

In search of...

Truth & Right

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By Christ Redeemed

Comparing the relative quality of hymns can easily lead to friendly debate, but one aspect of quality that must be taken into account is historical endurance. Do the people of God sing the hymn? How long have they been singing it? And will they continue to sing it? Disciples of Christ have been singing George Rawson's *By Christ Redeemed* for more than 150 years, and for good reason. You would be hard pressed to find another hymn so tightly packed with Biblical past and promise. Every one of its 11 phrases breathes meaning into our continuing observances of the Lord's Supper.

By Christ redeemed. With just three words, we're immediately centered on the One "who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness" (Titus 2:14). Christians are redeemed—recovered from the power of another by the payment of

a price—by Christ "who gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim 2:6). *By Christ redeemed.* Each of those words is pregnant with meaning. Engage your heart before you open your mouth and be ready to sing them sincerely and reverently.

In Christ restored. "In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col 1:19-20). That which was fractured by sin has been restored in Christ.

We keep the supper of the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14). We are sharing in the supper of the One

who is, always has been, and will be forevermore.

And show the death of our dear Lord. "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death" (1 Cor 11:26). We continue to proclaim the death of our Lord because the truth of his assertion endures forever: "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

His body given in our stead. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'" (Gal 3:13). He died the death we deserved to die.

Is seen in this memorial bread. "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me'" (1 Cor 11:23-24).

And as we drink we see the blood. "In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me'" (1 Cor 11:25). Our eyes of faith are opened and we personally behold the terrible cost of our

sins.

And thus that dark betrayal night. Having identified the moment Satan "entered into" Judas, John ominously notes in John 13:30, "It was night." That dark betrayal night. The night Judas "procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees" and came to the garden "with lanterns and torches and weapons" to betray the sinless Son of God.

With the last advent we unite. My strong hunch is the final phrases of By Christ Redeemed are the easiest to gloss over. Not only is the hymn coming to its conclusion, but the lyrics are slightly challenging. And yet, this is why it's worth exploring hymns that are easily taken for granted or ignored. The imagery in these concluding phrases makes such a powerful point! Our English word advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming," "arrival" or "approach." Hebrews 9:28 promises that "Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." He appeared nearly 2,000 years ago, and he has promised to appear again.

By one bright chain of loving rite. A rite is a ceremonial act or prescribed

procedure. It was used by God to describe the Passover in Exodus 12:24—"You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever." For the Christian, the Lord's Supper isn't a dull, outdated or lifeless ritual. It's an inspiring, current, living opportunity to lovingly commune with each other and the One who gave himself for us. Christians have always been and will always continue to be committed to this communing, remembering and proclaiming until he comes (1 Cor 11:26).

I can't stress enough: don't miss the profound point of these closing phrases. Most every hymn sung in view of the Lord's Supper points our informed memories to the past. Very few "Lord's Supper hymns" focus our ransomed hearts to the future. Christians shine as "lights in the world" (Matt 5:14), and every first day of the week, another bright link in the chain of loving rite is added between the dark betrayal night and the last advent. Each observance of the Lord's Supper unites the darkest night from which hope sprung and the brightest morning in which eternity will be realized.

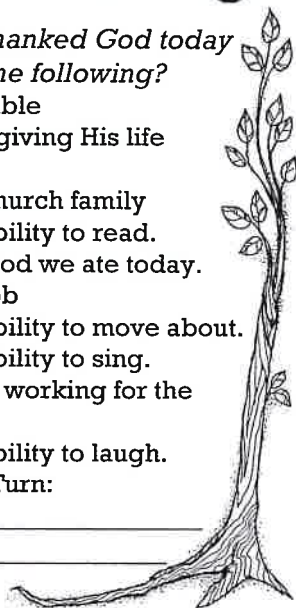
By Christ Redeemed may be more than 150 years old, but it encapsulates wonderful news that's worth singing about for another 150 years. Don't let old hymns fool you. There's a reason we're still singing them.

Jason Hardin

dear God,
thanks for this
beautiful life
and forgive me if
i dont love it
enough.

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us.
- Our church family
- The ability to read.
- The food we ate today.
- Our job
- The ability to move about.
- The ability to sing.
- Those working for the Lord.
- The ability to laugh.
- Your Turn:



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Christian Q&A

Katie Powell has been attending the Wellsburg church of Christ for the last four years as she has been furthering her education at Bethany College. This year is her senior year, and her major is Equine Business Management.

What is your favorite part of attending the Wellsburg church of Christ?

I love how open and welcoming all the members at Wellsburg are. I've felt like I was at home from the first day I came here.

When were you baptized?

Age 16

What is your favorite hymn that we sing?

"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

What is your favorite Bible verse? Why?

I Corinthians 16:24-"My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen." When I read this verse, it reminds me of my brothers and sisters in Christ, and the bond we have that we're always keeping each other in our thoughts and prayers.

What individual from the Bible do you most look up to? Why?

I most admire Queen Esther. She was placed in a position where it would be so easy for her to let go of her morals, but she stuck with what she knew was right and was able to influence an entire kingdom for good.



What is your favorite memory from the time you have attended the Wellsburg church of Christ?

All the times I've spent with brothers and sisters in Christ outside of assembly. The members here all spend so much time together and enjoy each other's company, and it's a welcome break from college to spend extra time with fellow Christians.

What do you want others to know about your religion?

I want to influence other people, especially those my age, to see how much better the Christian way of life is, and to realize how much heartache they can save themselves from by living a godly life.

