

actor, destiny. So, then, that we may have a happy consummation to our mortal life it behooves us to study good works, and meditate only upon what is good, so that we may wax strong in spirit. When I say study, I mean reading without thought, which opens up other avenues for acquiring knowledge. The mind becoming wholly absorbed in good and profitable study, good actions invariably follow. But very often behind good actions lies a selfish motive. What motive has that Titian-tongued dude who stands before an audience once a week, perhaps "reading what he never wrote." Is a pure or is it a selfish motive? Let the reader judge. Would it be different should he find himself in the situation of our poorly paid ministers? Thank God there are many who from an innate desire to save fallen humanity, to rescue a perishing world from sin, and from the great love to that glorified Redeemer who died for all, engage in their noble calling, but, alas! to the keen eyes of truth are there any now declaring the council of God who will only have their road on earth paved with roses.

May God in his infinite mercy deal leniently with all such (if any), for they know not what they do. The history of the Church shows us to-day that pride, the cause of man's first disobedience, is now reigning in many of our churches. Christ says: "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven;" but the Church to-day says: "Except ye repent, and are as proud as Lucifer and as rich Croesus ye cannot worship with us." We are falling back into the iniquities of Babylon. Pride is again entering amongst us, as it did the early Church, and as it then sought power and elevated sinful man to be the representative of God on earth, so, amongst us now, it will tend to lessen in our eyes the power of God and to a corresponding increase in the usurpations of man.

There is much more that can be said on the same subject; but I think I have made this essay long enough; and if this does not receive the deserved lot of falling into the waste basket, I may write again on the same theme. S. N. G.

OUR NEEDS.

No. 2.

We need to understand the "distinctive plea" of the "Christian Church." We need to know why we are a distinct people. I may be informed, right here, that this is already well understood, but I must beg to doubt this. I have many reasons to believe that this is one of our greatest needs. I remember, the writer a few years ago was interrogated on this very point, as to "what were our distinctive principles." The reply was, "We have no distinctive principles."

The discussion that followed this reply showed very clearly that there were some who did not understand our "plea." The principles we hold as conditions of salvation are taught by many in the denominations and cannot therefore be distinctive. The doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins is taught by others. We find it taught by Neander in his "Planting and Training," and by Shaff in his history of the Apostolic church, also by Lange, in his commentaries on Acts, and also by others we could name, which show that it is not a distinctive doctrine with us. A writer in a late "Standard" says: "We really hold no doctrine and have no practice that is exclusively our own. I may say that our distinctness consists in the fact that we have nothing that is distinct. Our strength and glory is in this, that we insist upon nothing as a bond of union or test of fellowship that is not already believed and accepted as valid scriptural by all evangelical denominations." The distinction, therefore, is not in distinctive principles, but in a grand distinctive "plea" of Christian

fellowship and union of all those who are admitted saved. We say that the conditions of salvation are the conditions of Christian fellowship, that when they are saved from sin they are one with Christ and should be one with all Christians. But with the denominations it is different. They will admit that others are saved and will be saved in heaven, but cannot unite with them in Christian fellowship because they differ in regard to certain principles that they admit are not essential to our salvation or our union in heaven. Here is seen the magnitude of the evil of denominationalism, dividing the church of God on earth which they admit will be united in heaven; and here is seen the greatness and importance of the "distinctive plea" of the Christian church, to make all one on earth whom they admit will be one in heaven, to make nothing essential to Christian fellowship on earth that is not essential to our salvation in heaven. The Christian church has proven the possibility of just such a union by having within her folds members who differ in principle, but yet one in heart and in Christian fellowship. As soon as we cease our contention, our principles, about which we differ, and which we admit are not essential to our salvation, just so soon we will be one in Christian fellowship.

Here is the grand plea that distinguishes us from others. We earnestly plead for toleration, to waive as authoritative all doctrines and opinions about which we differ, and to unite in loving fellowship and Christian union, on the principles that all admit as true and scriptural and about which there is no dispute, and which only are essential to salvation. While we plead for the union of all Christians upon this the only possible basis of Christian union, we forget our own plea. We find ourselves contending for principles not at all essential to salvation, and too often dissemble over differences that are wholly indifferent. We saw in one of our publications some time ago a statement to this effect: "That if a church wanted certain persons to pass the bread and wine, and there were persons in the church who did not acquiesce in the choice of said persons, they should separate and organize another congregation."

Any one can see that this is directly opposed to our "distinctive plea," to thus make such principles as are purely prudential, authoritative and exalt them to standards of faith and tests of fellowship. It is against this mistaken idea of our distinctive mission that Bro. Campbell, in 1849, expresses himself very forcibly, as may be seen in the following:

To ask for a positive precept for everything in the details of duties growing out of the various and numerous exigencies of the Christian church and the world, would be quite as irrational and unscriptural as to ask for an immutable wardrobe or a uniform standard of apparel for all persons and ages in the Christian church. . . . We must make a broad, a clear, and an indelible distinction between the elements of *faith*, *piety* and *morality*, and matters of temporal expediency. The former are wholly and exclusively of divine authority. They are forever fixed by the Messiah in person, and by his inspired and divinely commissioned lawgivers, apostles and prophets.

In all things pertaining to public interest, not of Christian faith, piety, or morality, the church of Jesus Christ, in its aggregate character, is left free and unshackled by any apostolic authority. This is the great point which I assert as of capital importance in any great conventional movement or co-operation in advancing the public interests of a common Christianity and a common salvation.

Matters of prudential arrangement for the evangelizing of the world, for the better application of our means and resources, according to the exigencies of society and the ever varying complexity of things around us, are left without a single law, statute, ordinance or enactment in all the New Testament.

"For my own part, I see no necessity for any positive Divine statutes in such matters."—*M. Harbinger, May, 1849.*

This is the very thing we need to see—"the distinction between the elements of *faith*, *piety*, and

morality, and matters of temporal expediency." The former are the essential elements of our salvation, and are therefore the only test of Christian fellowship, while the latter are not elements of faith, but matters left to our sanctified judgment, and should never be made a test of fellowship or a plea for union; and however much we may differ in these matters we should never let them separate us, or in any way destroy the peace and prosperity of the church of Christ. Let us be true to this "plea," that all who believe in Christ, through the apostles' word, may be one in Him.

H. MURRAY.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.

By JAMES MURRAY.

"Now abideth faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love." *Faith is the belief or testimony.* "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him. Faith is the first command of the gospel. The first step that every person must take in order to become a Christian is to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Taking the word of God, and reading the thrilling, and plain, and affecting story of Jesus—what he did for poor sinful man—it touches the heart and produces faith. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Faith is truly very important. It changes the heart and brings us to God, but still will pass away. We now walk by faith; but when this earth life is over, if faithful to the high calling into which we have entered, we shall "see Jesus as he is." "We shall know as we are known." *We shall then walk by sight not by faith.*

Hope is desire and expectation. What we desire and expect is what we hope for. Like a ship at anchor, although tossed by the storm and wind, is esteemed safe, so "hope as an anchor to the soul is both sure and steadfast." It gives us joy, peace and strength to look into the future and contemplate upon the things promised to the children of God. *We rejoice in full assurance of hope unto the end—"if in this only we have hope in Christ we would be of all men most miserable."* We are saved by hope. Every person must have a well-grounded hope in Christ in order to come into possession of the things hoped for. We do not hope for things we possess, but we hope for that we see not, and with patience wait for it. So hope also comes to an end with our life in this world of disappointments, toils, and sorrows. At home with God our Father, "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy," our hope will be turned to sight, we shall possess and enjoy the things we hope for, and are with joy looking forward to.

But there is one more beautiful word in the text, that is—love. "Now abideth faith, hope and charity (or love); the greatest of these is love." Whatever acts we may do in this life for the cause of Christ if not prompted by love are useless. By love we show to the world that we are the children of God. "We love Christ because he first loved us;" and by loving one another and keeping Christ's commands we show our love for him. But why is love greater than faith or hope? Greater because God is its author. "God is love." Christ for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. God has done everything for us that we need in order to be happy here and at last enjoy heaven. All because "God is love." God knows all things and sees and own all things. Faith nor hope cannot, therefore, apply to God, while love does. Love is also greater on account of its duration. While faith and hope ends, love never fails. Our love is imperfect here on account of sin and human weakness, but when we get home with God we shall love perfectly, and go on and on loving forever. Love shall be our song in that world of love, with our Father of love, and with Jesus our dear Redeemer.

O, that all who read this may love more—love God more, love each other more. Let brotherly love continue, that the world may behold in us the image of Christ.