

Christ

the Believer's Wisdom,
Righteousness, Sanctification,
and Redemption



GEORGE WHITEFIELD (1714-1770)

CHRIST

THE BELIEVER'S WISDOM, RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION, AND REDEMPTION

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“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”—1 Corinthians 1:30

OF all the verses in the book of God, this which I have now read to you is, I believe, one of the most comprehensive. What glad tidings does it bring to believers! What precious privileges are they herein invested with! How are they here led to the fountain of them all: I mean the love, the everlasting love of God the Father! “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

Without referring you to the context, I shall from these words, *first*, point out to you the fountain from which all those blessings flow, which the elect of God partake of in Jesus Christ, “who of God is made unto us...” And *second*, I shall consider what these blessings are, “...wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

1. The Fountain

First, I would point out to you the fountain from which all those blessings flow, that the elect of God partake of in Jesus. “Who of God is made unto us”—the Father, He it is Who is spoken of here. Not as though Jesus Christ was not God also, but God the Father is the fountain of the Deity. And if we consider Jesus Christ acting as Mediator,¹ God the Father is greater than He. There was an eternal contract between the Father and the Son: “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant” (Psa 89:3). Now David was a type of Christ, with Whom the Father made a covenant that, if He would obey and suffer and make Himself a sacrifice for sin, He should “see his seed,

¹ **Mediator** – a go-between; “It pleased God in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus His only begotten Son, according to the Covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and Man; the Prophet, Priest and King; Head and Savior of His Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: Unto whom He did from all Eternity give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.” (1689 London Baptist Confession 8.1; see also *Free Grace Broadcaster* 183, “Christ the Mediator”; both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY)

he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand” (Isa 53:10).

Our Lord refers to this compact in that glorious prayer recorded in John 17. There He prays for, or rather demands with a full assurance, all that were given to Him by the Father: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am” (Joh 17:24). For this same reason the apostle breaks out into praises of God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for He loved the elect with an everlasting love—or as our Lord expresses it, “before the foundation of the world” (Joh 17:24b).

And therefore, to show them to Whom they were beholden for their salvation, our Lord in Matthew 25 represents Himself, saying, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mat 25:34). And thus, in reply to the mother of Zebedee’s children, He says, It “is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father” (Mat 20:23). The apostle therefore—when here speaking of the Christian’s privileges, lest they should sacrifice to their own worth or think their salvation was owing to their own faithfulness, or improvement of their own free will—reminds them to look back on the everlasting love of God the Father, “who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

Would to God this point of doctrine was considered more, and people were more studious of the covenant of redemption² between the Father and the Son! We should not then have so much disputing against the doctrine of election, or hear it condemned (even by good men) as a doctrine of devils. For my own part, I cannot see how true humbleness of mind can be attained without a knowledge of it. Though I will not say that everyone who denies election is a bad man, yet I will say with that sweet singer Mr. Traill,³ it is a very bad sign.

Such a one, whoever he be, I think cannot truly know himself. For if we deny election, we must, partly at least, glory in ourselves; but our redemption is so ordered that no flesh should glory in the divine presence. Hence it is that the pride of man opposes this doctrine, because according to this doctrine and no other, “He that glorieth, let him glory [only] in the Lord” (1Co 1:31).

But what shall I say? Election is a mystery that shines with such resplendent brightness that, to make use of the words of one who has drank deeply of electing love, it dazzles the weak eyes of some of God’s dear children. However, though they know it not, all the blessings they receive, all the privileges they do or will enjoy through Jesus Christ, flow from the everlasting love of God the Father: “But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

² **covenant of redemption** –the agreement between the members of the Godhead whereby 1) God the Father purposed the salvation of lost sinners, 2) God the Son agreed to accomplish that salvation through the cross, and 3) God the Spirit agreed to apply that salvation to God’s elect through His regenerating power.

³ **Robert Traill** (1642-1716) – English Puritan; Presbyterian minister and author.

2. Wisdom

Secondly, I come to show what these blessings are, which are here, through Christ, made over to the elect.

Christ is made to them *wisdom*; but wherein does true wisdom consist? Was I to ask some of you, perhaps you would say, “in indulging the lust of the flesh, and saying to our souls, ‘eat, drink, and be merry.’” But this is only the wisdom of brutes; they have as good a gust and relish for sensual pleasures as the greatest epicure on earth. Others would tell me true wisdom consisted in adding house to house and field to field, and calling lands after their own names. But this cannot be true wisdom, for riches often take to them wings and fly away like an eagle towards heaven. Even Wisdom itself assures us that “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luk 12:15); vanity, vanity, all these things are vanity (Ecc 12:8). If riches leave not the owner, the owners must soon leave them, for rich men must also die and leave their riches for others. Their riches cannot procure them redemption from the grave, whither we are all hastening apace.

But perhaps you despise riches and pleasure, and therefore place wisdom in the knowledge of books. But it is possible for you to tell the numbers of the stars and call them all by their names, and yet be mere fools! Learned men are not always wise; nay, our common learning so much cried up⁴ makes men only so many accomplished fools.

To keep you therefore no longer in suspense, and withal to humble you, I will send you to a heathen school to learn what true wisdom is: “*know thyself*” was a saying of one of the wise men of Greece.⁵ This is certainly true wisdom, and this is that wisdom spoken of in the text and which Jesus Christ has made to all elect sinners. They are made to know themselves so as not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think (Rom 12:3). Before they were darkness; now they are light in the Lord—and in that light they see their own darkness. They now bewail themselves as fallen creatures by nature, dead in trespasses and sins, sons and heirs of hell, and children of wrath. They now see that all their righteousnesses are but as filthy rags (Isa 64:6); that there is no health in their souls (Isa 1:6); that they are poor and miserable, blind, and naked—and that “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Act 4:12) but that of Jesus Christ. They see the necessity of closing with a Savior, and [of] beholding the wisdom of God in appointing Him to be a Savior. They are also made willing to accept of salvation upon our Lord’s own terms, and to receive Him as their all in all. Thus Christ is made to them wisdom.

3. Righteousness

“Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and *righteousness*”; Christ’s whole personal righteousness is made over to them and accounted theirs. Being enabled to lay hold on

⁴ **cried up** – brought to display with effort.

⁵ “**Know thyself**” was inscribed on the ancient Greek temple at Delphi, and is often attributed to Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 B.C.).

Christ by faith, God the Father blots out their transgressions as with a thick cloud. Their sins and their iniquities He remembers no more (Heb 10:17). They are made the righteousness of God in Jesus, Who is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom 10:4). In one sense, God now sees no sin in them; the whole covenant of works⁶ is fulfilled in them; they are actually justified, acquitted, and looked upon as righteous in the sight of God. They are perfectly accepted in the Beloved; they are complete in Him. The flaming sword of God’s wrath—which before moved every way—is now removed, and free access given to the tree of life. They are enabled now to reach out the arm of faith, and pluck and live for evermore.

Hence it is that the apostle, under a sense of this blessed privilege, breaks out into this triumphant language; It is Christ that justifies, who is he that condemns (Rom 8:33-34)? Does *sin* condemn? Christ’s righteousness delivers believers from the guilt of it; Christ is their Savior and is become a propitiation⁷ for their sins: who therefore “shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?” (Rom 8:33). Does the *Law* condemn? By having Christ’s righteousness imputed to them, they are dead to the Law as a covenant of works; Christ has fulfilled it for them and in their stead. Does *death* threaten them? They need not fear: “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law” (1Co 15:56), but God has given them the victory by imputing to them the righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

And what a privilege is here! Well might the angels at the birth of Christ say to the humble shepherds, “Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy”; unto you that believe in Christ, a Savior is born (Luk 2:11). And well may they rejoice at the conversion of poor sinners, for the Lord is their righteousness. They have peace with God through faith in Christ’s blood, and shall never enter into condemnation.

O believers! (for this discourse is intended in a special manner for you) lift up your heads! “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phi 4:4). Christ is made to you of God, righteousness; what then should you fear: you are made the righteousness of God in Him. He is called, “The Lord our Righteousness” (Jer 23:6); of what then should you be afraid?

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from

⁶ **covenant of works** – the agreement God established with Adam in the Garden of Eden before his fall into sin. It established man’s obligation to obey God with the penalty of death for disobedience (Gen 2:16-17). See *The Covenants of Works and of Grace* by Walt Chantry, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁷ **propitiation** – “Propitiation has reference to the wrath or displeasure of God. To propitiate is to satisfy the divine justice and thus to appease His wrath. In the biblical usage of the term, the justice of God is satisfied by the propitiatory sacrifice.” (Morton H. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 382.)

the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:35-39)—“who of God is made unto us...righteousness.”

This is a glorious privilege for the children of God, but this is only the beginning of the happiness of believers; for, observe what follows.

4. Sanctification

a. Christ is our sanctification

Christ is not only made unto them righteousness, but *sanctification*. By sanctification, I do not mean a bare hypocritical attendance on outward ordinances⁸—though rightly informed Christians will think it their duty and privilege constantly to attend on all outward ordinances. Nor do I mean by sanctification, a bare outward reformation, a few transient convictions, or a little legal sorrow—for all this an unsanctified man may have. But by sanctification I mean a total renovation of the whole man. By the righteousness of Christ, believers become legally alive; by His sanctification, they are made spiritually alive. By one they are *entitled to glory*; by the other they are *made meet*⁹ for glory. They are sanctified therefore throughout in spirit, soul, and body.

Their *understandings*, which were before dark, now become light in the Lord: and their *wills*, before contrary to, now become one with the will of God:

- their *affections* are now set on things above;
- their *memory* is now filled with divine things;
- their natural *consciences* are now enlightened;
- their *members*, which were before instruments of uncleanness, and of iniquity unto iniquity, are now instruments of righteousness and true holiness;
- in short, they are new creatures; “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2Co 5:17).

In their hearts, sin has now no longer dominion over them; they are freed from the power, though not the indwelling and being, of it. They are holy both in heart and life, in all manner of conversation.¹⁰ They are made partakers of a divine nature; and from Jesus Christ, they receive grace for grace. Every grace that is in Christ is copied and transcribed into their souls: they are transformed into His likeness; He is formed within them; they dwell in Him and He in them; they are led by the Spirit and bring forth the fruits thereof; they know that Christ is their Immanuel, God with and in them; they are living temples of the Holy Ghost. And therefore, being a holy habitation unto the Lord, the whole Trinity dwells and walks in them. Even here, they sit together with Christ in heavenly places and are vitally united to Him, their Head, by a living faith. Their Redeemer, their Maker, is their Husband; they are flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone (Gen

⁸ **ordinances** – the Lord’s Supper and baptism.

⁹ **meet** – fit.

¹⁰ **conversation** – conduct; behavior.

2:23); they talk, they walk with Him as a man talketh and walketh with his friend. In short, they are one with Christ, even as Jesus Christ and the Father are one.

Thus is Christ made to believers sanctification. And Oh, what a privilege is this! to be changed from beasts into saints, and from a devilish to be made partakers of a divine nature; to be translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son; to put off the old man, which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which is created after God in righteousness and true holiness (Eph 4:22-24). Oh what an unspeakable blessing is this! I almost stand amazed at the contemplation thereof. Well might the apostle exhort the believers to rejoice in the Lord; indeed they have reason always to rejoice, yea, to rejoice on a dying bed—for the kingdom of God is in them. They are changed from glory to glory, even by the spirit of the Lord.

Well may this be a mystery to the natural, for it is a mystery even to the spiritual man himself—a mystery that he cannot fathom. Does it not often dazzle your eyes, Oh ye children of God, to look at your own brightness when the candle of the Lord shines out, and your Redeemer lifts up the light of His blessed countenance upon your souls. Are you not astonished when you feel the love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost—and God holds out the golden scepter of His mercy and bids you ask what you will, and it shall be given you (Joh 15:17)? Does not that peace of God, which keeps and rules your hearts, surpass the utmost limits of your understandings? And is not the joy you feel unspeakable? Is it not full of glory? I am persuaded it is! And in your secret communion, when the Lord's love flows in upon your souls, you are as it were swallowed up in, or to use the apostle's phrase, "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19). Are you not ready to cry out with Solomon, "will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?...O LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth" (2Ch 6:18, 14). If you are children of God, and know what it is to have fellowship with the Father and His Son—if you walk by faith and not by sight—I am assured this is frequently the language of your hearts.

But look forward and see an unbounded prospect of eternal happiness lying before thee, O believer! What thou hast already received are only the first fruits, like the cluster of grapes brought out of the land of Canaan—only an earnest and pledge of yet infinitely better things to come, the harvest to follow. Thy grace is hereafter to be swallowed up in glory. Thy great Joshua and merciful High Priest shall administer an abundant entrance to thee into the land of promise, that rest which awaits the children of God—for Christ is not only made to believers wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, but also redemption.

b. Justification and sanctification

But before we enter upon the explanation and contemplation of this privilege, first learn hence the great mistake of those writers and clergy who, notwithstanding their talk of sanctification and inward holiness (as indeed sometimes they do, though in a very loose and superficial manner), yet they generally make it the *cause*, whereas they should consider it as the *effect*, of our justification. Of Him "are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God

is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness,” and then “sanctification.” For Christ’s righteousness, or that which Christ has done in our stead without us, is the sole cause of our acceptance in the sight of God and of all holiness wrought in us. To this and not to the light within, or anything wrought in us, does God look favorably upon us.

Our sanctification at best, in this life, is not complete. Though we are delivered from the power, we are not freed from the in-being of sin. Not only the dominion, but the in-being of sin, is forbidden by the perfect Law of God: for it is not said, thou shalt not give way to lust, but, thou shalt not lust (*see* Rom 7:7; Mat 5:28). So that whilst the principle of lust remains in the least degree in our hearts, though we are otherwise never so holy, yet we cannot, on account of that, hope for acceptance with God. We must first therefore look for a righteousness without us, even the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason the apostle mentions it, and puts it before sanctification in the words of the text. And whosoever teacheth any other doctrine, doth not preach the truth as it is in Jesus.

c. Experimental sanctification

Secondly, from hence also the Antinomians¹¹ and formal hypocrites may be confuted, who talk of Christ without, but know nothing experimentally¹² of a work of sanctification wrought within them. Whatever they may pretend to, since Christ is not in them, the Lord is not their righteousness and they have no well-grounded hope of glory. For though sanctification is not the *cause*, yet it is the *effect* of our acceptance with God; “who of God is made unto us...righteousness, and sanctification.” He therefore that is really in Christ is a new creature.

It is *not* going back to a covenant of works to look into our hearts and, seeing that they are changed and renewed, from thence form a comfortable and well-grounded assurance of the safety of our state. No, but this is what we are directed to in Scripture: by our bringing forth the fruits, we are to judge whether or no we *ever did* truly partake of the Spirit of God. “We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren” (1Jo 3:14). And however we may talk of Christ’s righteousness, and exclaim against legal preachers, yet if we are not holy in heart and life, if we are not sanctified and renewed by the Spirit in our minds, we are self-deceivers, we are only formal hypocrites—for we must not put asunder what God has joined together. We must keep the medium between the two extremes: 1) not insist so much on the one hand upon Christ *without*, as to exclude Christ *within*—as an evidence of our being His and as a preparation for future happiness; 2) nor on the other hand, so depend on inherent righteousness or holiness wrought in us, as to exclude the righteousness of Jesus Christ without us.

¹¹ **Antinomians** – from the Greek *anti*, against, and *nomos*, law; antinomianism basically means “against law.” It generally means those who hold the theological view that God’s Law has no place in the life of believers. See *The Law and the Saint* by A.W. Pink, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

¹² **experimentally** – through personal experience of something; experientially.

5. Redemption

a. Christ is our redemption

Let us now go on and take a view of the other link, or rather the end, of the believer's golden chain of privileges: *redemption*. But we must look very high; for the top of it, like Jacob's ladder, reaches heaven, where all believers will ascend and be placed at the right hand of God. "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and *redemption*."

This is a golden chain indeed! And what is best of all, not one link can ever be broken asunder from another. Were there no other text in the book of God, this single one sufficiently proves the *final perseverance* of all true believers: for never did God yet justify a man whom He did not sanctify; nor sanctify one whom He did not completely redeem and glorify. No, as for God, His way, His work, is perfect; He always carries on and finishes the work He begins.

Thus it was in the first, so it is in the new creation. When God says, "Let there be light" (Gen 1:3), there is light, light that shines more and more unto the perfect day—when believers enter into their eternal rest as God entered into His. Those whom God has justified, He has in effect glorified: for as a man's worthiness was not the cause of God's giving him Christ's righteousness, so neither shall his unworthiness be a cause of his taking it away. God's gifts and callings are without repentance (Rom 11:29).

I cannot think they are clear in the notion of Christ's righteousness, who deny the final perseverance of the saints. I fear they understand justification in that low sense, in which I understood it a few years ago, as implying no more than remission of sins. But it not only signifies remission of sins past, but also a federal¹³ right to all good things to come. If God has given us His only Son, how will he not with him freely give us all things (Rom 8:32)? Therefore, the apostle, after he says, "Who of God is made unto us...righteousness," does not say, perhaps He *may be made* to us sanctification and redemption; but He *is made*—for there is an eternal, indissoluble connection between these blessed privileges, as the obedience of Christ is imputed to them also. It argues great ignorance of the covenant of grace and redemption to object against it.

b. Redemption of our bodies

By the word *redemption*, we are to understand not only a complete deliverance from all evil, but also a full enjoyment of all good, both in body and soul. I say both in body and soul, for the Lord is also for the body; the bodies of the saints in this life are temples of the Holy Ghost. God makes a covenant with the dust of believers; after death, though worms destroy them, yet even in their flesh shall they see God. I fear, indeed, there are some Sadducees¹⁴ in our days, or at least heretics, who say either that there is no resurrection of the body, or that the resurrection is past already, namely in our regeneration.

¹³ **federal** – pertaining to an official covenant or treaty.

¹⁴ **Sadducees** – members of the ancient Jewish sect who denied the authority of oral tradition, the resurrection of the dead, and the existence of angels, etc. (see Mat 22:23).

Hence it is that our Lord's coming in the flesh at the Day of Judgment is denied. Consequently [if their view be true], we must throw aside the sacrament¹⁵ of the Lord's Supper. For why should we remember the Lord's death until He come to judgment, when He is already come to judge our hearts and will not come a second time?

But all this is only the reasoning of unlearned, unstable men, who certainly know not what they say or whereof they affirm. That we must follow our Lord in the regeneration, be partakers of a new birth, and that Christ must come into our hearts, we freely confess—and we hope when speaking of these things, we speak no more than what we know and feel. But then it is plain that Jesus Christ will come hereafter to judgment, and that He ascended into heaven with the body that He had here on earth; for, says He after His resurrection, “handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luk 24:39). And it is plain that Christ's resurrection was an earnest¹⁶ of ours, for says the apostle, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1Co 15:20). And as in Adam all die and are subject to mortality, so all that are in Christ—the second Adam, Who represented believers as their federal head¹⁷—shall certainly be made alive, or rise again with their bodies at the last day.

Here then, O believers, is one, though the lowest, degree of that redemption which you are to be partakers of hereafter; I mean the redemption of your bodies. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1Co 15:53). Your bodies, as well as souls, were given to Jesus Christ by the Father; they have been companions in watching, fasting, and praying. Your bodies therefore, as well as souls, shall Jesus Christ raise up at the last day. Lean not, therefore, O believers, to look into the grave; for to you it is no other than a consecrated dormitory where your bodies shall sleep quietly until the morning of the resurrection—when the voice of the archangel shall sound and the trump of God give the general alarm, “Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.” Earth, air, fire, water, shall give up your scattered atoms, and in both body and soul shall you be ever with the Lord.

I doubt not but many of you are groaning under crazy bodies, and complain often that the mortal body weighs down the immortal soul—at least this is my case. But let us have a little patience and we shall be delivered from our earthly prisons. Ere long these tabernacles of clay shall be dissolved, and we shall be clothed with our house that is from heaven. Hereafter our bodies shall be spiritualized, and shall be so far from hindering our souls through weakness that they shall become strong; so strong, as to bear up under an exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2Co 4:17). Others again may have deformed bodies, emaciated also with sickness, and worn out with labor and age—but wait

¹⁵ **sacrament** – “A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers”—The Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 92. Many Protestants today use the word “ordinances” instead to distinguish from the Roman Catholic Church. The Bible teaches two ordinances instituted by Christ: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

¹⁶ **earnest** – pledge of anything afterwards to be received in greater abundance.

¹⁷ **federal head**– legal representative.

a little until your blessed change by death comes. Then your bodies shall be renewed and made glorious, like unto Christ's glorious body, of which we may form some faint idea from the account given us of our Lord's transfiguration on the Mount. It then is said, "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Mat 17:2). Well then may a believer break out into the apostle's triumphant language, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory" (1Co 15:55)!

c. Redemption of our souls

But what is redemption of the body, in comparison to the redemption of the better part: our souls? I must, therefore, say to you believers, as the angel said to John (Rev 4:1), "Come up hither" and let us take as clear a view as we can at such a distance, of the redemption Christ has purchased for you and will shortly put you in actual possession of. Already you are justified, already you are sanctified, and thereby freed from the guilt and dominion of sin. But as I have observed, the being and indwelling of sin yet remains in you; God sees it proper to leave some Amalekites¹⁸ in the land, to keep His Israel in action.

1). Corruption

The most perfect Christian, I am persuaded, must agree, according to one of our articles,¹⁹ that the corruption of nature remains even in the regenerate; that "the flesh lusteth [always] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal 5:17). Thus the believers cannot do things for God with that perfection they desire. This grieves their righteous souls day by day, and with the holy apostle makes them to cry out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom 7:24)! I thank God that our Lord Jesus Christ will, but not completely before the day of our dissolution. Then will the very being of sin be destroyed, and an eternal stop put to inbred, indwelling corruption. And is not this a great redemption? I am sure believers esteem it so, for there is nothing grieves the heart of a child of God so much as the remains of indwelling sin.

2). Temptations

Again, believers are often in heaviness through manifold temptations; God sees that it is needful and good for them so to be. Though they may be highly favored and wrapped up in communion with God even to the third heavens,²⁰ yet a messenger of Satan is often sent to buffet them lest they should be puffed up with the abundance of revelations. But be not weary, be not faint in your minds: the time of your complete redemption draweth nigh (Luk 21:28). In heaven the wicked one shall cease from troubling you, and your weary souls shall enjoy an everlasting rest; his fiery darts cannot reach those blissful re-

¹⁸ **Amalekites** – a pagan people who lived near the nation of Israel, whom God used to keep His people dependent upon Him.

¹⁹ **one of our articles** – reference to one of the Thirty-nine Articles, the confession of faith of the Church of England drafted during the Reformation.

²⁰ **third heavens** – reference to the three heavens understood in biblical times: first, the earth's atmosphere; second, outer space; third, the dwelling of God (see 2Co 12:2).

gions. Satan will never come any more to appear with, disturb, or accuse the sons of God, when once the Lord Jesus Christ shuts the door.

Your righteous souls are now grieved, day by day, at the ungodly conversation of the wicked: tares²¹ now grow up among the wheat; wolves come in sheep's clothing. But the redemption spoken of in the text will free our souls from all anxiety on these accounts. Hereafter you shall enjoy a perfect communion²² of saints. Nothing that is unholy or un-sanctified shall enter into the holy of holies that is prepared for you above. This, and all manner of evil whatsoever, you shall be delivered from when your redemption is hereafter made complete in heaven.

Not only so, but you shall enter into the full enjoyment of all good. It is true, all saints will not have the same degree of happiness, but all will be as happy as their hearts can desire. Believers, you shall judge evil and familiarly converse with good angels: you shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the spirits of just men made perfect. And to sum up all your happiness in one word, you shall see God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and, by seeing God, be more and more like unto Him, and pass from glory to glory even to all eternity (2Co 3:18).

But I must stop; the glories of the upper world crowd in so fast upon my soul that I am lost in the contemplation of them. Brethren, the redemption spoken of is unutterable; we cannot here find it out. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the hearts of the most holy men living, to conceive how great it is (1Co 2:9). Was I to entertain you whole ages with an account of it, when you come to heaven you must say with the queen of Sheba, "Behold, the half was not told me" (1Ki 10:7)—no, not the one thousandth part! All we can do here is to go upon Mount Pisgah and by the eye of faith take a distant view of the promised land. We may see it, as Abraham did Christ, afar off, and rejoice in it; but here we only know in part. Blessed be God, there is a time coming, when we shall know God even as we are known, and God be all in all. Lord Jesus, accomplish the number of thine elect! Lord Jesus, hasten thy kingdom!

6. Applications

a. Warning to the lost

And now, where are the scoffers of these last days, who count the lives of Christians to be madness, and their end to be without honor? Unhappy men! you know not what you do. Were your eyes open and had you senses to discern spiritual things, you would not speak all manner of evil against the children of God, but you would esteem them as the excellent ones of the earth and envy their happiness. Your souls would hunger and thirst after it; you also would become fools for Christ's sake. You boast of wisdom, so did the philosophers of Corinth—but your wisdom is the foolishness of folly in the sight of God.

²¹ **tares** – weeds.

²² **communion** – sharing of joy and fellowship among those united by some particular bond.

What will your wisdom avail you, if it does not make you wise unto salvation? Can you, with all your wisdom, propose a more consistent scheme to build your hopes of salvation on, than what has been now laid down before you? Can you, with all the strength of natural reason, find out a better way of acceptance with God than by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it right to think your own works can in any measure deserve or procure it?

If not, why will you not believe in Him? Why will you not submit to His righteousness? Can you deny that you are fallen creatures? Do not you find that you are full of disorders, and that these disorders make you unhappy? Do not you find that you cannot change your own hearts? Have you not resolved many and many a time, and have not your corruptions yet dominion over you? Are you not bond-slaves to your lust, and led captive by the devil at his will?

Why then will you not come to Christ for sanctification? Do you not desire to die the death of the righteous, and that your future state may be like theirs? I am persuaded you cannot bear the thought of being annihilated, much less of being miserable forever. Whatever you may pretend, if you speak truth, you must confess that conscience breaks in upon you in your more sober intervals, whether you will or not, and even constrains you to believe that hell is no painted fire. And why then will you not come to Christ? He alone can procure you everlasting redemption!

Haste, haste away to Him, poor beguiled sinners. You lack wisdom; ask it of Christ. Who knows but He may give it you? He is able, for He is the wisdom of the Father; He is that wisdom which was from everlasting. You have no righteousness; away, therefore, to Christ: He is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth. You are unholy; flee to the Lord Jesus: He is full of grace and truth; and of His fullness, all may receive that believe in Him. You are as if afraid to die; let this drive you to Christ: He has the keys of death and hell. In Him is plenteous redemption; He alone can open the door that leads to everlasting life.

Let not, therefore, the deceived reasoner boast any longer of his pretended reason. Whatever you may think, it is the most unreasonable thing in the world not to believe on Jesus Christ, Whom God hath sent. Why, why will you die? Why will you not come unto Him that you may have life? Oh! every one that thirsteth, come unto the waters of life and drink freely: Come, buy without money and without price (Isa 55:1). Were these blessed privileges in the text to be purchased with money, you might say, "we are poor, and cannot buy." Or were they to be conferred only on sinners of such a rank or degree, then you might say, "how can such sinners as we expect to be so highly favored?" But they are to be freely given of God to the worst of sinners!—to us, says the apostle: to me a persecutor; to you Corinthians, who were unclean, drunkards, covetous persons, idolaters.

Therefore, each poor sinner may say then, "why not unto me?" Has Christ but one blessing? What if He has blessed millions already by turning them away from their iniquities, yet He still continues the same. He lives forever to make intercession, and therefore will bless you, even you also. Though, Esau-like, you have been profane and hitherto

despised your heavenly Father's birth-right (Gen 25:30 ff.); even now, if you believe, Christ will be made to you of God, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

b. Charge to believers

But I must turn again to believers for whose instruction, as I observed before, this discourse was particularly intended. You see, brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, what great blessings are treasured up for you in Jesus Christ your Head, and what you are entitled to by believing on His name. Take heed, therefore, that "ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph 4:1). Think often how highly you are favored; and remember, you have not chosen Christ, but Christ hath chosen you.

Put on, as the elect of God, humbleness of mind and glory; but let it be only in the Lord, for you have nothing but what you have received of God (1Co 4:7). By nature ye were as foolish, as unholy, and in as damnable a condition as others. Be pitiful, therefore, be courteous; and, as sanctification is a progressive work, beware of thinking you have already attained. Let him that is holy be holy still; knowing that he who is most pure in heart shall hereafter enjoy the clearest vision of God. Let indwelling sin be your daily burden; and not only bewail and lament, but see that you subdue it daily by the power of divine grace. Look up to Jesus continually to be the finisher, as well as the author, of your faith (Heb 12:2).

Build not on your own faithfulness, but on God's unchangeableness. Take heed of thinking you stand by the power of your own free will. The everlasting love of God the Father must be your only hope and consolation; let this support you under all trials. Remember that God's gifts and callings are without repentance (Rom 11:29); that Christ having once loved you, will love you to the end. Let this constrain you to obedience, and not only be your wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, but also your complete and everlasting redemption. "*Glory to God in the highest*" (Luk 2:14)! ✨