

“Universal Redemption” (1739)¹

[cf. Baker list, #14]

Editorial Introduction:

In late April 1739 John Wesley decided to publish his sermon *Free Grace*, which challenged the doctrines of limited atonement and unconditional election (points of contention between the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield). Appended to the sermon (pp. 31–35) was a 36-stanza poem affirming “Universal Redemption.” The authorship of this poem is unclear, with scholars leaning slightly toward assigning it to Charles Wesley. It was included the next year in *HSP* (1740), 136–42; but it was dropped after the first edition, perhaps because it continued to appear in subsequent editions of the sermon. John turned to the poem once more when initiating the *Arminian Magazine* as a journal to defend the universal offer of saving grace, reprinting “Universal Redemption” in the first volume (1778: 235–40).

Editions:

[Charles Wesley(?).] “Universal Redemption.” In John Wesley’s *Free Grace*, 31–35. Bristol: Farley, 1739.

London: Strahan, 1740.

3rd London: Strahan, 1741.

4th London: Foundery, 1754.

Bristol: Pine, 1765.

Included in JW’s *Works* (Bristol: Pine, 1773), vol. 20 [hymn on pp. 77–82].

London: Hawes, 1775.

London: New Chapel, 1791.

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Universal Redemption.

- [1] Hear, holy, holy, holy, Lord,
 Father of all mankind,
Spirit of love, eternal word,
 In mystic union joined.
- [2] Hear, and inspire my stammering tongue,
 Exalt my abject thought,
Speak from my mouth a sacred song,
 Who spak'st the world from nought.
- [3] Thy darling attribute I praise
 Which all alike may prove,
The glory of thy boundless grace,
 Thy universal love.
- [4] Mercy I sing, transporting sound,
 The joy of earth and heaven!
Mercy by every sinner found,
 Who takes what God hath given.
- [5] Mercy for all, thy hands have made,
 Immense, and unconfined,
Throughout thy every work displayed,
 Embracing all mankind.
- [6] Thine eye surveyed the fallen race
 When sunk, in sin they lay,
Their misery called for all thy grace,
 But justice stopped the way.
- [7] Mercy the fatal bar removed,
 Thy only Son it gave,—
To save a world so dearly loved,
 A sinful world to save.

- [8] For every man he tasted death,
He suffered once for all,
He calls as many souls as breathe,
And all *may*² hear the call.
- [9] A power to choose, a will to obey,
Freely his grace *restores*;
We all *may* find the living way,
And call the Saviour ours.
- [10] Whom his eternal mind *foreknew*,
That they the power would use,
Ascribe to God the glory due,
And not his grace refuse;
- [11] Them, only them, his will *decreed*,
Them did he *choose* alone,
Ordained in Jesu's steps to tread,
And to be like his Son.
- [12] Them, the elect, consenting few,
Who yield to proffered love,
Justified here he *forms anew*,
And *glorifies* above.
- [13] For as in Adam all have died,
So all in Christ may live,
May (for the world is justified)
His righteousness *receive*.
- [14] Whoe'er to God for pardon fly,
In Christ may be forgiven,
He speaks to all, "Why *will* ye die,
And not accept my heaven!"
- [15] No! In the death of him that dies,
(God by his life hath sworn)
He is not pleased; but ever cries,
Turn, O ye sinners, turn.
- [16] He would that all his truths should own,
His gospel all embrace,

²The italics here and in following verses are missing in 1739 original, but found in all later appearances.

Be justified by faith alone,
And freely saved by grace.

[17] And shall I, Lord, confine thy love,
As not to others free?
And may not every sinner prove,
The grace that found out *me*?

[18] Doubtless through one eternal now
Thou ever art the same,
The universal Saviour thou,
And Jesus is thy name.

[19] Ho! Every one that thirsteth come!
Choose life; obey the word;
Open your hearts to make him room,
And banquet with your Lord.

[20] When God invites, shall man repel?
Shall man th' exception make?
"Come, freely come, WHOEVER WILL,
And living water take!"

[21] Thou bidd'st; and would'st thou bid us choose,
When purposed not to save?
Command us all a power to use,
Thy mercy never gave?

[22] Thou canst not mock the sons of men,
Invite us to draw nigh,
Offer thy grace to all, and then,
Thy grace to most deny!

[23] Horror to think that God is hate!
Fury in God can dwell,
God could an helpless world create,
To thrust them into hell!

[24] Doom them an endless death to die,
From which they could not flee,
No Lord! Thine inmost bowels cry,
Against the dire decree!

- [25] Believe who will that human pain,
Pleasing to God can prove:
Let Molock feast him with the slain,
Our God, we know, is love.
- [26] Lord, if indeed, without a bound,
Infinite love thou art,
The HORRIBLE DECREE confound,
Enlarge thy people's heart!
- [27] Ah! Who is as thy servants blind,
So to misjudge their God!
Scatter the darkness of their mind,
And shed thy love abroad.
- [28] Give them conceptions worthy thee,
Give them in Jesu's face,
Thy merciful design to see,
Thy all-redeeming grace.
- [29] Stir up thy strength, and help us, Lord,
The preachers multiply,
Send forth thy light, and give the word,
And let the shadows fly.
- [30] Oh! If thy Spirit send forth me,
The meanest of the throng,
I'll sing thy grace divinely free,
And teach mankind the song.
- [31] Grace will I sing, through Jesu's name,
On all mankind bestowed;
The everlasting truth proclaim,
And seal that truth with blood.
- [32] Come then, thou all-embracing love,
Our frozen bosom warm;
Dilating fire within us move,
With truth and meekness arm.
- [33] Let us triumphantly ride on,
And more than conquerors prove,

With meekness bear th' opposers down,³
And bind with cords of love.

[34] Shine in our hearts Father of light,
Jesu thy beams impart,
Spirit of truth our minds unite,
And make⁴ us one in heart.

[35] Then, only then our eyes shall see
Thy promised kingdom come;
And every heart by grace set free,
Shall make the Saviour room.

[36] Thee every tongue shall then confess,
And every knee shall bow,
Come quickly, Lord, we wait thy grace,
We long to meet thee now.

³Line changed to "Mightily bear th' opposers down" in 1765 edn. and following.

⁴"Make" changed to "keep" in 2nd edn. (1740) and following.