

15<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## Times

**“For the times they are a-changin’”**

Bob Dylan, *The Times They Are A-Changin’*

*The Oldie* magazine informs me that the Amondawa people of the Amazon have no word for “time”. Researchers have discovered that while the Amondawa recognise events occurring in time, time doesn’t exist as a separate, abstract concept. They don’t refer to their ages, for example, having no measurement for months or years. They simply assume different names in different stages of their lives, or as their status changes in their community. And they have no clocks or calendars ... Amazing! How would I cope if measuring time wasn’t available to me? But I have a clue ...

William Freeman Lloyd was born in Gloucestershire in 1791. In 1810, he was appointed one of the Secretaries of the Sunday School Union and became connected with the Religious Tract Society. He wrote extensively for Sunday School teachers and published a *Child’s Book of Poetry and Verse*. His best-known hymn is *My Times are in Thy Hand*, first published in 1841, a line of which I included in my “Prayer for the Day” yesterday.

*My times are in Thy hand; my God, I wish them there;  
My life, my friends, my soul I leave entirely to Thy care.*

*My times are in Thy hand; whatever they may be;  
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright, as best may seem to Thee.*

*My times are in Thy hand; why should I doubt or fear?  
My Father’s hand will never cause His child a needless tear.*

*My times are in Thy hand, I’ll always trust in Thee;  
And, after death, at Thy right hand I shall forever be.*

I’ve never been a fatalist. I don’t believe God has a predetermined plan for my life. We make of life what we can. But Lloyd’s approach places me somewhere between the Amondawa and my own drivenness in time. “My times ...”, my measurements, organisation, planning, defining, are human constructs, and can become tyranny. But if we leave such times in God’s hands, might we escape that tyranny and be less anxious as a result?

If “the times they are a-changin’”, as Dylan suggests, the meaning of my times may have to change too. I’ll take time to ponder that ...

### **A prayer for today**

*Time ... to think about so many things. I hope I can use that time well.*