaustible supply of the covenant, in the exceeding great and precious promises of his word, he has anticipated every spiritual exigence of the believer. How precious is your soul to him who bore all its sins, who exhausted all its curse, who travailed for it in ignominy and suffering, and who ransomed it with his own most precious blood! Guarded, too, by his indwelling Spirit is his kingdom of righteousness, joy, and peace within you. Oh! endeavor to realize that whatever be your mental exercises, spiritual conflicts, doubts and fears, your "times" of soul-despondency are in the Lord's hand. Lodged there, safe are your spiritual interests. "All his saints are in his hand." And he to whose care you have confided your redeemed soul, has pledged himself for its eternal security. Of his own sheep he says: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them to me is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

With like precious faith and humble assurance you are privileged to exclaim with Paul: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Ah! as soon shall Christ himself perish as one bought with his blood. No member of his body, insignificant though it may be, shall be dissevered. No temple of the Holy Spirit, frail and imperfect though it is, shall be destroyed. Not a soul to whom the divine image has been restored, and the divine nature has been imparted, upon whose heart the name of Jesus has been carved, shall be involved in the final and eternal destruction of the wicked. Nothing shall perish but the earthly and the sensual. Not one grain of precious faith shall be lost, not one spark of divine light shall be extinguished, not one pulsation of spiritual life shall die.

Oh! think of this, you who have fled all sinful and trembling to Jesus, you who cling to him as the limpet to the rock, as the ivy to the oak; never shall you lose that hold of faith you have on Christ, and never will Christ lose that hold of love he has on you. You and Jesus are one, indivisibly and eternally one. Nothing shall separate you from his love, nor sever you from his care, nor exclude you from his sympathy, nor banish you from his heaven of eternal blessedness. You are in Christ the subject of his grace, and "Christ

is in you the hope of glory." All your cares are Christ's care, all your sorrows are Christ's sorrow, all your need is Christ's supply, all your sicknesses are Christ's cure, all your crosses are Christ's burden. Your life, temporal, spiritual, eternal, is "hid with Christ in God."

Oh! the unutterable blessings that spring from a vital union with the Lord Jesus! The believer can exultingly say: Christ and I are one! One in nature, one in affection, one in sympathy, one in fellowship, and one through the countless ages of eternity. The life I live is a life of faith in him. I fly to him in the confidence of a loving friend, and I reveal to him my secret sorrow. I confess to him my hidden sin. I acknowledge my heart-backsliding. I make known to him my needs, my sufferings, my fears. I tell him how chilled is my affection, how reserved is my obedience, how imperfect is my service, and yet how I long to love him more ardently, to follow him more closely, to serve him more devotedly, to be more wholly and holily his.

And how does he meet me? with a hearkening ear, with a beaming eye, with a gracious word, with an outstretched hand, with a benignity and a gentleness all like himself. Confide, then, dear reader, your spiritual and deathless interests in the Lord's hand. Careful only to "work out" in the holy life, the grace he has wrought in your soul, thus manifestly a "living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men."

At the time of DEATH. To those who, depressed with a painful foreboding at their final dissolution, are all their lifetime subject to bondage, how consolatory is the reflection that the time of the believer's death is peculiarly in the Lord's hand! It is solemnly true that there is a "time to die". An affecting thought- a time to die! A time when this mortal conflict will be over, when this heart will cease to feel, alike insensible to joy or sorrow, when this head will ache, and these eyes will weep no more, best and holiest of all, a time "when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality," and we shall "see Christ as he is, and be like him." The world we have left will move on then as now. Life's lights and shadows will gather in blended hues around our grave; but wrapped in death's sleep, dreamless sleep, we shall be unconscious of all that once distressed or charmed us- the frown of anger and the smile of love- "forever with the Lord."

If this be so, then, O Christian! why this anxious, trembling fear? Your time of death, with all its attendant circumstances, is in the Lord's hand. All is appointed and arranged by him who loves you and redeemed you- infinite goodness, wisdom, and faithfulness consulting your highest happiness in each circumstance of your departure. The final sickness can not come, the "last enemy" can not strike, until he bids it. All is in his hand; then calmly, confidingly leave life's closing scene with him. You cannot die away from Jesus. Whether your spirit wings its flight at home or abroad, amid strangers or friends, by a lingering process or by a sudden stroke, in brightness or gloom, Jesus will be with you; and upheld by his grace and cheered by his presence, you shall triumphantly exclaim, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me," bearing your dying testimony to the faithfulness of God and the preciousness of his promises. My time to die is in your hand, O Lord! and there I calmly leave it.

There is a peculiar emphasis in a truth contained in the beautiful words upon which we have been commenting worthy of a more particular notice. In whose hand are the believer's times? In A FATHER'S HAND. Be those times what they may, times of trial, times of temptation, times of suffering, times of peril, times of sunshine or of gloom, of life or death, they are in a parent's hand. Is your present path lone and dreary? Has the Lord seen fit to recall some fond blessing, to deny some earnest request, or painfully to discipline your heart? All this springs from a Father's love as fully as though he had unlocked his treasury

and poured its costliest gifts at your feet. Can you enter upon the unknown history of this year, troubles, it may be, looming in the shadowy distance- uncertainty hanging over your future path, not able to forecast a single probability of what may be your future lot- with a firmer, sweeter truth for faith to lean upon than this? "My times are in a Father's hand, and all will, all must be well."

In A REDEEMER'S HAND, too, are our times. That same Redeemer who carried our sorrows in his heart, our curse and transgressions on his soul, our cross on his shoulder, who died, who rose again, and who lives and intercedes for us, and who will gather all his ransomed around him in glory, is your guardian and your guide. Can you not cheerfully confide all your earthly concerns, all your spiritual interests to his keeping and control- "casting all your cares upon him who cares for you"? "Oh! yes," faith replies, "in that hand that still bears in its palm the print of the nail, are all my times; and I will trust and not be afraid."

In Whose Hand, Sinner? UNCONVERTED READER, do you ask, "In whose hand are my times?" I answer, in that infinite Sovereign's, "in whose hand your life is, and whose are all your ways." I confront you, standing upon the threshold of the new year, with this solemn truth- your times are in God's hand. "In him you live, and move, and have your being." You can not be independent of God for a single breath, a single thought, or a single step. From his government you can not break, from his eye you can not hide, from his power you can not flee. He holds you responsible for all your endowments, acquirements, and doings, and before long will say to you, "Give an account of your stewardship."

Oh! that this may be a year of new spiritual life to your soul- of living to the Lord. A new year it then, indeed, will be in your history, such as you have never lived before. Oh! that this year your stubborn will, after so long a resistance- your rebellious heart, after its years of closing and hardening against a beseeching, pleading Savior, may be sweetly constrained to bow to the despised Gospel of Christ- born of the Spirit a child of God, an heir of happiness which the revolution of time and the ages of eternity shall never terminate. Ah! of how many who read these pages may the decree have already gone forth: "Thus says the Lord, this year you shall die!" Oh! dismal sentence to those who have no union with the Lord Jesus!

Dear reader, you are preparing and resolving to spend this year as all the previous years of your life have been spent? What! in hating God, abusing his mercies, in despising his Son, in neglecting his salvation, in hardening your heart in sin, in living for the world and to yourself, and in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath? Is such a life worthy of your being? Can you bend the knee upon the confines of this year and pray: "Great Author of my being! Father of all mercies! righteous Judge of the world! grant me another year of rebellion and impiety; more time to waste; more mercies to abuse; more means of grace to neglect; more property to squander; more influence to oppose and fight against you?" You shudder at the thought! You could not, for your life, breathe such a prayer. And yet, entering upon this year in an unconverted state, are not your thoughts, temper, and resolves, and ways far more expressive than words, insulting God with the spirit of a petition, the language of which you dare not utter?

Oh! that gently, persuasively drawn by the Holy Spirit, you may now betake yourself to the Lord Jesus as a self-destroyed, yet humble, repentant sinner. Oh! that this may be the happy hour of your spiritual espousals- of your covenant, unreserved surrender to the Lord, to be his child, his servant forever. True happiness, joy, and peace will ever be strangers to your heart until it tastes the love of the Savior. Nor will you be able to give yourself to the high and noble duties of real life, or to contemplate death with calmness, and the eternity that stretches beyond it with hope, until you are reconciled to God, through the "one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

In pressing these thoughts upon your attention with equal earnestness and affection, would I exhort you to come to Christ without demurring at your sinfulness, or hesitating on the ground of having no fitness or worthiness to plead. Jesus saves none but sinners. Approach with a price in your hand with which to purchase your salvation, and you will be indignantly rejected! But approach the life-giving waters "without money and without price," and receive salvation as a free gift, and you will be cordially received! The atoning work is finished, the great salvation is purchased, the mighty debt is paid- all perfected and secured by the blood of God's incarnate Son. And now it is his good pleasure and delight to confer this priceless, precious boon upon every one who is of a "contrite and humble spirit," as an act of most free favor, however vile, undeserving, and poor the recipient might be. "By grace are you saved." "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." Before the majesty and splendor of this precious truth all human glory must fade, all human pride must fall.

Were a crown to encircle your brow, or had you lived the life of the most rigid moralist, or were you possessed of all the spoils of ancient legend- yet, if saved you must be saved as was the humble publican, approaching in his spirit and breathing his petition: "God be merciful to me a sinner." That proud, rebellious, self-righteous heart of yours must be laid low in the dust. Oh! descend from the 'Babel of your own works', from the towering summit of which you have profanely hoped to build your way into heaven; tear from off you the 'fig-leaf righteousness' with the covering of which you have vainly sought to veil the moral deformity of your soul, and come and base your hope of heaven upon the "only name given under heaven whereby a sinner might be saved," and enfold yourself believingly in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be accepted. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." It is written: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." And by the same inspiration it is also written: "But to him that works not, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And, then, from this act of most free justification follows this precious, holy result: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Oh! then, by all the deathless interests that are at stake, by the desire for a holy life, a happy death, and a glorious immortality, cease from yourself; relinquish all reliance upon sacraments, religious duties, and charitable works, and under a spiritual, deep conviction of the desperate sinfulness of your fallen and corrupt nature, the "plague of your own heart," your entire inability to save yourself and your utter unpreparedness to stand before the holy Lord God, flee to Christ, and avail yourself of the great salvation which he has, effectually wrought and most freely bestows.

And what will be your reception by the Savior? Does it admit of a doubt? Oh! no, not one. He came into the world to save sinners, and he will save you. His compassion inclines him to save sinners, his power enables him to save sinners, his promise binds him to save sinners. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And, oh! how easy it is to be saved when the Holy Spirit draws the heart to Christ! It is not great faith, nor deep experience, nor extensive knowledge that are required. The dimmest eye that ever looked to Christ, the feeblest hand that ever took hold of Christ, the most trembling step that ever traveled to Christ, has in it present salvation, has in it life eternal. The smallest measure of real faith will take the soul to heaven. Yes, there is hope for the trembling penitent. Jesus suffered to the uttermost; therefore he is able to "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him."

Let us, in conclusion, trace THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE which this truth should exert upon our minds. The present aspect of our "times" as a nation, is gloomy and depressive to a degree. It is "a time of war!"

The scourge which our hearts fondly hoped would be staid has fallen upon us with more than expected terror and destruction. The nation is clad in mourning. Scarcely is there a family from the highest to the lowest, that has not felt some vibration of the terrible shock. "Abroad the sword bereaves, at home there is death." Who can paint the anguish or describe the desolateness at the present time of many a home?

We turn to you who are thus so suddenly and deeply bereaved. Your present time of calamity is in the Lord's hand! He has made you a widow that he might be your God- a fatherless one that in him you might find mercy. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" "I wound and I heal." Oh! that this the time of your deep, inconsolable grief may be the time of prayer, of seeking unto Him who has smitten and who alone binds up! "Acquaint now, now yourself with him, and be at peace;" and then, in deep, un murmuring submission to the divine disposal, you will exclaim: "The cup which my Father has given me; shall I not drink it? He has done all things well."

DON'T BE ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING. Let this precious truth, "My times are in your hand," divest your mind of all needless, anxious care for the present or the future. Exercising simple faith in God, "don't be anxious about anything." "Be content with such things as you have, for he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you." Learn to be content with your present lot, with God's dealings with, and his disposal of you. You are just where his providence has, in its inscrutable but all-wise and righteous decision, placed you. It may be a position, painful, irksome, trying, but it is right. Oh! yes, it is right! Only aim to glorify him in it. Wherever you are placed, God has a work for you to do, a purpose, through you to be accomplished, in which he blends your happiness with his glory. And when you have learned the lessons of his love, he will transfer you to another and a wider sphere, for whose nobler duties and higher responsibilities the present is, perhaps, but disciplining and preparing you.

COVET, THEN, TO LIVE A LIFE OF DAILY DEPENDENCE UPON GOD. Oh, it is a sweet and holy life! It saves from many a desponding feeling, from many a corroding care, from many an anxious thought, from many a sleepless night, from many a tearful eye, and from many an imprudent and sinful scheme. Repairing to the "covenant ordered in all things and sure," you may confide children, friends, calling, yourself, to the Lord's care, in the fullest assurance that all their 'times' and yours are in his hand.

In a letter addressed by Luther to Melancthon, at Augsburg, there occur these striking remarks, which from their appropriateness to the present subject, I venture to interweave with my own. "Grace and peace in Christ! in Christ I say, and not in the world, amen. I hate with exceeding hatred those extreme cares which consume you. If the cause is unjust, abandon it; if the cause is just, why should we belie the promises of Him who commands us to sleep without fear? Can the devil do more than kill us? Christ will not be lacking to the work of justice and of truth. He lives! He reigns! What fear, then, can we have? God is powerful to upraise his cause if it is overthrown; to make it proceed if it remains motionless; and if we are not worthy of it, he will do it by others. For our cause is in the very hands of him who can say: 'No one shall pluck it out of my hands.' I would not have it in our hands, and it would not be desirable that it were so. I have had many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have been able to place in God's, I still possess."

ALL IN HIS HAND. Oh! yes, beloved reader, thank God that your times, your interests, your salvation, are all out of your hands, and out of the hands of all creatures, supremely and safely in his. Forward in the path of duty, of labor, and of suffering. Aim to resemble Christ more closely in your disposition, your spirit, your whole life. Soon will it be said: "The Master is come, and calls for you." He is coming. "Prepare to meet your God." Let your motto for this year be- Forward! Patient in endurance, submissive in suffering,

content with God's allotment; zealous, prayerful, and watchful; be found, "standing in your lot at the end of the days;"

Trust God implicitly for the future. No sorrow comes, but shall open some sweet spring of comfort- no necessity transpires but shall endear a father's care- no affliction befalls but shall be attended with the Savior's tenderest sympathy. In him meet all confluence of grace for your hourly, momentary need. Let your constant prayer be: "Hold me up, and I shall be safe." Let your daily precept be "Casting all your cares upon him, for he cares for you." And then leave God to fulfill, as most faithfully he will, "his own gracious, precious promise: "As your days, so shall your strength be." Thus walking with God through this vale of tears, until you exchange sorrow for joy, suffering for ease, sin for purity, labor for rest, conflict for victory, and all earth's checkered, gloomy scenes; for the changeless, cloudless happiness and glory of heaven.

TIME, HOW SWIFT!

While with ceaseless course the sun

Hastened through the former year,

Many souls their race have run,

Never more to meet us here;

Fixed in an eternal state,

They are done with all below;

We a little longer wait,

But how little- none can know.

As the winged arrow flies,

Speedily the mark to find;

As the lightning from the skies

Darts, and leaves no trace behind.

Swiftly thus our fleeting days

Bear us down life's rapid stream;

Upwards, Lord, our spirits raise,

All below is but a dream.

Thanks for mercies past received,

Pardon of our sins renew;

Teach us, henceforth, how to live

With, eternity in view.
Bless your word to young and old,
Fill us with a Savior's love;
And when life's short tale is told,
May we dwell with you above.
Time, with an unwearied hand,
Pushes round the seasons past;
And in life's frail glass the sand,
Sinks apace, not long to last.
Many, who, as you and I,
The last year assembled thus,
In their silent graves now lie;
Graves will open soon for us!
Daily sin, and care, and strife,
While the Lord prolongs our breath,
Make it but a dying life,
Or a kind of living death.
Wretched they, and most forlorn,
Who no better portion know;
Better never to have been born,
Than to have our all below.
When constrained to go alone,
Leaving all you love behind,
Entering on a world unknown,
What will then support your mind?
When the Lord his summons sends,
Earthly comforts lose their power;

Honor, riches, kindred, friends,
Cannot cheer a dying hour.
Happy souls who fear the Lord;
Time is not too swift for you;
When your Savior gives the word,
Glad you'll bid the world adieu.
Then he'll wipe away your tears;
Near himself appoint your place;
Swifter fly, you rolling years,
Lord, we long to see your face. (Selected)

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/octavius-winslow/my-times-in-gods-hand/>

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