

of this glorious scheme, and of contributing by our exertions or substance to swell the ranks of the redeemed. No. Let the votaries of mammon do so, if they will. But let all those who love the Lord and know the value of immortal souls, endeavour to forward the extension of the Messiah's kingdom, as far as their opportunities and abilities extend.

III. And we learn from the text, *the high honor and dignity conferred upon the redeemed*:—They “stood before the throne and before the Lamb.” Where heaven is situated, we are not informed. Probably it is in the middle of the great universe, in some immense central globe, round which all the other central bodies with their respective systems revolve, as so many different parts of the one grand whole. At any rate, wherever heaven is, there is God, and there also is His throne. And wherever He is, there also is the great living centre of attraction to all holy intelligences, and the eternal source whence all power and wisdom and light and life and goodness radiate to the most distant worlds. And surely believers never can forget that wherever God is, there also, in the midst of the throne, is the great Redeemer who as our atoning sacrifice is figuratively styled “the Lamb”—“the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” It is the great sacrifice of himself which he offered, that opened up the gates of mercy to mankind; and it is the saving and ever-streaming efficacy of his blood that wafts such countless myriads to the heavenly shores. And because he is both their God and Saviour, to all his ransomed people he is and ever must be an object of adoring wonder and of grateful homage and regard. And the nearer they are admitted to him, the greater must be their honor and felicity. And had Scripture been silent on the subject, where would you have expected these once polluted outcasts to be placed upon their arrival in the kingdom of their Father? Even presumption itself could scarcely dare to hope for higher advancement for them than to occupy the lowest mansions which stand upon the outskirts of the eternal world. But the grace that saves, also honors. For we learn from the text that the redeemed, instead of holding an inferior place in the Celestial city, have the highest station of dignity bestowed upon them. “They stand before the throne,” and in the 11th verse, the angels are represented as “standing round about the throne,” and enclosing the ransomed company within their capacious circle. “This honor have all his saints.” The very seraphs of the angelic host give honorable precedence to them by tendering them the nearest place to the king of Heaven; and gradually extend their ever widening circle to let the redeemed people in. And if, as the Saviour tells us, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God

over one sinner that repenteth,,” with what thrilling emotions will they raise their song and sweep their harps when God brings all his children home!

And Christians, say not with doubting hearts all this honor is too much for us. The question is not—is it too much for you to receive? but is it too much for God to bestow? The question is not—are you worthy of it? but was Christ worthy to purchase it for you? If the redeemed had got their deserts, not one of them would ever have entered the heavenly mansions. Talk not, therefore, of limiting God's grace to your deservings. If the merits of Christ can bring you to Heaven, can they not also secure for you Heavens most exalted honors? There is neither injustice nor impropriety in the Almighty's conferring higher rank on saints than on the angels who never sinned; for what are both the one and the other but what Divine goodness has been pleased to make them. It is right that God should bestow the greatest dignity upon the redeemed, for the more he honors them, the more he honors his Son who bought them; and the more he honors him, the more he honors himself and his sovereign grace which planned and executed the scheme of redemption. And how could you have believed that Christ would have shed his precious blood to purchase anything less than the highest glory to himself and the most exalted favours to his people. And who should have a better title to enjoy the most eminent honours which the King of kings bestows, and stand nearest to the throne, than the redeemed of mankind, whose Saviour God and eldest brother sits in the midst of it. Verily “eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” And believers let this be your comfort in the house of your pilgrimage. Let it support and cheer your souls amidst all the troubles and trials of the present state, and encourage you to hold on in the way of life till you join the General Assembly and Church of the first born in heaven, and obtain a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

IV. And we also learn from the text, *the glorious appearance of the redeemed before the throne*—“clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” The “white robes” mark that spotless innocence and purity of character to which they have attained through the atoning and cleansing efficacy of the Saviour's blood. And by the triumphal “palms which they hold in their hands” are designed that glorious victory which, under the guidance of the great Captain of their salvation, they have obtained over Satan and all their spiritual enemies. Once they were sinful, guilty and sunk in moral defilement, but the blood of