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John Gill's

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY

Book 6—Chapter 2

**OF THE CAUSES OF REDEMPTION
BY CHRIST**

Secondly, The next thing to be considered are the causes of redemption; what it springs from, by whom, and by what means it is obtained; and for what ends and purposes it is wrought out.

I. First, the moving cause of it, or from whence it springs and flows; and that is, the everlasting love of God; which, as it is the source and spring of every blessing of grace; as of election, regeneration, and effectual calling; so of redemption. The gift of Christ to be the Redeemer of his people flows from this love. Christ was given to be a Redeemer before he was sent; when he was given for a covenant to the people he was given in covenant to be the Redeemer of them; and this gift was the effect of love; to this Christ himself ascribes it; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son"; that is, to be their Redeemer; hence, before he came, Job had knowledge of him as his living Redeemer; and all the Old Testament saints waited for him as such. The mission of Christ in the fulness of time, to be the propitiation for the sins of men, and to redeem them from them, is given as a manifest, clear, and undoubted instance of his love; "In this was manifested the love of God", &c. "Herein is love", &c. (1 John 4:9, 10) and God's not sparing his Son, but delivering him into the hands of justice and death, to die in the room and stead of sinners, while they were such, is a full demonstration and high commendation of his great love unto them (Rom. 5:8). The free grace of God, for grace, if it is not altogether free is not grace; and which is no other than unmerited love, clear of all conditions, merit and motives in the creature; it is at the bottom of our redemption by Christ; for as we are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus

Christ"; so that redemption that is in and by Christ is of free grace; the gift of Christ is a free grace gift; his being sent and delivered up to death are owing to the grace of God; it is "by the grace of God he tasted death for everyone"; for everyone of the sons of God: and this cannot be attributed to any merit or desert in those for whom Christ died; since they were without strength, ungodly wicked sinners, the chief of sinners, and enemies in their minds, by wicked works (Rom. 5:6-8, 10). Mercy, which is no other than the love and grace of God, exercised towards miserable creatures, gives rise to this blessing of redemption: God first resolved to have mercy on sinful men; and then determined to redeem and save them by his Son; and it is through the tender mercy of our God, that Christ, the dayspring from on high, visited and redeemed his people; and so performed the mercy promised to men (Luke 1:68, 69, 72, 78), hence God is said to save men according to his mercy; and mercy is glorified in their salvation and redemption by Christ; and they are under obligation to sing of mercy, to praise the Lord, and give thanks unto him, on account of it (Titus 3:5; Ps. 107:1, 2; 136:23, 24), it is now, by the love, grace, and mercy of God to sinful men, that his will is determined, and his resolution fixed, to redeem them; for redemption is according to an eternal purpose he has purposed in Christ; who was foreordained before the foundation of the world, to redeem men from a vain conversation, with his precious blood: he was set forth, in the decrees and purposes of God, to be the propitiation for sin; God appointed him to be the Redeemer and Saviour; and appointed men, not unto wrath, which they deserved, but to obtain salvation by him; even the vessels of mercy afore prepared for glory; and being moved, from his love, grace, and mercy, within himself, to determine upon the redemption of them, his wisdom was set to work to find out the best way and method of doing it: upon this a council was held; God was, in Christ, forming a scheme of peace, reconciliation, and redemption; in which he has "abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence", in fixing upon the most proper person, and the most proper means, whereby to effect it: and hence the scheme of redemption, as formed in the eternal mind and council of God, is called "the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 1:7, 8; 3:10). But of the wisdom of God, as it appears in redemption by Christ, I have more largely treated when on the attribute of Wisdom. All these workings in the heart and will of God, issued in a covenant between him and his Son; in which he proposed to his Son, that he should be the Raiser up, Restorer, and Redeemer of his people, both among Jews and Gentiles; and to which he agreed, and said, "Lo, I come to do thy will!" which was no other, than to work out the redemption of his people (Isa. 49:5, 6; Ps. 40:7, 8). Hence this covenant is by some called, the covenant of redemption, in which this great affair was settled and secured. Now upon all this, the love, grace, and mercy of God, the good will and purpose of his heart, his council and covenant, the plot of man's redemption is formed; this is the source and spring of it.

II. Secondly, The procuring cause, or author of redemption, is Christ, the Son of God; he was appointed to it, and assented to it; was prophesied of as the Redeemer that should come to Zion; he was sent to redeem them that were under the law; and he has obtained eternal redemption; and in him believers have it, through his blood, and he is of God made redemption to them.

1. If it be asked, how Christ came to be the Redeemer? it may be answered, as the love, grace, and mercy of God the Father moved him to resolve upon redemption, and appoint his Son, and call him to this work; so like love, grace, and mercy, wrought in the heart of the Son of God to accept of this call, and engage in this work; the love of Christ, which was in his heart from everlasting, and was a love of complacency and delight; this showed itself in various acts, and especially in giving himself for his people to redeem them; in giving himself an offering and a sacrifice for their sins; in laying down his life for them; all which is frequently ascribed to his love (Titus 2:14; Eph. 5:2, 25; 1 John 3:16), and this love is unmerited, as appears from the characters of the persons for whom he died, observed before; and so is called the grace of Christ, free grace, unmoved and unmerited by anything in the creature; and to this is attributed the whole affair of our redemption and salvation by Christ (2 Cor. 8:5), pity and compassion in his heart towards his people in their miserable and enthralled state, moved him to undertake and perform the work of their redemption: "in his love and in his pity he redeemed them", as he did Israel of old (Isa. 63:9). This love, grace, and mercy, influenced and engaged him to resolve upon the redemption of them; hence he said, "I will ransom them, I will redeem them"; as from the grave and death, so from every other enemy (Hosea 13:14), and as he entered into covenant engagements with his Father from everlasting, he considered himself as under obligation to perform this work, and therefore spoke in language which imports the same; as that he must work the works of him that sent him, of which this is the principal; that he "ought" to suffer and die as he did; and that he "must" bring in those the Father gave him, and he undertook for, and bring them safe to glory.

2. The fitness of Christ to be a Redeemer of his people is worthy of notice. As he engaged in it he was every way fit for it; none so fit as he, none fit for it but himself; no creature, man or angel: no man, for all have sinned, and so everyone needs a redeemer from sin, and can neither redeem himself nor any other; nor could an angel redeem any of the sons of men; God has put no trust of this kind in those his servants the angels, knowing that they were unequal to it: the angel Jacob speaks of, that redeemed him from all evil, was not a created but the uncreated angel; the angel and messenger of the covenant, the Messiah. Now Christ's fitness for the work of redemption lies in his being God and man in one person. It was the Son of God that was sent to redeem men, who is of the same nature, and possessed of the same perfections his divine Father is; the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal to him: this Son of God is the true God, the great God, and so fit to be the Redeemer and Saviour of men; and a mighty redeemer he must be, since he is Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, and therefore equal to such a work as this (Gal. 4:4; 1 John 5:20; Titus 2:13; Jer. 50:34), and he is both God and man; he is the child born, as man, and the son given, as a divine person; he is Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh, and so fit to be a mediator between God and man; and to be an umpire, a daysman to lay hands on both; and to do the work required of a redeemer of men, to make reconciliation for their sins, and to take care of things pertaining to the glory of God, his justice and holiness. As man he could be

made, as he was made, under the law, and so capable of yielding obedience to it, and of bearing the penalty of it; which it was necessary he should, as the surety and redeemer of men; as man, he had blood to shed, with which most precious blood he could redeem them unto God; had a life to lay down, a sufficient ransom price for his people, and was capable of suffering and dying in their room and stead, and so of making full satisfaction for them. As God, he would be zealously concerned for the glory of the divine perfections, and secure the honour of them in the redemption wrought out by him; as such, he could put an infinite virtue into his blood, and make it a full and adequate price for the purchase of his church, and the redemption of it; as such, he could support the human nature under the load of sin and of sufferings for it, and of carrying it through the work, otherwise insupportable; and as both God and man he had a right to redeem; as Lord of all, he had a right as well as power to redeem them that were his; and being, as man, their near kinsman, the right of redemption belonged to him, and therefore bears the name of Gaol which signifies a redeemer, and a near kinsman; see the law in Leviticus 25:47-49 and who so fit to be the redeemer of the church as he who is her head and her husband?

3. The means by which redemption is wrought out by Christ; and that is by his blood, his life, to which it is often ascribed (Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Rev. 5:9), this was shed, and shed freely, for the remission of sins, and for the redemption of men; had it been shed involuntarily, by accident, or by force, against his will, it would not have been a proper redemption price, or have answered such an end; but it was purposely and voluntarily shed, and with full consent; Christ, as he had the full disposal of his own life, freely gave his life a ransom price for many; "I lay down my life for the sheep", says he, as a ransom price for them; "I lay it down of myself" (Matt. 20:28; John 10:15, 18), and the blood that was thus freely shed was the same with that of those for whom it was shed, which was necessary; not the blood of bulls and goats, which could not be an adequate price of redemption, but human blood; Christ partook of the same flesh and blood with the children for whom he died; only with this difference, it was not tainted with sin as theirs is; which is another requisite of the ransom price; it must be the blood of an innocent person, as Christ was: much notice is taken in scripture of the innocence, holiness, and righteousness of the Redeemer; that he was holy in his nature, blameless in life, knew no sin, nor ever committed any; that he, the just and Holy One, suffered for the unjust; a great emphasis is put upon this, that the price with which men are redeemed is "the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18, 19), for if he had had any sin in him, he could not have been a redeemer from sin, nor his blood the price of redemption: and yet more than all this, it is necessary to make this price a full and adequate one, it must not be the blood of a mere creature, but of one that is God as well as man, and such is Christ; hence God, who is Christ, is said to "purchase the church with his own blood"; being God and man in one person, this gave his blood a sufficient virtue to make such a purchase; and a peculiar emphasis is put upon his blood, being the "blood of" Jesus Christ "the Son of God", which cleanses from all sin (Acts 20:28; 1 John 1:7). Now this price is paid into the hands of God, whose justice is offended, whose law is broken, and who is the lawgiver, that is able to save and to destroy; and against whom all sin is committed:

and who will not clear the guilty unless his justice is satisfied; for he is the judge of all the earth, who will do right; wherefore Christ is said "to redeem" men "unto God by his blood" (Rev. 5:9). The price of redemption, which is the blood of Christ, was paid unto God, whereby redemption from vindictive justice was obtained; it was not paid into the hands of Satan, or any other enemy that had power over the redeemed; for the power of Satan was only an usurpation; he had no legal right to hold them captives; and therefore the delivery of them out of his hand is by power and not by price: but the justice of God had a legal right to shut them up, and detain them as prisoners, till satisfaction was given; and therefore redemption from avenging justice, which is properly the redemption that is by Christ, is by a price paid to justice for the ransom of them.

III. Thirdly, The final cause, or causes, or ends, for which redemption was wrought out and obtained by Christ in this way; and they are these.

1. That the justice of God might be satisfied in the salvation of a sinner; that God might appear to be just, while he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus; and be just and faithful in forgiving sins, and cleansing from all unrighteousness; that the attributes of his justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness, might be glorified in the redemption of men, as well as the other perfections of his (Rom. 3:25, 26; 1 John 1:9; Ps. 85:10).

2. That the people of God might be reconciled unto him, and have peace with him, and joy through believing in Christ; for the price of redemption being paid for them, and satisfaction given, they are reconciled to God by the death of his Son; even to his justice, as they always stood in his love and favour; and peace being made by the blood of Christ on such a footing, they may joy in God through Christ, by whom they have received the atonement (Rom. 5:10, 11).

3. Another end of redemption by Christ is, that the redeemed might enjoy the blessing of adoption; for so it is said, that God sent his Son "to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons", (Gal. 4:4, 5) for though the saints are predestinated to the adoption of children in the purpose of God from everlasting; and this blessing is provided and secured in the covenant of grace; yet sin having thrown an obstruction in the way of the enjoyment of it in their own persons, consistent with the holiness and justice of God, this is removed by the redemption which is through Christ; so that they come to receive and enjoy this blessing of grace in themselves in virtue of their redemption by Christ, and through believing in him.

4. The sanctification of God's elect is another end of redemption by Christ; "who gave himself for them, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14), and again, Christ is said to love the church, and give himself for it, a ransom price for it, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it" (Eph. 5:25, 26) and the redeemed are said to be redeemed by his blood "from a vain conversation" (1 Pet. 1:18), for in consequence of redemption

by Christ, the Spirit of Christ comes as a Spirit of sanctification, and begins and carries on that work in the souls of God's people; and by applying the grace and benefit of redemption, lays them under the highest obligation to holiness of life and conversation; see Galatians 3:14.

5. In a word, the end of Christ's redeeming his people is, that they might be freed from all evil, from every enemy, and all that is hurtful, sin, Satan, the world, law, hell, and death; and that they might be put into the possession of every good thing. "Christ has redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them, that the blessing of Abraham", even all the blessings of the covenant of grace, in which Abraham was interested, "might come on them through Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:13, 14).

6. And lastly, The subordinate end of redemption is the everlasting salvation of God's elect, and their eternal life and happiness; and the ultimate end is the glory of God, of his grace and justice, and of all the perfections of his nature.