

## ***THE JOY OF THE ANGELS***

### ***Revelation 5:9.***

*—Thou—hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*

The redemption spoken of, is suited to the various cases of sinners, of every nation, people and language. And many sinners of diverse descriptions, and from distant situations, scattered abroad into all lands, through a long succession of ages, will, by the efficacy of this redemption, be gathered together into one John 11:52. They will constitute one family, united in one great Head Ephesians 3:14-15. When they shall fully attain the end of their hope, and encircle the throne, day without night, rejoicing, their remembrance of what they once were, their sense of the happiness they are raised to, and of the great consideration, to which they owe their deliverance, and their exaltation, will excite a perpetual joyful acknowledgement to this purport. They were once lost, but could contribute nothing to their own recovery, therefore they ascribe all the glory to their Saviour. They strike their golden harps and sing, in strains, loud as from numbers without number, sweet as from blest voices, Thou art worthy—for though wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

The angels watched in sorrow when sin broke in heaven and Christ was crucified on Calvary. And now for the ransomed of the earth they can't hide their joy and join in adoration. But though this song, and this joy, will only be consummated in heaven, the commencement takes place upon earth. Believers, during their present state of warfare, are taught to sing it; in feebler strains indeed, but the subject of their joy, and the object of their praise, are the same which inspire the harps and songs in the world of light. May I not say, that this life is the time of their rehearsal? They are now learning their song, and advancing in meetness to join in the chorus on high, which, as death successively removes them, is continually increasing by the accession of fresh voices. All that they knew, or desire to know, all that they possess or hope for, is included in this ascription.

I take the last clause of the verse into the subject. The words suggest three principle points, to our consideration. Points that will include in the song

- 1) The benefit of Redemption, to God.*
- 2) The redemption price, by the blood.*
- 3) The extent of the benefit, to a people out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation.*

### ***The benefit of Redemption, to God and man***

Thou hast redeemed us to God. Redemption or ransom, is applicable to a state of imprisonment for debt, and to a state of bondage or slavery. From these ideas taken together, we may form some estimate of the misery of our fallen state; a theme,

which, if I cannot insist upon at large in every discourse, I would never, wholly, omit. For we can neither understand the grace, nor enjoy the comfort of the gospel, but in proportion as we have a heart-felt and abiding conviction of our wretched condition, as sinners, without it. They who think themselves whole, know not their need of a physician Matthew 9:12, but to the sick he is welcome.

If a man, shut up in prison for a heavy debt, which he is utterly incapable of discharging, should obtain his liberty, in consideration of payment made for him, by another, he might be properly said, to be redeemed from imprisonment. This supposition will apply to our subject. The law and justice of God have demands upon us, which we cannot answer. We are therefore shut up, under the law, in unbelief, helpless and hopeless, till we know and can plead the engagement of a surety for us. For a time, like Peter, we are sleeping in our prison Acts 12:6-10, regardless of danger. The first sensible effect of the grace of God, is to awaken us from this insensibility. Then, we begin to feel the horrors of our dungeon, and the strength of our chains, and to tremble under the apprehension of an impending doom. But grace proceeds to reveal the Saviour and friend of sinners, and to encourage our application to him. In a good hour the chains fall off, the bars of iron and brass are broken asunder, and the prison-doors fly open. The prisoner understands, that all his great debt is forgiven, blesses his Deliverer, obtains his liberty, and departs in peace.

We are likewise in bondage. The servants, the slaves, of a harder task-master, than Pharaoh was to Israel. Satan, though not by right, yet by a righteous permission, tyrannizes over us, till Jesus makes us free John 8:34,36. The way of transgressors is hard Proverbs 13:15. Though the solicitations and commands, of that enemy who worketh in the children of disobedience Ephesians 2:2, are, in some respects, suited to our depraved inclinations, yet the consequences are grievous. A burdened conscience, a wasted constitution, a ruined fortune and character, swiftly and closely, follow the habits of intemperance and lewdness. And they who seem to walk in a smoother path, are deceived, mortified and disappointed daily. If persons, who live, openly and habitually, in a course, that is contrary to the rule of God's word, speak swelling words of vanity 2Peter 2:18-19, and boast of their liberty, believe them not. We are sure they carry that in their bosom, which, hourly, contradicts their assertions. Yea, sometimes their slavery is so galling, that they attempt to escape, but in vain. They are soon retaken, and their bonds made stronger. The issue of their short lived reformations, which they defer as long as possible, and at last set about with reluctance, usually is, that their latter end proves worse than their beginning. At most, they only exchange one sinful habit for another, sensuality for avarice, or prodigality for pride. The strong one armed will maintain his dominion, till the stronger than he interposes and says, Loose him, and let him go, for I have found a ransom. Then by virtue of the redemption price, the prey is taken from the mighty, and the captive is delivered Isaiah 49:24-25. Then, the enslaved sinner, like the man out of whom the legion was cast, sits at the feet of Jesus, in peace, and in his right mind Mark 5:15. He becomes the Lord's freed-man.

For he is not only delivered from guilt and thrall, he is redeemed to God. He is now restored to his original state, as an obedient and dependent creature, devoted to his Creator, conformed to his will and image, and admitted to communion with him in love. These are blessings which alone can satisfy the soul, and, without which, it is impossible for man to be happy. While he is ignorant of his proper good, and seeks it in creatures, he is, and must be, wretched. Madness is in his heart, a deceived, disordered imagination turns him aside, and he feeds upon ashes, and upon the wind Isaiah 44:20. But by grace he is renewed to a sound judgment, his mind receives a right direction, and he is turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God Acts 26:18.

### *The redemption price, by the blood*

What unspeakably, and beyond conception, enhances the value of this deliverance, is, the consideration of the means by which it is effected. For it is not merely a deliverance, but a redemption. It is not an act of mere mercy, but of mercy harmonizing with justice. It is not an act of power only, but of unexampled, and expensive love. Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood!

The sentence, denounced by the law against transgressors, was death. And therefore when Messiah became our surety, to satisfy the law for us, he must die. The expression of his blood, is often used figuratively for his death, perhaps, to remind us how he died. His was a bloody death. When he was in his agony, in Gethsemane, his sweat was as great drops of blood, falling down to the ground Luke 22:44. His blood flowed when he gave his back to the smiters, under the painful strokes of the scourging he endured, previous to his crucifixion. It flowed from his head, when the soldiers having mocked his character of King, by crowning him with thorns, by their rude blows forced the thorns into his temples. His blood streamed from the wounds made by the spikes, which pierced his hands and his feet, when they fastened him to the cross. When he hung upon the cross, his body was full of wounds, and covered with blood. And, after his death, another large wound was made in his side, from which issued blood and water. Such was the redemption price he paid for sinners, his blood, the blood of his heart. Without shedding of blood there could be no remission. Nor could any blood answer the great design, but his. Not any, not all the bloody sacrifices appointed by the law of Moses, could take away sin, as it respects the conscience, nor afford a plea, with which a sinner could venture to come before the high God Micah 6:6. But the blood of Messiah, in whom were united, the perfections of the divine nature and the real properties of humanity, and, which, the apostle therefore styles the blood of God Acts 20:28, this precious blood cleanses from all sin. It is exhibited, as a propitiation of perpetual efficacy, by which God declares his righteousness, no less than his mercy, in forgiving iniquities Ro 3:25-26, and shews himself just to the demands of his holiness, and the honour of his government, when he accepts and justifies the sinner who believes in Jesus.

If these things were understood and attended to, would it be thought wonderful, that this Saviour is very precious to those who believe in him, and who obtain redemption by his blood? How can it possibly be otherwise? Grace, like this, when known, must captivate and fix the heart! Not only to save, but to die, and to die for his enemies! Such costly love, productive of such glorious consequences, and to such unworthy creatures! Surely the apostle's mind was filled and fired with these considerations, when authenticating an epistle with his own hand, he subjoined this emphatical close, If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha 1Corinthians 16:22! Do you think, my brethren, that the apostle took pleasure in denouncing so severe a sentence, against all those who did not see (as we say) with his eyes? Had he so little affection for sinners, that he could thus consign them to destruction by multitudes, for differing from him, in what some persons only deem an opinion? Rather, consider him, not as breathing out his own wishes, but as speaking in the name, and on the behalf of God. He knew it must be, and he declared it would be so. It was no pleasure to him, to see them determined to perish. On the contrary, he had great grief and sorrow of heart for them, even for the Jews, who had treated him with the greatest cruelty. Even for their sakes, he could have been content to be made an Anathema himself Romans 9:3, that they might be saved. But upon the whole, he acquiesced in the will of God, and acknowledged it to be just, right and equal, that if any man would not love the Lord Jesus Christ, after all that he had done and suffered for sinners, he should be accursed. By this comparison of the apostle's severe language, with his compassionate temper, I am led to digress a little farther. It suggests an apology for ministers of the gospel in general. When we declare the terrors of the Lord, when we assure you that there is but one solid foundation for hope, and that, unless you love the Lord Jesus Christ, you must perish; some of our hearers account us bigoted, uncharitable and bitter. But if you could see what passes in secret, how faithful ministers mourn over those who reject their message, how their disobedience cuts them to the heart, and abates the comfort they would otherwise find in your service; if you could believe us when we say (I trust truly) that we are ready to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but our own souls also, because you are dear to us 1Thessalonians 2:8, and we long for your salvation, then, you would think more favourably of us. But after all, we cannot, we dare not, soften our message to please men. What we find in the word of God, we must declare. It would be at the peril of our souls, to speak smooth things, to prophesy deceits Isaiah 30:10 to you; and, so far as we preach the truth, it will be at the peril of your souls, if we are disregarded.

***The extent of the benefit, to a people out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation***

The benefits of this redemption extend to a numerous people, who are said to be redeemed out of every kindred, tongue and nation. The redeemed of the Lord, are those who actually experience the power of his redemption, who are delivered from the dominion of sin and Satan, and brought into a state of liberty, peace, and holiness. That the people of every kindred, nation and tongue are not redeemed, in

this sense, universally, is as certain, as evidence of facts, and express declarations of scripture, can make it. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Multitudes, thus disqualified, will be found trembling, on the left hand of the Judge, at the great day. But, a remnant will be saved, according to the election of grace. For they who differ, who are redeemed to the service of God, while others live and die in the love and service of sin, do not make themselves to differ 1Corinthians 4:7. It becomes the potsherd of the earth, to ascribe to their Maker, the glory of his sovereignty, and to acknowledge that if they have a good hope, it is, because it pleased the Lord to make them his people who once were not his people Hosea 2:23. Yet, a way of conceiving of the doctrines of the divine sovereignty, and of a personal election unto life, has often obtained, which seems to have a tendency to render the mind narrow, selfish and partial, and to straighten the exercise of that philanthropy, which the genius and spirit of the gospel, powerfully inculcate.

The best of us, perhaps, are more prone than we are aware of, to assimilate the great God to ourselves, and to frame our ideas of him, too much according to our own image. So that, often, much of a man's natural disposition, may be observed in the views he forms of the divine perfections and conduct; as on the other hand, his conceptions of the character of God, strengthen and confirm him in his own tempers and habits. There are persons, who being persuaded in their minds (we would hope upon sure grounds) that they, themselves, are of the elect, appear to be little concerned what may become of others.

The Revelations vouchsafed to the beloved disciple in Patmos exhibit a succession of great events, extending from the apostles days, to the end of time. But while only the learned can so much as attempt to ascertain, from history, the dates and facts, to which the prophecies already fulfilled refer; or to offer probable conjectures concerning the events, as yet, future; (in which the most judicious commentators are far from being agreed) there are passages, interspersed, which seem designed to administer consolation to plain believers, by representations suited to raise their thoughts, to the state of the church triumphant. Though they are unable to explain the particulars of what they read, there is a glory resulting from the whole, which animates their hope and awakens their joy. Of this kind I think is that vision Revelation 7:9, in which, the apostle saw the servants of God, who were sealed in their foreheads, in number a hundred and forty-four thousand; and besides these, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, &c. I confess myself unable to expound this sublime passage, and to give the full, or even the principal, sense of it, with certainty. But that it has some reference to what is now passing, within the veil, which, hides the unseen world from our view, I cannot doubt. I propose my thoughts upon it with caution and dissidence. I dare not speak with that certainty, which I feel myself warranted to use, when I set before you, from scripture, the great truths which are essential to a life of faith in the Son of God. Yet, I hope to advance nothing

that is contrary to scripture, or, to any deductions fairly and justly, drawn from it. what I can say with certainty to a sinner seeking victory and becoming a saint before probation closes is that, in the whole mist of beasts and kingdoms jostling for power in the Revelation, it's a mystery that can be confirmed that the lamb wins against the dragon, the sea beast and other fearful creatures mentioned and the saints too win by the blood of the lamb; this, reader, should cause you to leap in joyous victory.

Having premised this acknowledgment of my incompetence to decide positively, I venture to say, that by the hundred and forty-four thousand sealed in their foreheads (a definite for an indefinite number, which is frequent in scripture language) I understand, those, who, living to mature age and where the gospel is afforded, are enabled to make a public and visible profession of religion, and are marked, as it were, in their foreheads, and known to whom they belong, by their open and habitual separation, from the spirit and customs, of the world which lieth in wickedness. And the exceeding great multitude, contradistinguished from these, I conceive to be those, who are, elsewhere, styled the Lord's hidden ones; and that these, are a great multitude indeed, gathered by him, who knows them that are his, out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples and tongues. I may distribute them into the following classes.

### *Infants*

I think it, at least, highly probable, that when our Lord says, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven Matthew 19:14, he does not only intimate the necessity of our becoming like little children, in simplicity, as a qualification without which (as he expressly declares in other places) we cannot enter into the kingdom, but informs us of a fact; that the number of infants, who are effectually redeemed to God by his blood, so greatly exceeds the aggregate of adult believers, that comparatively speaking, his kingdom may be said to consist of little children. The apostle speaks of them as not having sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression Romans 5:14, that is, with the consent of their understanding and will. And when he says, We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, he adds, that every man may give an account of what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad 2Corinthians 5:10. But children who die in their infancy have not done any thing in the body, either good or bad. It is true, they are by nature inherent of evil tendencies, and must, if saved, be the subjects of a supernatural change. And though we cannot conceive how this change is to be wrought, yet, I suppose, few are so rash as to imagine it impossible that any infants can be saved. The same power that produces this change in some, can produce it in all. Should I be asked to draw the line, to assign the age, at which, children begin to be accountable for actual sin, it would give me no pain to confess my ignorance. The Lord knoweth.

### *People in un-enlightened Lands*

A people hidden among the most degenerate communities, civil or ecclesiastical, that bear the name of Christian; where ignorance and superstition, or errors, which, though more refined, are no less contrary to the gospel, have a prevailing dominion and influence. What can be more deplorable, in the view of an enlightened and benevolent mind, than the general state of the Roman and Greek churches! Where the traditions, inventions and doctrines of men, a train of pompous and burdensome ceremonies, a dependence upon masses, penance and pilgrimages, upon legends and fictitious saints, form the principal features of the public religion. Many nations are involved in this gross darkness, but they are not wholly destitute of the scripture; some portions of it, are interwoven with their authorized forms of worship; and we cannot, with reason, doubt, but a succession of individuals, among them, have been acquainted with the life and power of true godliness, notwithstanding, the disadvantages and prejudices of their education. There are likewise, amongst protestants, schemes of doctrine, supported by learning, and by numbers, which are not more conformable to the standard of the New Testament, than the grossest errors of popery; and yet, here and there, persons may be met with, who, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, enabling them to understand the scriptures, are made wiser than their teachers; and who, though still fettered by some mistakes and prejudices, give evidence in the main, that their hopes are fixed upon the only atonement, that they are redeemed to God, and are partakers of that faith which worketh by love, purifies the heart, and overcometh the world.

### *The Heathens*

I will go one step farther. The inferences that have been made, by some persons, from the apostle Peter's words, That God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him Acts 10:34-35, are, undoubtedly, rash and unscriptural. They would conclude from thence, that it is of little importance what people believe, provided they are sincere in their way. That the idolatrous heathens, even the most savage of them, whose devotion is cruelty, who pollute their worship with human blood, and live in the practice of vices disgraceful to humanity, are in a very safe state, because they act, as it is supposed, according to their light. But if the light which is in them be darkness, how great is that darkness! Such a lax candor as this tends to make the gospel unnecessary; if they who have it not, are, therefore, excusable, though they neither love nor fear God, and live in open violation of the law of their nature. The declaration, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord Hebrews 12:4, holds universally, and without a single exception. But if we suppose a heathen, destitute of the means of grace by which conversion is usually wrought, to be brought to a sense of his misery, of the emptiness and vanity of worldly things, to a conviction that he cannot be happy without the favour of the great Lord of the world, to a feeling of guilt, and a desire of mercy; and that though he has no explicit knowledge of a Saviour, he directs the cry of his heart to the unknown Supreme!

Who will prove, that such views and desires can arise in the heart of a sinner, without the energy of that Spirit, which, Jesus is exalted to bestow? Who will take upon him to say, that his blood has not sufficient efficacy, to redeem to God, a sinner who is thus disposed, though he has never heard of his name? Or who has a warrant to affirm, that the supposition I have made is, in the nature of things, impossible to be realized? But I stop—I do not often amuse you with conjecture. And though, for want of express warrant from scripture, I dare not give the sentiments I have no offered, a stronger name, than, probable or conjectural, I hope I do not propose them for your amusement. They will prove to your advantage and my own, if they are helpful to guard us against a narrow, harsh, and dogmatical spirit; and if, without abating our reverent submission to the revealed will of God, they have a tendency to confirm our views of his goodness, and the power and compassions of the great Redeemer.

### *THE CHORUS OF ANGELS.*

#### *Revelation 5:12.*

*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!*

It was a good report which the queen of Sheba heard, in her own land, of the wisdom and glory of Solomon. It lessened her attachment to home, and prompted her to undertake a long journey, to visit this great King, of whom she had heard so much. She went, and she was not disappointed. Great as the expectations were which she had formed from the relation made her by others, they fell short of what she saw and heard herself, when she was admitted into his presence. Good, likewise, is the report of the gospel. It has a powerful effect upon those who receive it by faith. It is abundantly sufficient to convince them, of the comparative insignificance, of all that they most admired and esteemed in this world. From that hour, they become strangers and pilgrims upon earth. They set out, in the way which God has prescribed, in hopes of seeing him who is greater than Solomon; and the report they have heard of him, is their subject, their song, and their joy, while they are on their journey, and their great support, under the difficulties they meet with on the road. What then will it be to see him as he is? As yet, the one half is not told them. Or, at least, they are not yet capable of conceiving the half, or the thousandth part, of what they read in the scripture, concerning his wisdom, his glory, and his grace. We weaken, rather than enlarge, the sense of such a passage as this, by our feeble comments. We must die, before we can understand it. To the bulk of mankind, Wait the great teacher, death; is cold, is dangerous advice. If they are not taught by the gospel, while they live, the teaching of death will be too late. Dreadful will be the condition of those, who cannot be convinced of their mistakes, till repentance and amendment will be impracticable. But death will be a great teacher, indeed, to a believer; he will then know more by a glance, and in a moment, of the

happiness he is now expecting, than by all he could collect, from the enquiry and experience of a long course of years, in this world.

The scenery of this chapter, if attentively considered, is sufficient, to snatch our thoughts from the little concerns of time, and to give us some anticipation of the employments and enjoyments of heaven. Come, all ye that are wearied, and burdened with afflictions and temptations, look up, and for a while, at least, forget your sorrows! The Lamb is upon his throne, surrounded by a multitude of his redeemed people, who, once were afflicted and burdened like yourselves; but now all tears are wiped from their eyes. They have a song, peculiarly their own, and are represented, as taking the first and leading part in worship and praise. The angels cannot sing their song, they are not redeemed to God by his blood; but they are interested in the subject. Their highest views, of the manifold wisdom of God, are derived from the wonders of redemption. Therefore they join in the chorus, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. If you have a humble hope, of bearing a part, in this immortal song, will you hang down your heads like a bulrush, because you have the honour of following your Lord, through many tribulations, to his kingdom? The number of the angels is expressed, indefinitely, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; myriads and millions; to intimate to us, that with respect to our capacities and conceptions, they are innumerable. Their number is known to him, who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names Psalms 147:4; and to him only. The scripture intimates a diversity of ranks and orders among them, Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; but as to particulars, there is little said, that might gratify our curiosity. It is enough for us, to know that the highest of them, and that all of them, worship him who is clothed in our nature. My text expressly informs us, that the object of their worship is the Lamb that was slain. Not that the humanity of Christ, which is but a creature, is, simply and formally, the object of their worship. But they worship him who has assumed the human nature into personal union with himself; God manifested in the flesh, God in Christ. Though the world censure or despise us for honouring the Son as we honour the Father John 5:23, we have here a good precedent, as we have, in many places of scripture, the warrant of an express command. Whether men are pleased or not, we will, we must, worship the Lamb that was slain. To animate our devotion, let us thankfully consider. Why he was slain, and How he was slain.

### *Why he was slain*

The redeemed say, For us. He loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood Revelation 1:5. They were sinners and enemies. They were slaves to sin and Satan, yet he loved them, and died to redeem them, It is by virtue of his blood and death, that they are now before the throne. Nothing less than his death, could have made them duly sensible of their misery, nothing less, could have relieved them from it. He was lifted up upon the cross, that by the powerful magnetism of his dying love, he might, in the hour of his grace, draw their hearts too himself John 12:32. This was the design, this was the effect of his sufferings. A crucified Saviour, though a

stumbling-block to the self-righteous, and foolishness to vain reasoners, was, to them, the power and the wisdom of God for salvation. They looked unto him, and were enlightened, they trusted in him and were not ashamed. By faith in his name, they obtained peace with God, they renounced they ways of sin, they warred the good warfare, they overcame the world, and were, at length, made more than conquerors. For his sake, they endured the cross, and despised the shame. They met with bad treatment from the world, but it was from the world that crucified him. While they were here, their characters were obscured, by their own imperfections, and by the misrepresentations and reproaches of their enemies. But now their reproach is removed, and they shine, each one like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father Matthew 13:43. What an immense constellation of suns! This their full salvation was the joy set before him, for the sake of which, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And now they see him as he is, they ascribe all their victories and honours to him, and unite in one song of endless praise, to the Lamb that was slain.

### *How he was slain*

Their praises are heightened, when they consider, How he was slain. He did not die a natural death. He was slain. Nor did he fall, like a hero, by an honourable wound in the field of battle. He conquered for us, but it cost him his life. But he died honourably and was lamented by his country. Not so, the Lamb of God. He died the death of a slave, of a malefactor. Cruelty, malice, and contempt, combined to give his sufferings every possible aggravation. And after he was slain, very few laid it to heart. The world went on as it did before, as though nothing extraordinary had happened. But on this dark ground, the perfections of God were displayed in the fullest lustre. And they are the perfections of the great Redeemer, and therefore distinctly ascribed to him by the angels, in the words which follow—Power and wisdom, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Though each of these words have a distinct sense, a nicety in defining them, and stating their precise meaning, is of less importance, than to feel the combined efficacy of them all, to impress our hearts with sentiments of reverence, confidence, and love. The fullness of expression may teach us, that every kind of excellence, is the indubitable right and possession of the Lamb that was slain. He is worthy to have them all attributed to him, in the most absolute sense, and consequently worthy of our adoration, dependence, and praise.

1) *Power.* It is spoken of once, yea twice we have heard the same, that power belongeth unto God Psalms 62:11. It belongeth to him eminently and exclusively. All the power of creatures is derived from him. Such is the power of the Lamb. He styles himself the Omnipotent, the Upholder and Possessor of all things. Revelation 1:8, 11 He exerciseth this power in the human nature Matthew 28:18. He doeth what he pleaseth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth Daniel 4:35; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? He has, therefore, all-sufficiency, and

*uncontrollable authority, for the discharge of his office, as the Mediator and Head of his church. The divine perfections, being infinite, are not distinct in themselves, though the scripture, in condescension to our weakness, authorizes us to speak of them, as distinguishable. God is one. And the Power which can preserve and govern the world, involves in the idea of it, every other excellence, which are separately mentioned in this passage.*

2) **Wisdom.** *His knowledge is perfect, his plan is perfect. himself being essentially the wisdom of God Proverbs 8:22, and he is our wisdom 1Corinthians 1:30. It is life eternal to know the only true God John 17:3, and, therefore, it is life eternal to know Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. For he is the only way, and the only door to this knowledge; no one can come unto God, or attain to any just conception of him, but in and by the Son of his love, who so perfectly represents God to us, is so completely the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, that whose hath seen him, hath seen the Father John 14:9. By him is opened to us, the unsearchable wisdom of the divine counsels, particularly, in the great work of redemption. No one hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him John 1:18. Is it by wisdom communicated from him, that his people are made wise unto salvation. Though there are few scholars and philosophers among them, and many of them are despised for their ignorance and weakness, yet in truth, they have all a good understanding, for they know the Lord and his will; they know wherein their proper happiness consists, and how it is to be obtained. They are instructed, how to walk and to please God, how to bear afflictions with patience, and to meet death with composure. This wisdom is far superior to that of the schools. But He bestows and maintains it. The eyes of their mind are opened, and they see by his light, but they have no light of their own, or in themselves. They wait upon him for direction in every difficulty, for the solution of every hard question which perplexes their spirits; and he makes the crooked strait, teaches them to avoid the snares that are laid for them, or extricates them when entangled. Therefore in time, and to eternity, they will admire and adore his wisdom.*

3) **Riches.** *All the stores of mercy, grace, and comfort, are in him, as light in the sun, or water in the ocean. The apostle speaking of the unsearchable riches of Christ Ephesians 3:8, gives us the idea of a mine, the height, length, depth, and breadth of which cannot be investigated, nor the immense wealth it contains exhausted. Of this fullness the poor are invited to receive freely, and multitudes from age to age have been enriched, and the treasure is still undiminished. None are sent away empty. And when all have been supplied, it will be full as at first.*

4) **Strength.** *That energy and efficacy of his power, by which he accomplishes his holy purposes. Who can conceive of this? How just is the Psalmist's reasoning, He that formed the eye shall not he see? He that planted the ear,*

*shall not he hear Psalms 96:9? So we may say, How strong is he, from whom, all created strength is derived, and before whom the strength of all creatures, if collected into one effort, would be as chaff before the whirlwind? The Lord of all power and might speaks, and it is done; he commandeth, and it standeth fast. Though the waves of the stormy sea toss themselves, they cannot prevail Psalms 93:3-4; he checks them in the height of their rage, setting bounds to their violence which they cannot pass, saying, Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud billows be strayed Job 38:10-11. With equal sovereignty, certainty, and ease, he rules over moral agents. He formed the heart of man, and he can fill it with terror or with comfort, in a moment, in any assignable circumstances. He can make it happy in a dungeon Acts 16:25, or impress it with dismay and despair upon a throne Daniel 5:5-6. All hearts are, thus incessantly, under his influence. And the hedge of his promise and protection, surrounds those who trust in him, as with mountains and walls of brass and fire, impenetrable to the assaults of the powers of darkness, unless so far as he, for wise and holy ends, is pleased to give permission. With the arm of his strength he upholdeth them that are falling, and raiseth up them that are bowed down Psalms 145:14, and, is, in one and the same instant, a present and immediate help in trouble, to all who call upon him Psalms 46:4. Therefore they that abide under his shadow are safe; they pass, unhurt, through floods and flames, because their Redeemer is strong. And when, in defiance of all their enemies, he has brought them together in his heavenly kingdom, they will, with one consent, ascribe unto the Lord, glory and strength.*

**5) Honour.** *He is the fountain of it. All the honour of his creatures, and of his people, is from him; as the sun beautifies and gilds the objects he shines upon, which, without him, are opaque and obscure. Because his people are precious in his sight they are honourable. He clothes them with the garments of salvation, covers them with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, as a bride adorneth herself with jewels Isaiah 61:10. But who can speak of his own inherent honour, as God-man and Mediator! We must wait till we see him, without a cloud or veil, receiving the homage and adoration of angels and men. For, as yet, the one half cannot be told us! Then, however, it will be universally known, that he who possesses the fullness of wisdom and power, riches, and strength, is worthy to receive all honour. Ah! how different will he then appear, from that humble form he once assumed, when, for our sakes, he was a man of sorrows, despised, rejected, and nailed to the ignominious cross!*

**6) Glory.** *The manifestation of God, that, by which, he is known and magnified, in the view of finite intelligences; the result, the combined effulgence of his holiness, grace, wisdom, truth, and love: this is his glory, and this glory is revealed and displayed in Christ. He is glorious in his works of creation and providence, but these do not fully exhibit his character. But in the Lamb upon*

*the throne, his glory shines, full-orbed. And all in heaven, and all in earth, who behold it, take up the song of Moses and the Lamb Exodus 15:11, Who is like unto thee, O Lord? Who is like unto thee? Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders! Great and marvelous are thy words, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, Thou King of saints Revelation 15:3!*

7) **Blessing.** *He is the author of all blessings, of all the happiness and good which his people receive, and he is the deserved object of their universal praise. The different senses, in which we use the word, blessing, taken together, may express that intercourse or communion, which is between the Head and the mystical members of his body. He blesses them effectually, with the light of his countenance, with liberty, grace, and peace. He blesses them daily. His mercies are renewed to them every morning. He will bless them eternally. Blessed are the people who have this Lord for their God. They can make him no suitable returns, yet, in their way, they bless him. They admire, adore, and praise him. They call upon all the powers of their souls to bless him. They proclaim his goodness, and that he is worthy to receive the ascription of power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing. In proportion to their attainments in this delightful exercise of worship, love, and gratitude, they enjoy a heaven upon earth; and to stand before him continually to behold his glory, to live under the unclouded beams of his favour, and to be able to bless and praise him as they ought, without weariness, abatement, interruption, or end, is what they mean, when they speak of the heaven they hope for hereafter. Such is the blessedness of those who have already died in the Lord. They see his face, they drink of the rivers of pleasure, which are at his right hand, they cast down their crowns before him, and say, Thou art worthy—Let us not be slothful Hebrews 6:12, but followers of them, who through faith and patience, have finished their course, and are entered into the joy of their Lord.*

Of all this glory and honour, the scripture declares the Lamb that was slain to be worthy. Wisdom, riches, and strength, are his. His power is infinite, his authority supreme. He is the author and giver of all good. He has life in himself, and he is the life of all that live. The Lord and head of the church, and of the universe. Can language express, or can heart conceive, a higher ascription and acknowledgement than this? Can all this be due to a creature, to one of a derived and dependant character? Then, surely the scripture would have a direct tendency to promote idolatry. Far be the thought from us! The scripture teaches us the knowledge of the true God, and the worship due to him. Therefore, MESSIAH, the Lamb that was slain, is the true God, the proper and immediate object of the worship of angels, and of men.

Let us, therefore, take up a lamentation for those, who flight the glorious Redeemer, and refuse him the honour due to his name. Their mistake should excite, not our anger or scorn, but our pity and prayers. Are there any such amongst us?

**THE UNIVERSAL CHORUS.*****Revelation 5:13.***

*{And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying,} Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.*

Men, have generally agreed, to dignify their presumptuous and arrogant disquisitions on the works and ways of God, with the name of wisdom; though the principles upon which they proceed, and the conclusions which they draw from them, are, for the most part, evident proofs of their depravity and folly. Instead of admiring the effects of his wisdom and power in the creation, they have rashly endeavoured to investigate the manner of its production. A variety of hypotheses have been invented, to account for the formation of the world, and to state the laws by which the frame of nature is governed; and these different and inconsistent accounts, have been defended, with a magisterial tone of certainty, and an air of demonstration, by their respective authors, as though they had been by-standers and spectators, when God spoke all things into being, and produced order out of confusion, by the word of his power. They have, however, been much more successful in shewing the absurdity of the schemes proposed by others, than in reconciling their own, to the sober dictates of plain, common sense.

But, if by indulging their speculations on the creation of the world, the causes of the deluge, and similar subjects, their employment has been no better than weaving spiders webs; the result of their reasoning on morals, has been much worse. Here they have, with much industry, hatched cockatrice eggs Isaiah 59:5; and their labours have been not only fallacious, but mischievous. Their metaphysical researches, while they refuse the guidance of revelation, if pursued to their just consequences, will always lead into the labyrinths of scepticism, weaken the sense of moral obligation, rob the mind of the most powerful motives of right conduct, and of the only consolations, which, can afford it solid support, in an hour of trouble. One insuperable difficulty which they will undertake to solve, though it does not properly lie in their way, is concerning the origin of evil. That evil is in the world, is felt and confessed universally. The gospel points out an effectual method of deliverance from it; but, alas, the simple and infallible remedy is neglected, and men weary themselves with vain enquiries.

The more they reason, the more they involve themselves in uncertainty and error, till at last they make lies their refuge, and adopt, with implicit credulity, as so many undoubted axioms, opinions, which are equally dishonourable to God, and contradictory to truth and experience 2Thessalonians 2:11. Thus much is certain, that by the occasion of evil, the character of God is manifested, with superior glory, to the view of angels and men, who are in a state of holiness and allegiance, and an

higher accent is thereby given to their praises. For now his justice and his mercy, which could not have been otherwise known, are revealed in the strongest light; and the redemption of sinners, affords the brightest display of his wisdom and love.

The redeemed are represented as taking the first part in this sublime song, verse 8-10. The angels join in the chorus, verse 11-12, which now becomes universal. All the angels, all the saints redeemed, with one heart, aim and voice, unite in worship and praise. In the proceeding verse, Blessing, and honour, and glory and power, are ascribed unto the Lamb; but here, the ascription is unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!

The Lord Jesus is not only the head of the church redeemed from among men, but of the whole intelligent creation, that is in willing subjection to God. It belonged to his great design to gather together in one Ephesians 1:10, (to reduce under one head, as the Greek expression is) even in himself, all things that are in heaven, and upon earth. He is the Lord and the life both of angels, and of men. Mutability and dependance are essential to the state of creatures, however exalted; and the angels in glory owe, their preservation and confirmation, in holiness and happiness, to him. Hence they are styled the elect angels 1Timothy 5:21, in distinction from those who left their first habitation, and sunk into sin and misery. Angels, therefore, constitute a branch of that great family, which is named of him, in heaven and earth. And having made peace by the blood of his cross, he has effected a reconciliation, not only between God and sinners, but also between angels and men. How, those inhabitants of light, are disposed to sinful men, considered as sinful, we may learn from many passages of scripture. They are devoted to God, filled with zeal for his honour, and wait but for his command to execute vengeance upon his enemies.

When Herod, infatuated by his pride, and by the flattery of the multitude, received their idolatrous compliment with complacence, an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory Acts 12:23. The pestilence which destroyed the people, towards the end of David's reign, was under the direction of an angel 2Samuel 24:16-17, and David saw him with his arm stretched out against Jerusalem. And in this prophecy, angles are spoken of, as employed in pouring forth the vials of wrath upon the earth. And still they are ready, we may believe, to avenge their Maker's cause upon the wicked, when they are commissioned. And if the history of modern times was written by an inspired pen, and events, as in the scriptures, were assigned to their proper causes, perhaps, the death of many a haughty worm would be recorded in words to this effect, And an angle of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory. But, viewing sinners as the subjects of redemption, the angels copy from their Lord. They regard them with benevolence, and rejoice over every one that repenteth Hebrews 1:14. They willingly attend on them, and assist them, in ways beyond our conception. They esteem believers in Jesus as their fellow-servants Revelation 22:9. We have reason to think, that they are present in our worshipping assemblies; and, perhaps, always so present, that they could discover themselves to us in a moment, were it consistent with the rules

of the divine government, established in this lower world, suited to the state of those who are to walk by faith, not by sight. Thus far, however differing in other respects, the angels and the redeemed, are united and related in one common head, and have fellowship in worship and service. When sinners are enabled, by grace, to renounce this world, they are admitted, to an honourable alliance, with a better.

From hence, we may form some judgment of the true nature and high honour of that spiritual worship, which is the privilege and glory of the church of God, under the gospel dispensation. When we meet in the name of Jesus, as his people, and with a due observance of his institutions, we come to the innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first born Hebrews 12:22-23, the first born ones, (for the expression is plural.) We draw nigh, by faith, to the very gate of heaven, to the holiest of all. Men, unacquainted with spirituality, are soon weary even of the form of worship, unless their minds are amused by a splendid ceremonial. The first rise, and subsequent increase, of that pomp and pageantry, which, in some countries, has quite obscured the simplicity and beauty of gospel worship, is to be ascribed to this indisposition of the human mind. Our thoughts, while we are in a natural state, are too weak and wavering, and too gross, to be pleased with a worship, in which, there is nothing suited to affect the imagination by sensible objects. And, therefore, when men think themselves wise, and profess to despise the pageantry which captivates the vulgar, their wisdom affords them no real advantage, if they have nothing better to substitute, in the room of what they reject as insignificant. The very appearance of devotion will languish, they will grow remiss, and neglect the Sabbath and public assemblies, for want of something to keep up their attention. We have abundant proof of this, in our land, and at this time.

Protestants pride themselves in not being papists, but when the protestant religion is understood to mean no more, than a renunciation of the superstitious ceremonies of the church of Rome, it is, with respect to individuals, little, if at all, better than popery itself. Among us enlightened protestants, no expedient but preaching the gospel of Christ, will be found sufficient to retain people in a stated observance of the Sunday. But true believers, who understand and love the gospel, do indeed draw nigh to God; and they account a day in his courts better than a thousand Psalms 84:10, because they can take a part in the songs of heaven, and, in spirit and in truth, worship him that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb who redeemed them to God by his blood. They know by happy experience, that his promise, to be in the midst of those who assemble in his name, is truth. Their worship is not a mere bodily service, a lifeless form, a round of observances, which neither warm the heart, nor influence the conduct; but they are instructed, comforted and strengthened, by waiting upon God. Their spiritual senses are exercised; they behold his glory in the glass of the gospel, they hear his voice, they feel an impression of his power and presence, they taste his goodness, and the virtue of that name which is as ointment poured forth, perfumes their tempers and conversation.

Though the Lamb is worthy of all blessing, and honour, and glory, and power; there is a distinct ascription of praise, to him that sitteth upon the throne. The scripture, which alone can teach us to form right conceptions of God, and to worship him acceptably, guides us in a medium, between opposite errors and mistakes. Too many persons, ignorant of their own state as sinners, and of the awful majesty and holiness of the Most High, presume to think of him, to speak of him, and, in their way, to speak to him, without being aware of the necessity of a Mediator. But they who are without Christ, who is the only door and way to the Father, are without God, atheists in the world Ephesians 2:12. There is a mistake likewise on the other hand, when, though the Deity of the Saviour be acknowledged, yet, what we are taught of the ineffable distinction in the Godhead, is not duly attended to. It is written, In the beginning,–the Word was God Joh 1:1. It is likewise written, The Word was with God. This latter expression undoubtedly has a meaning, which, though perfectly consistent, is not coincident, with the former. The truth contained in it, is proposed, not to our curiosity, as a subject of speculation, but to our faith. I do not attempt to explain it. But, what God expressly declares, we are bound, upon the principles of right reason, to believe. For he is Truth, and cannot deceive us. The gospel is designed for the poor. But the poor and unlearned, would be at a great disadvantage, if the scripture could not be rightly understood, without the assistance of such learning, and such criticism, as we often see pressed into the service. But the Holy Spirit graciously leads those who pray for his teaching, into such views of this high subject, as are sufficient to comfort their hearts, and to animate their obedience. The faith of those who are taught of God, is exercised in their approaches to him, under two different modification. Both are scriptural, and therefore both are save, and witnessed to by his gracious acceptance and blessing. The word was with God means the word is divine and what the gospel offers is that personality of divinity to overcome sin. Christ says the words I speak unto you are spirit and life. This is the power of the word and mystery of redemption.

They who come to God by Christ have access through him to the Father Ephesians 2:18. Unworthy to speak for themselves, they bow their knees in his name Philipians 2:10. Christians are sufficiently distinguished and described by saying, They come to God by him Hebrews 7:25. They come to God, they cannot live without him in the world, as they once did. They are now conscious of wants and desires, which only God can satisfy. But they are conscious likewise that they are sinners, and therefore they durst not approach him, if they had not the invitation of his promise, and an assurance of an Advocate with the Father 1John 2:1.

They come to God, in Christ. He is the great Temple, in whom the All-fullness dwells Colossians 1:19; 2:9; and they are not afraid of idolatry, when they worship and honour the Son, even as the Father. This distinct application to God, in the person of the Son of his love, perhaps, becomes more frequent and familiar, as they advance in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour 2Peter 3:18. They, who seek to him for deliverance from sin and misery, at first, I believe, chiefly consider him, as the Advocate and High Priest, who, by the virtue of his atonement, and the prevalence of

his intercession, is able to save to the uttermost. But when the apostle distributes Christians, according to their growth in grace, into the state of babes, young men, and fathers 1John 2:14, he speaks of a more distinct, and appropriate knowledge of him, who is from the beginning, as the peculiar privilege, and distinguishing attainment of the fathers. He speaks of him that is from the beginning, so often, that we can be at no loss to determine whom he intends by the expression. He applies it to him who was in the beginning with God John 1:1, and whom he and the other apostles had heard, had seen with their eyes, and touched with their hands 1John 1:3.

The mediatorial kingdom of Christ, will have a period. He will reign as Mediator, till he has subdued all enemies under his feet, and perfected his whole work. Then his kingdom, in this sense, will cease. He will deliver it up to the Father, that God may be all in all 1Corinthians 15:28. Then the grand, ultimate, final cause of all the manifestations of God, will be completely obtained. The glory of the great Creator and Lawgiver, the splendor of all his perfections will for ever shine, without a veil or cloud, and with a brightness which could not have been known by creatures, had not the entrance of evil, given occasion for a display of his wisdom and love, in overruling it to the praise of his glorious grace. At the consummation of everything, God shall not veil himself anymore and so he shall be all in all unlike now he is restricted to manifestations through the son and angels and faint visions and dreams because he dwells in light unapproachable.

I would humbly hope, that some persons, who were strangers to the power and grace of MESSIAH, are now desirous of seeking him with their whole hearts. The gospel is the rod of his strength Psalms 110:2, which when accompanied by the power of his Spirit, produces greater effects than the wonder-working rod of Moses. It causes the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the dead to live. A faithful minister, will account a single instance of success, a rich recompense for the labour of a life. May this joy be mine! May the Lord encourage you to go on seeking him. Then he will surely be found of you. An open door is set before you Revelation 3:8, and if you are truly willing to enter, none shall be able to shut it.

As the saved of all ages and angels will join in the ruptures song of victory, triumph and adoration to God and the His Son, I pray that no one who have come across this paper may be missing.

**Blessings.**