

sweeping Christendom out of the narrow ditch of sectarianism which in the past has been mistaken for the river of God.

With such a tendency, there is a readiness for hearing, and a preparation for accepting, our plea for Christian union on Christ alone, and with the Bible alone as our guide, which is peculiar to this age. This explains the fact emphasized in the article republished in last CHRISTIAN, that the Disciples of Christ have made the most remarkable growth in the religious world, in the past five years. It is a time for instant and earnest action on our part. The soil was never so ready, nor the skies so promising as just now. We are fortunate to live when the best plea in the world can be made at the best time in its history. May we catch the inspiration of the occasion and fit the message and the effort to the fitness of the time.

THE ATTRACTION OF CALVARY.

T. H. BLMNUS.

V.

The attraction of Calvary overcomes in man all the forces of a depraved heart.

First. There is the love of ease. Men sigh for repose. They ever seek the clear sky, the thornless path, and the unruffled stream. Life without its conflicts, pleasure without pain, and honor without its struggles, are the things much to be desired. How the great mass of men, rather than endure the conflict, place the reins upon the neck of desire, until bound hand and foot, they are borne to death and destruction. The cross of Calvary lifts us out of the love of ease. It imparts to us new desires, and put within us the "impulse of a new affection." It moves us with a heavenly passion, and we ask for duty not ease. We are enamoured with visions of usefulness. We ask a place to toil. At home or abroad, we are apostles, and evangelists, and missionaries. God's word is our law. His smile is our heaven.

Second. There is the love of the world. Not the world of nature, for that is God's world—we mean that spirit of the world, or that pursuit of it, which however innocent in itself, may come in between the soul and its God, and so cause an eclipse of the Sun of Righteousness. That world of which the apostle spake, when he said, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." We speak of it as the love of the pleasures, the honors, the wealth of the world. We know the strength of this love. For pleasure, men have sacrificed wealth and honor, and home and health; for honor, riches and friends, principle and manhood; for wealth, ease and comfort, and truth and right. But what a metamorphosis is wrought by the cross. And yet, the true child of God is neither a stoic nor an ascetic. He is in the world but not of it. Its pleasures are purified, its honors ennobled, its wealth consecrated to holy use. Pleasure consists in the possession of our ideal. We sacrifice all things for that which to us is the most lovely. But the cross of Christ has lifted the veil from the face of God, and the "root out of dry ground" has become the "chieftest of ten thousand and the one altogether lovely." This vision of God explains the impassioned utterances of the old worthies, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee." "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." This vision of the Almighty explains how men are willing to offer in one holocaust all that they hold

dear, dashing to the earth every cup of worldly pleasure. Not that the Christian is indifferent to place, or power, or wealth; but he wins laurels to lay them at the feet of Jesus; he attains power that he may wield it for God and the right; he gains wealth that with it he may push forward the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. He exemplifies the aphorism of one of the early reformers, which is, "Get all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." The mean becomes generous, the base magnanimous, the avaricious liberal. He is like the city's reservoir which turns into itself a score of mountain streams, and then rushing through all streets, and avenues, and lanes, waits and yearns to quench the thirst of all, from the prince to the beggar. It is being filled with God and overflowing on others as God overflows on us. Did it ever occur to the reader that all the beauty, the glory of life around us is simply the overflowing of God? What is the glory of the morning but the overflowing of his light; what the beauty of the spring, the fragrance of the flower, the song of the bird, but the overflowing of God in beauty, in fragrance and in song? What is the enamelled cloud, the bursting bud, the waving grain, and the trembling leaf, but the channels through which God is pouring out his thought and love? The laugh of a child is the exuberance of his joy, and the tenderness of a mother's love the outgushing of his sympathy.

Third. The attraction of Calvary is stronger than the love of friends. Jesus said, If any man will come to me and hate not, that is, love not less, father and mother, brother and sister, and wife and children, he cannot be my disciple. The history of Christianity is resplendent with lustre here. The love of Jesus Christ has proved stronger than the love of country, and home, and friends, and wealth. For his sake thousands have become homeless wanderers. They have taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and have "counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, the Lord."

THE BEGINNING.

LUKE XXIV. 47; ACTS XI 15.

NEIL M'LEOD.

Men have made sad havoc of the Christian system with their various and conflicting theories and traditions. They have made the clear and simple gospel of the blessed Christ an intricate puzzle. They have broken up its unity and harmony, disarranged its parts, overestimating some, subordinating others, obscuring some things and casting some away, and adding things of their own invention until, if Paul should now hear some men attempt to preach the gospel which he received and delivered unto us, he would not recognize it as the same, but another gospel which is not a gospel at all but only a poor theology.

In the effort to get order out of this religious chaos, it is of the first importance to find a correct starting place—to fix the place of beginning. If we fail in this, it is next to impossible for us to find any clew to the maze, or make our way out into the clear light of the divine truth as it is in Christ Jesus. The skein has been terribly tangled and broken, but if we can get hold of the right end, it may be slowly and surely unwound.

Fortunately for us this important matter was not omitted or neglected in the beginning. The beginning was marked and the first

stake driven where it still stands immovably fixed in the rock of enduring truth.

Beginning at Jerusalem. Various beginnings are mentioned in the Bible. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Gen. i. 1. In the beginning was the word * * * the same was in the beginning with God. John i. 1, 2. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Mark i. 1. But to none of these does Peter refer, for they were all prior to his advent upon the scene. But there is one other, "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high." Luke xxiv. 46-49. They followed his instructions and after his ascension waited in the city until the day of Pentecost when the promise was fulfilled, and they were endued with power by the Holy Spirit. Read Acts i. 1-14; ii. 1-16. It is evident that this is the beginning to which Peter refers in Acts xi. 15. This is the beginning spoken of by Christ in Luke xxiv. 47.

Guided by these unmistakable land-marks, we have made our way up the stream of the sacred river of life to its source as it springs from beneath the altar. Here it takes its rise and begins to flow outward in streams of blessing to the ends of the whole earth.

Here we make some very interesting discoveries as to "The Beginning."

1. *The beginning of the new dispensation.* This age has been called the "dispensation of the Holy Spirit." He came on the day of Pentecost to inaugurate his mission of blessing to the whole world. It is called by Paul the "dispensation of the fullness of the times." Eph. i. 10. Old things are passed away, all things have become new, and all things are of God who hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation—that is the gospel preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. We are not under the law but under grace. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. From this time forth the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, makes us free from the law of sin and death.

2. *The beginning of gospel preaching.* All that went before was preparatory. Now all things are ready. Christ has suffered and has risen from the dead. He ascended to heaven and has been crowned in glory. The Holy Spirit has come and filled all the apostles, and they began to speak as he gave them utterance. Repentance and the remission of sins is preached in the name of Jesus Christ for the first time. Never before was the complete gospel proclaimed, and full and final and universal conditions of pardon and salvation offered to all men.

3. *The beginning of the Church.* Christ during his ministry did not organize a church. This was to be the work of the Spirit. Christ gathered about him the materials that formed the nucleus of the church. Now by the coming of the Holy Spirit these are constituted the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And the Lord added daily to the church those that were being saved. Thus we find three important beginnings. A new dispensation inaugurated, a new law of life proclaimed to all men, and an institution founded which was to embody the spirit and principles of the new age, and propagate the new faith once for all delivered to the saints.