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ARTICLE I.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

Among all the absurdities that prevail among those who receive the Scriptures as a Divine revelation, none perhaps, is more astonishing than that which disrobes our Saviour of his Divinity. Christ is not the Supreme God, but a creature only, is the opinion of an Arius, a Socinus, a Priestly, and a Belsham, and their numerous disciples, in direct opposition to what we deem the explicit teachings of both the Testaments, which they professedly believe and revere. It is really strange, in our judgment, that candid and intelligent men, after even a cursory examination of the Scriptures, should ever arrive at such a conclusion. There is no better evidence of the extraordinary subtlety of Satan, in his work of deception and ruin, than the effort he makes, and the success with which that effort is attended, to divert serious minds from the obvious import of Divine revelation, and occupy them with a creed that has its origin in a grievous perversion of truths of infinite moment. If he cannot utterly destroy the word of God, nor arrest its circulation, he will destroy its influence, by adulterating, or else by torturing it. This remark is made with all due respect toward those whose views we are about to combat. We should all be humble enough to acknowledge that we are possibly holding with tenacity, errors which are to be attributed to Satan's power over us.

There are two facts with which our minds should be deeply impressed. The wonderful constitution of our Saviour's person, which, as we believe, combines the Divine and

ARTICLE VII.

AMBITION REBUKED,

*Or Self-abasement and Self-denial the necessary conditions of Greatness in Christ's Kingdom.**

This was the third time, within the space of a few months, that the Saviour found it necessary to reprove the ambition of his disciples. Journeying in Galilee, "they had by the way disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest." As they were sitting in the house, after they had reached Capernaum, the Master asked them "what was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" and when ashamed to tell, "they held their peace;" he endeavoured to eradicate the evil feeling which had prompted their discussion, by showing them the nature of preëminence in his kingdom,— "if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all." This was not the preëminence that could excite or gratify the feeling of ambition. Then, to illustrate the spirit which they ought to cultivate, "he called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven."

Some months after this occurrence, as they were on their way to Jerusalem, when the two sons of Zebedee had, through their mother, asked for the chief places in his kingdom, and the rest had been moved to indignation at this attempt to gain what they conceived to be an advantage over them, Jesus called them unto him and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles ex-

* A Sermon, preached at the opening of the General Assembly in Buffalo, May 18th, 1854, from Luke xxii: 26: "But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth rule." Written out from short notes, for the Review, by request. Various accidental causes have combined to delay its transmission hitherto.—[Eps. S. P. R.]

exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be the servant of all." On this occasion he taught them still more clearly and fully, that preëminence in his kingdom could be won only by foregoing all the advantages which rank and power are supposed to confer on their possessors in the kingdoms of this world,—and that the greatest in that kingdom was to be he of whom was to be required the most absolute and unqualified resignation of all that made distinction and authority the objects of men's desires. This view of their duty, and of the principle on which it rested, he enforced and illustrated by an appeal to his own example,—“for even the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

And now, even on the very night before his crucifixion, we find this same spirit of ambition again kindling a flame in the hearts of his disciples, and our Saviour again directing his efforts to extinguish it. As they sat down to the last meal which they were to take with him on earth, something seems to have occurred which gave rise to the question of superiority. The order in which they attempted to take their places may have occasioned, at that particular time, this unbecoming strife for rank and precedency. After the various admonitions previously administered to them in consequence of their discussion of this subject,—one of them, too, so recently,—it seems scarcely credible that their jealousy and rivalry could have broken forth in words upon this solemn occasion, and it seems most probable that they had only indulged in *feelings* which they had not dared to utter. Be this as it may—whether this spirit was unuttered or expressed, the Saviour had marked its re-appearance; and earnestly desiring to repress it, as one destructive alike to the personal happiness of his followers and to the interests of his kingdom, he repeated his former instructions with some variety of form, and then proceeded to enforce them, not merely as before, by an appeal to his general course of life as furnishing a model

for their conduct, but by performing before their eyes a most striking and significant act of humble and self-denying service to each one of them, and proposing this act as an example for their imitation. By reference to the Gospel of John, we learn that he "rose from the supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." "After he had washed their feet and taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."*

The evils engendered by this spirit are such as to make its extirpation from the hearts of his followers an object that was well worthy of these varied instructions, admonitions, and warnings of the Divine Redeemer. Called by different names, according to the diversity of aspects which it presents,—ambition, love of power, anxiety for distinction, desire for supremacy,—it has ever been found exerting its baleful influence in the church from the days of Diotrophes down to the present hour, originating or nurturing all the strifes that have discredited, the schisms that have rent, and the heresies that have corrupted her. And do we need proof, brethren and fathers, that this unhallowed desire for preëminence, this contentious spirit of rivalry, has naturally, a deep lodgment in all our hearts, and demands our strenuous efforts for its expulsion? Look at these disciples of Jesus! For three years, they had daily witnessed the meek and lowly conduct of their Divine Master,—they had attended constantly on those discourses, full of grace and truth,

* Compare Matt. xx: 25-28, and xviii: 1-9; Mark ix: 33, and x: 42-45. Luke ix: 46-48; John xiii: 17.

which had shown them the nature of true greatness and true glory, and had disclosed to their view high and holy, and eternal objects suited to draw their affections from the low and sordid aims of earthly ambition,—they had listened again and again to his direct and earnest admonitions, to his affectionate and repeated warnings against the indulgence of this evil disposition. Yet, all these opportunities and advantages had not availed to extirpate this evil feeling from their hearts. Even the genuine love and deep respect felt by them for their Master, the awe inspired by his presence, the solemnity of the scene, the dim apprehensions and undefined forebodings of some strange and trying events that were about to occur,—all these failed *even to repress* this feeling. *There, at the last supper*, it swelled in their bosoms,—and among the last instructions imparted by the Saviour were those that were designed to aid them in their future struggles against this unhappy passion. If it so tenaciously retained its seat in the hearts of these beloved and favoured disciples, how much reason have we to fear lest it may, even though unrecognized by our consciousness, exercise its evil influence over us! To minds of a certain description, and especially when they belong to a class of men circumstanced as we are, this is a more dangerous sin than any of the more violent and outbreking fleshly lusts,—it is a hidden and often unnoticed fire within us, secretly and unremittingly consuming our spirituality, while they are the tornadoes that sweeping only occasionally and openly over the soul, alarm us by their visible ravages, and make us aware of our peril. It is a subtle sin, usually disguising itself under the semblance of a virtuous desire for the means of extended usefulness. It is not one of those low, degrading, mean, and despicable vices, that destroy the respect of our fellow-men and then give us warning of our danger of perdition. It never consigns its subjects to contempt and scorn, but even by those who condemn it, it is often palliated and excused as “the last infirmity of noble minds,”—while by many, it is honoured and commanded as “the spur to noble deeds.”

Usually, the most effectual mode of resisting evil is to flee from temptation. But we cannot thus escape

danger here,—for we cannot strip ourselves of power, nor even forbear to use and increase it. Our very position as office-bearers in Christ's kingdom implies the possession of some degree of authority and distinction. The office of an elder or bishop, from its very nature, confers power on the holder of it; and the faithful discharge of its duties increases this power, yet, "he that desireth the office of a bishop desireth a good work." Standing then, in our places, and with temptations continually increasing upon us, we must struggle with this evil propensity of our nature, using those means with which God has furnished us for overcoming it, relying on his promised strength for our success. Prominent among these means stands this injunction of our Divine Master, delivered to his disciples in such varied forms, under such peculiar circumstances, and with such striking illustrations. Its habitual and prayerful contemplation could not fail to exert a happy influence over every mind that has been, to any extent, renewed in the image of God. To a single, but important view of the nature of this injunction, we desire at present, to direct your attention.

Every precept may be regarded as the embodiment of a principle—and, as in every system are found two sets of principles, the one essential and the other incidental, so there are found corresponding precepts. The absolute indispensableness and obligation of a precept can then be ascertained only by examining the principle which it exhibits. Now, it will be found, on examination, that the principle embodied in this injunction of our Lord, is not one of those isolated and independent principles which might be changed without effecting any radical change in the nature of our blessed and holy religion, but is derivative and dependent, naturally originating from other ulterior and broader principles which lie at the very foundation of this religion,—that it *is not the result of any mere positive appointment, or special and separate act of legislation on the part of our Divine Redeemer, but is the necessary consequence of certain great elementary principles, or fundamental laws, which constitute the very basis of this kingdom, and impart to it its peculiar character as a spiritual kingdom.* If it

can be seen to be true, that the principle of this injunction is the necessary outgrowth of other principles, which we all recognize as the vital elements of the religion of Jesus,—that it is the bud and the flower naturally produced by these principles, we shall see more clearly and feel more deeply the necessity of conforming our hearts and lives to such an injunction.

The injunction is, "*He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.*" The principle is, that *exaltation in Christ's kingdom is incompatible with the spirit of ambition, or (to present the idea in another form,) that self-abasement and self-denial are the necessary conditions of greatness in Christ's kingdom.*

I. The first great principle or law of the Redeemer's kingdom, of which the principle of this injunction is a necessary result is, that *the very object of this kingdom makes it impossible that greatness can be achieved in it, save by the possession of those qualities which, as far as they are possessed, render a man incapable of ambition.* Greatness is not absolute but relative—and what makes any person great in one sphere may disqualify him for greatness in another. Those very qualities which placed Achilles and Ajax foremost among the warriors who battled around the walls of Troy, would have effectually hindered them from rising to eminence, had they been placed among the sages who taught wisdom and self-control in the groves of the Athenian Academy. Greatness in the kingdom of our Redeemer is the result of that combination of faculties and dispositions, which best fit their possessor for promoting the object for which this kingdom was established, viz: "destroying the works of the devil." Any one can become great here, then; only in proportion to his qualifications as an instrument in the hands of God, to win souls to Christ, and thus "destroying the works of the devil," inducing them to abandon their sins and labor to remove the evil effects which flow from them. From the spiritual nature of the work it is manifest that no amount of mere intellectual powers would qualify any man for its successful prosecution. It would be as unnecessary as it would be tedious, to enumerate all even of the moral qualities that are needed

for eminent success in this work. It is sufficient for our present purpose to point out a few which are *indispensable*, and which are utterly inconsistent with the spirit of ambition, the Diotrephian love of preëminence.

1. As first among these qualities we may mention *thorough devotedness to the cause of Christ*—that principle which enabled Paul to utter the sublime declaration, “for me to live is Christ,”—that principle, the absence of which from the hearts of many of his associates the Apostle so deeply deplored, and the presence of which in his beloved son Timothy, induced him to send *him* to the Phillippians with the assurance that his mission would prove a blessing to them. “For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” It needs no argument to prove that this quality is essential to any high degree of success in fulfilling the object of our Saviour in the establishment of his kingdom, or that it is utterly at variance with that spirit which seeketh great things for itself.

2. Another quality essential to all successful efforts for destroying the works of the devil is, a *deep sense of our unworthiness of the honour to which God has called us*,—that habitual feeling which found utterance in the striking contrast drawn by the apostle between his own desert and the glory of the work which God had assigned to him, when he exclaimed, “unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,”—that feeling which again broke forth in his humble confession that he was “the chief of sinners.” This feeling is the genuine result of habitual and correct views of the holy character of God and our own sinfulness,—of the obligations which his kindness has laid upon us, and our inexcusable and shameful violation of these obligations,—of his wondrous mercy and our utter want of all claim to that mercy. This feeling of unworthiness and these views from which it springs are indispensable qualifications for the work to which God has appointed his servants,—and they are utterly destructive of all those feelings which would lead us to self-aggrandizement and self exaltation.

3. Another quality, without which, we must fail in the work of combatting against the principalities and powers of darkness is, *a thorough conviction of our dependence on God for success*,—that conviction which was expressed by the apostles of the Gentiles, when he disclaimed for himself and his fellow-labourers, all the glory awarded to them by the Corinthian disciples. “I have planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he planted anything, neither he that watered, but God that giveth the increase.” Need I produce elaborate proofs that such a feeling of dependence on God is necessary to success, when we hear the Saviour saying to his disciples, “without me ye can do nothing,”—when we hear the great apostle telling his experience, “when I am weak then am I strong,”—when we hear the Most High declaring that he will not “give his glory to another,” and that he will blow upon all schemes conceived and executed in reliance upon human power. And how is such a feeling compatible with the spirit of ambition? Seeking to magnify ourselves by performances which owe their whole success to God’s power working through us as mere instruments, appears as incongruous as it would be for the “axe to boast itself against him that heweth therewith, or the saw to magnify itself against him that shaketh it, or the rod to shake itself against him that lifteth it up, or the staff to lift up itself as if it were not wood.” The full and distinct recognition of this dependence on God for all that we achieve by our spiritual labours, as effectually prevents a man from undertaking such labours with a view to his own exaltation, as it inevitably leads him, after they have been crowned with a blessing, to exclaim from the depths of a grateful heart, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy great name be all the glory.”

4. The last quality to which I shall allude as requisite for attaining greatness in God’s kingdom is *benevolence*,—that feeling which makes the good of others, not our own gain or glory, the object of our aims and efforts,—that feeling which embodied itself in language, when the apostle, oppressed with a sense of the interminable and intolerable woes that his brethren were bringing on

themselves by their unbelief, exclaimed, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." The victories of a spiritual kingdom are achieved not by force, but by persuasion, for its dominion is to be extended, not over the bodies, but the hearts of men. This kingdom originated in that "love of Christ which passeth all understanding,"—it was established by the display of that love before the eyes of men,—and it increases in extent just as rapidly and as far as sinners can be led to comprehend and believe in that love. And how can one who does not strongly sympathize with the pervading spirit and spiritual principle of this kingdom, labour successfully in its extension? He who would win souls to Christ must be one who willingly spends and is spent in their service,—for thus alone can he gain a salutary influence over them, thus alone can he present before them a living image of the blessed Jesus, and thus alone can he lead them to form some conception of that perfect love of Christ, which constrains men to yield their hearts to his gracious sway. And can there be aught more incompatible with the spirit of self-seeking ambition than this "love which seeketh not its own?"

Were additional evidence needed to show that qualities utterly inconsistent with an ambitious spirit are indispensable to the attainment of eminence in the Redeemer's kingdom, this evidence might be drawn from the fact that those who have ever been recognized as greatest in that kingdom have all possessed such qualities in an eminent degree. We might direct your attention, also, to the fact, that so universal is the recognition of the necessity of these qualities, as to force those who, while conscious of their lack of them, still aim at greatness in this kingdom, to assume the appearance of them and pretend to their possession. It is only when the kingdom of the Redeemer has become, in a measure, converted into a kingdom of this world,—when, by the establishment in it of a hierarchy, and by welding it with the civil power, its nature has been changed, and it has been made to resemble the incongruous image of gold and brass, and iron, and clay, it is then only that men

aim at greatness in this kingdom, without at least, affecting or pretending to humility, dependence, devotedness to God and love to man. The indispensableness of these qualities might be further proved, conclusively, from the fact that their possession is made a condition of the enjoyment of the kingdom of Heaven. If the Saviour has promised the blessings of his kingdom specially to the meek, the mourners, the poor in spirit, the merciful, the peace-makers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness, the conclusion is irresistible that *exaltation* in that kingdom will be *proportioned to the degree* in which these qualities are possessed.

A last and most convincing proof of the need of these qualities to the attainment of greatness in the Redeemer's kingdom is furnished by the fact, that through their possession the glorious Head of this kingdom obtained his own mediatorial exaltation.

II. Another great principle or law of the Redeemer's kingdom, of which the principle of this injunction is a necessary result, is, that *those prerogatives which worldly greatness is supposed to confer on its possessors, and which render such greatness an object of desire, can never, from the very nature of their work, be enjoyed by those who are great in this spiritual kingdom.*

Let us consider, for a moment, what constitutes the fascinations of power, the charms of rank and elevation,—what are the objects which ambition aims at securing, the prizes which draw men into the struggle for eminence and authority.

1. *Exemption from control* is one of the objects longed for, when men desire power or high position. We naturally chafe under a sense of responsibility. It is vexations and humiliating to feel that we are compelled to render an account of our actions to others, and to recognise that they may punish us unless those actions accord with their pleasure. These shackles upon their freedom to follow their own impulses and inclinations, men feel galled in wearing, and they long for a condition in which they may throw them off. Command, authority, or elevation above others, places them, as they imagine, in such a situation, and hence it becomes an object of eager desire.

2. *There is a pleasure in the very exercise of power, and even in its conscious possession,* which leads men to seek it. Whence this feeling springs we need not enquire. All are aware of the fact, that there is a satisfaction in the conscious control that we exert even over the elements of nature around us, over inanimate matter when we mould and fashion it at our pleasure,—and much stronger is this satisfaction when we are conscious of controlling the acts and feelings of our fellow-men. So strong is this feeling in the minds of some that there have lived not a few who have been so satisfied with its enjoyment as to have been willing to forego for it all the other advantages of power. Provided they were permitted to bend the wills of others to their own, to shape their acts, and influence their destinies, they were willing to relinquish to others all the external honours and emoluments derived from place and reputation. They have been contented to labour unseen and unnoticed, and unhonoured, letting others have the *credit* of their labours, provided they could enjoy the *consciousness of control*, and silently witness the effects which they were producing.

III. *Power is desirable because it enables us to use others as the instruments for securing the satisfaction of our varied wants, and for enlarging indefinitely, the sphere of our gratifications.* From the earliest dawn of reflection we are conscious of our need of the instrumentality of others, in satisfying our craving desires and furnishing us with the means of a pleasurable existence. The control of others thus becomes an object of paramount desire, as including in it an indefinite amount of resources for the most varied enjoyments. In proportion to the number of those whom a man can command, and the extent to which he can make them minister to him, he feels that he can indulge his appetites, gratify his tastes, and give free scope to his passions. These are the objects which greatness is supposed to secure, and which men covet when they seek it. But, *in the Saviour's kingdom, the greater any one becomes, the less of these objects he can expect to secure.* This arises from the very nature of his work.

1. *It is a work, in undertaking which, a man re-*

nounces self-control, and assumes fearful responsibility; for he is "a steward of God," and "in stewards it is required that a man be found faithful." His position is one in which we are told he must "labour to be accepted of God,"—one in which "he must watch for souls as one who must give an account." None perhaps, has stood higher in the church of God than the great apostle of the gentiles, and no man ever felt more deeply a sense of control and responsibility. Every one who is spiritually enlightened sees that an enlargement of his powers and an elevation of his position, increases the amount of his responsibility to God, and his need of direction and support from him, and in the sincerity of his soul, looking at the account he has to render, he exclaims "who is sufficient for these things?" When that eminent servant of God, John Knox, was called by the united voices of his brethren in the castle of St. Andrews, to assume the office of a preacher of the gospel, he shrank from the work overwhelmed by a sense of its fearful responsibility. He whose dauntless spirit never quailed in view of the perils which ever beset the path of his eventful life,—he, over whose grave was pronounced by the Regent of Scotland, the memorable eulogy, "There lies one who never feared the face of man,"—he, this lion-hearted man, burst into tears and fled from the assembly which wished him to undertake this high and holy vocation.

2. It is a work which necessitates the subordination of his own will to the will of others. So far from enjoying the pleasurable consciousness of power, he who is chief in Christ's kingdom, feels more deeply than any other, the consciousness of absolute dependance on God, and so far from feeling that his will is the law which controls others, he feels that he is a soldier under the orders of a commander, a servant subject to the authority of a master, an apostle that must obey the directions of Him that sent him. And while he is employed to rule others, it is on the condition that he is to "become all things to all men,"—that he is "not to please himself," but "to bear the infirmities of the weak."

3. It is a work which *consists in performing labours, enduring hardships, and making sacrifices for others.*

When the apostle is vindicating his title to eminence and authority in the kingdom of Christ, he does it by presenting a picture of self-denials and sufferings in the service of his fellow-men, the sight of which is sufficient to chill the fever of worldly ambition.—2 Cor. xi: 23-29. The apostle asserted his claim to power, by showing, not the extent to which he made others minister to his gratifications, but the extent to which *he* ministered to *them*.

If any other proof were needed than that which is furnished by the nature of the service, that greatness in Christ's kingdom is only attainable by the renunciation of all those objects which lead the minds of men ordinarily to covet power and distinction, it would be found in the example of Him who is greatest in that kingdom, its Divine Founder. His whole life was a continuous renunciation of all those objects. He sought no exemption from control and responsibility,—“I have a work to do, and how greatly am I straitened till it be accomplished,—“He came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him.” He sought not the enjoyment of power, but denied himself its exercise even for delivering himself from agony. When he could have put away the cup of wrath, he declined to do it, exclaiming, “Father, not my will, but thine be done.” With twelve legions of angels ready to do his bidding, he suffered himself to be seized by an insignificant band of servants and soldiers who came against him, as if a thief or a robber, with swords and staves. He suffered the menials of the High Priest to smite him with the palms of their hands, to spit upon him, and to jeer him, when he could by a word, have shut forever the blaspheming mouths that taunted him, and paralysed the impious hands that struck him. He sought not to make others minister to his gratifications, but he ministered to all who would receive his services, even to the giving of his life a ransom for them.

Some important deductions may be drawn from the view which has been presented of the grounds of our Saviour's injunction.

1. We may deduce from it a *striking and independent proof of the truth of our holy religion*,—for it exhibits this religion as containing in its essential princi-

ples an *unlooked* for, yet *effective* provision for relieving us from many of the evils of life. We are formed with such a constitution and placed in such circumstances, as to be all mutually dependent on each other for the larger amount of happiness or misery, of which each of us is partaker. How wonderfully adapted then, to the nature of man, as a scheme for remedying the evils of his lot, and conveying to him blessings, is a kingdom organized on such principles as to give the highest honours and greatest rewards to *him who excels in doing good*,—thus substituting in the heart of man for the selfish principle of ambition, which crushes the happiness of millions in its remorseless struggles after place and power, that self-denying benevolence which consecrates its energies to the mitigation of human woe and the increase of human enjoyment? What a change in the condition of man would be wrought by the universal diffusion of these principles? If the princes of the earth, who now “exercise dominion” over their subjects, and the great ones who now “exercise authority upon them,” were brought to feel the power of these principles and act upon them, how rapidly would disappear those political and social evils under which the nations have groaned for centuries,—against which they have partially and vainly struggled, and from which they can be delivered only by the power of Him who can change the hearts of men, and who, at the cry of his saints, “How long, O Lord, how long,” has promised to come out of his place and shake the earth. Nor would rulers be less of gainers than their subjects, by seeking greatness according to the principles of the gospel. A deceived heart turns them aside from the only true path that leads to glory and happiness. The objects for which they struggle elude their grasp, and as the fruit of their toils and cares in the pursuit of eminence and power, they reap only vexation, disappointment, and the empty appearance of good.

What infinite heart-ease must kings neglect
That private men enjoy! And what have kings
That privates have not too, save ceremony!—
Save genial ceremony!

2. From this view we may deduce *one of the strong-*

est motives that can urge us to subdue our natural love of preëminence. If it is true, that this spirit is incompatible with the existence of at least, a portion of those qualities which are needed to make a man truly and spiritually great,—if it is true, that to be faithful and successful in the service of Christ requires the renunciation of all that men desire when they labor for preëminence, then its indulgence is as worldly an indulgence and as subversive of all the principles of godliness, as indulgence in sensuality, and we should pray and strive against the one as earnestly and watchfully as we do against the other. Napoleon was not a sensualist. Julian the apostate, was not a sensualist. It was the desire of authority and distinction that ruined their souls, and made their influence productive of evils to mankind, greater than those inflicted by the most degraded voluptuaries that ever filled the throne of the Cæsars. How despicable is the man who enters the ministry of reconciliation to obtain a piece of bread, or who discharges the duties of his sacred office to secure or enlarge his income. But, is he less guilty in the sight of God, who seeks to acquire *distinction* and *power* by his labours in this holy calling? Will he, in that day when the secrets of all hearts are revealed, and the issues of all actions are exhibited, be less deeply scarred by the thunderbolts of Jehovah's wrath? His aim is more specious and elevated, indeed, but not less pernicious, or less subversive of the principles on which the kingdom for which he professedly labours is established.

3. From this view, *we may deduce some valuable instruction as to the mode of subduing this strong tendency of our nature.* The Saviour here shows us the nature of that greatness which he bids us seek, and how it is to be attained. He proposes to us higher ends than the desire of distinction and power among men, and points us to his own example. Let us look at the model of greatness embodied in the life of our glorious Master, who was great in his benevolence, great in his meekness, great in his patience, great in his condescension, great in his labors, great in his self-denial, great in his sacrifices, great in his sympathy, great in his compassion,—let us look till we admire, adore, love and imitate

him. Look at the glorious end that he proposed, "For the joy that was set before him," (the joy of redeeming sinners and crowning them with life,) "he endured the cross, despising the shame." For this object "he who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God, also, hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name." The end which the Saviour sought we are to aim at, and the exaltation which the Saviour attained, we, according to our preparation, shall receive. We are not forbidden to seek greatness like his, and its rewards are offered to us. To those who were to be chief in his kingdom, he promised that they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,—a promise which, however interpreted, foreshadows the highest glory and honour. To us, too, if we cultivate his spirit and imitate his greatness, is promised the honour that cometh from God, high employment in his everlasting kingdom, and nearness to his ever-blessed throne. These are the rewards that will be bestowed on those who are truly great in his kingdom below. And how infinitely are these preferable to all distinction, in the eyes of our fellow-men, and to all the fruits of power to be enjoyed here on earth? And even while we tabernacle here below, how far do the joys of true greatness surpass those of selfish ambition? Possessed of his spirit, the servant of Jesus may be baffled, disappointed, defeated in his attempts to extend the dominion of his blessed Master, but he is not cast down. Paul and Silas, though dragged before an unrighteous tribunal, beaten, imprisoned, with their feet made fast in the stocks, could still express their joyous and triumphant feelings in hymns of praise. Our labours may be cut short, our honours may be trampled in the dust, our names may perish, but the cause which is dear to us shall not perish,—Jesus lives and his kingdom shall be established "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." Yes, and we, too, shall live and reign with him forever, enjoying the companionship of the hosts of Heaven, sharing their employ-

ments and honors, and admitted to the presence chamber of the King of Kings. Can it be that such glory awaits any of *us*? Is it not *presumption* in us, to expect more than *admission* into Heaven,—to be permitted to occupy the lowest seat in that holy and happy place? Sometimes we fear to raise our hopes so high. When we look at what we have done for the Saviour,—when we look at what we are, we feel that “God be merciful to me a sinner,” is a more suitable prayer for us, than to ask for a *throne in Heaven*. Alas! alas! how much of corruption remains in us! How far are we from that glowing zeal, that burning love, that deep humility, that entire dependence on God, which would fit us to be great in the glorious kingdom on high! Can beings so weak, so wayward, so ungrateful, so prone to pitiful self-seeking, so forgetful of the blessed Jesus,—can *such* ever sit with him upon the throne? How often do our hearts overflow with thankfulness, and our eyes with tears, as we sing,—

“Lord, when I read the traitor’s doom,
To his own place consigned,
What holy fear and trembling hope
Alternate fill my mind.

Traitor to thee, I too have seen,
But saved by matchless grace,
Or else the lowest, hottest hell
Had surely been my place.

Hither I was by law adjudged,
And thitherward rushed on,
And then in my eternal doom,
Thy justice might have shone.

But lo! what wondrous matchless love!
I call a place my own,
On earth, within the gospel sound,
And at thy gracious throne.

A place is mine among thy saints,
A place at Jesus’ feet,
And I expect in Heaven a place
Where saints and angels meet.

Who of us, as he has thus sung, but has often felt ready to exclaim, “Lord, ’tis enough, Lord, ’tis enough, stay thy hand, thy mercy overwhelms us.” Our aspi-

rations after higher glory pass away, as we realize our weakness, our vileness, and the glorious riches of God's goodness towards us,—from the depths of humbled and thankful hearts we can cry only, "Jesus, Master! help thy feeble servants, lift us up that we may follow thee, draw us near to thyself, that we may feel and live like thee!"

Brethren and fathers, we have met in council to advance the interests of the glorious kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners. Woe unto us, if we seek our own glory instead of the glory of our Master. We are beset with peculiar dangers in such an Assembly, "temptations without and corruption within." Unused as we are to debate, the conflict of opinions, and the excitement of collision endanger our equanimity, our courtesy, our brotherly kindness, and stir up the spirit of strife and ambition. These evils we may abate by remembering the conduct and principles of our Divine Master. Let us give diligent heed to the admonitions, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." "If an evil thought be in thy heart put thy hand on thy mouth." In all our discussions let us strive to exhibit proof that we are disciples of him who directed the "greatest to be the least, and the chief of all to be the servant of all." But grace, special grace, alone can preserve us from this deep-rooted and sinful principle of our depraved nature. Let us daily and hourly ask that grace, assured that we shall obtain it through the intercession of him who hath promised to be our advocate with the Father.

To our Master alone each of us is responsible. He alone can judge the heart. Our actions may seem fair to men, yet God may abhor them,—they may be condemned of men, yet God may approve them. Let us each judge himself, and let us ask God to "try us, and show us if there is any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting." We shall soon cease to sit in these assemblies. We are sitting in the seats of the fathers who have fallen asleep—others will soon occupy our seats, and our names will be forgotten. But what matters it? Our influence passes away and our names

perish from the earth, but Jesus lives, and remains forever with his church. We feel that the cause which we love is safe in his hands. Meanwhile, we, if we prove faithful, go up to "shine as stars forever and ever." And may God, of his infinite mercy, grant, that to none of us who stand in these high places of God's heritage on earth, shall be reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

ARTICLE VIII.

CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. *True Practice of Religion*: from the Dutch "Shorter Doctrine of Practice," of the Rev. EWALDUS KIST, D. D. pp. 448: Published by JOHN BALL. New Orleans.

This work is a translation, by a gentleman, a merchant of New Orleans, during his moments of leisure, of the Practical treatises of Dr. Kist, who has been well styled the Baxter of the Church of Holland. Of the merits of the translation we cannot of course, speak, having never seen the original. The style is very simple and didactic, possessing little of that fervor which marks the practical writings of the great English Dissenter, with whom the author is compared. Yet there is no lack of the calm earnestness which is often found to pervade purely didactic treatises, when the writer is sincerely persuaded of the truths he inculcates, and addresses himself with lucid statements and dispassionate reasoning to obviate the difficulties which obstruct the practice of religion. From the nature of the work, the author is not so much engaged in the full, objective statement of the doctrines of grace, as with the analysis of the subjective exercises of believers themselves. The objection therefore, lies against this as against all treatises of this kind, of regarding the work of sanctification too exclusively on its negative side. The difficulty is, indeed, inherent, and not simply accidental. Books of this sort have a value,