

repeat the simple but electrifying words: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." To the Christian, already in happy possession of the "anchor of the soul," we lovingly appeal. "Hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end," and in a little while, when life's fitful fever is over, you will be enabled to cast your anchor in the haven of eternal rest.

W. H. E.

St. John, January, 1881.

RELIGION.

The word "Religion" is one of the most commonly used words in the vocabulary of the Christian world. True, it is used with a great many different significations. Some good people speak of it as a thing reserved in heaven for the use of those who by dint of perseverance can succeed in calling down a portion of it into their hearts. Such speak of *getting religion*, in answer to prayer, or by some other means. Some people speak of *enjoying religion*, as they would speak of enjoying health, as though it were a thing that was controlled largely by the circumstances of an earthly existence. Some, but by far the smallest number, speak of *practising religion*. The word occurs but few times in the Bible, never in the Old Testament, and but seven times in any form in the New Testament. It is a *scriptural* word, however, and, as such, has a *scriptural* meaning. And this *scriptural* meaning is its *only legitimate meaning*. This, then, is the sense in which it should always be used; and if this rule were adhered to, many of the false notions concerning a religious life would soon be things of the past.

The definition given of the word in the standards of the English language, is "a rebinding, or binding again." Used, as it is in the Scriptures, in reference to God and man, it means a *rebinding* of man to his God. Sin separated man from God; man's only hope lay in being united again to God; God loved man and desired him to be reunited to Himself; *religion* was the thing that was to effect this reunion. Religion was then made a necessity by the introduction of sin. Had man never sinned and been separated from God, there would have been no reunion to be effected, and consequently no necessity for religion for this purpose. Religion, then, came into existence after the fall of man; it was made *for man*, and not simply for man but for *sinful* man, to restore him to his lost estate.

In relation to this subject there are certain things that must be self-evident to every careful observer.

1. "Religion, in order to be acceptable to God must come from Him." It would be simply impossible for fallen man to devise anything in the nature of religion, that would meet God's approval. The old adage that the stream cannot rise higher than its fountain is in nothing truer than in this, Man is imperfect. Anything which originates with him must, in the very nature of things, partake of his imperfections. Should he originate a religion it must be an *imperfect* religion. Such a religion could not meet the approbation of a pure and perfect God. There is abundant proof of this in the denunciations of God's word against false religions. Those were *man-made* religions, and they were an abomination in God's sight. The religion which has God's approval must have God as its author. It is, then, pure and perfect as He is pure and perfect; and, like the works of His hand in the creation, He can look upon it and call it good.

2. "Religion, in order to be beneficial to man, must come from God." If we could imagine a drowning man taking hold of himself and lifting himself from the surging waters and carrying himself to a place of safety, we could imagine lost man, the slave of sin, vile and corrupted and separated

from God, originating a religion that could redeem him from sin's bondage and save him from its power, make him pure and holy, and join him in inseparable bonds to his God. One is impossible; so is the other. Here again the stream cannot rise above its fountain. A religion that will take hold on man and lift him out of his sin, and save him from it, and bring him and bind him again to God, must come from above. It must be divine: God must be its author. The whole history of man-made religions demonstrate this. Their influence is invariably to make man worse. Like the prisoner in the quicksands, every effort for freedom sinking him deeper, human effort unaided must only intensify man's hopelessness. The religion that would lead man to God must come from God. The religion that would prepare man for heaven must be heavenly in its nature.

3. "If God gives man a religion it is undoubtedly adapted to man." Everything that God has made gives evidence of *purpose* in its creation; and, furthermore, everything is perfectly adapted to the purpose for which it was created. God set the sun in the heavens to *rule the day* and the moon to *rule the night*. The fidelity and completeness with which the day and night are ruled by those orbs demonstrate their adaptedness to their work.

God gives religion to man for a *definite purpose*. It is to rebind fallen man to his God. It is, then, perfectly adapted, *just as God gives it*, to man's fallen state and to the accomplishment of its work. As well might we attempt to add to the brilliancy of the sun, or the pale beauty of the moon, as to attempt to improve on the religion which God gives to man.

4. "In order that man may be benefitted to the highest degree by God-given religion, he must practice it *just as God gives it*." As God has given it, it is perfection. We cannot make perfection more perfect, neither can we *change a perfect thing* without spoiling its perfection. With every *human* element that is introduced into a divine religion, is introduced a *human weakness*; and just to the extent to which we change a God-given religion do we vitiate it and destroy its power and frustrate its purpose. The whole past bears testimony to the truth of these statements. With these thoughts before us we are prepared to study the religion which God has given in all its different manifestations. But this must wait for the present.

M. B. RYAN.

THE FAMILY.

"IF YOU UNDERTAKE TO DO A THING,
DO IT."

In one of the replies to my inquiries about mottoes, a prosperous Brooklyn manufacturer tells how a single watchword made him wealthy, besides helping him in his character. When a young man, he started for Australia in a sailing vessel, intending to go into business there; but he became very weary of the slow and stormy voyage and half determined to leave the ship at a South American port, and return home. He asked advice in this matter from an old man, who was one of his fellow-passengers. The counsel he got was: "If you undertake to do a thing, do it." He took the advice, and the motto also. In Australia, he soon acquired twenty-five thousand dollars, which he brought to this country and greatly increased, by fidelity to the same ever-present watchword. The motto has also helped him as a Christian in holding on and holding out. Mr. Edmund Driggs of Brooklyn, who is known for his double worth, gives, in his reply, a motto that came into his life like an influence, and greatly helped him toward success. At the age of fifteen, he left home to engage with an older brother in the

freighting business on the Hudson river. The first duty he performed on board the vessel was to go aloft to reeve the pennant halliards through the truck on the top of the topmast, which was forty feet above the top of the mainmast, without any rigging attached thereto. The sailing-master arranged the halliards over the boy's shoulder, with a running bowline under his right arm, and then he ordered him aloft. The new sailor looked at the sailing-master, and then aloft, and asked the question, "Did anybody ever do that?" "Yes, you fool!" was the answer; "do you suppose I would order you to do a thing that was never done before?" The young sailor replied, "If anybody ever did it, I can do it." He did it. That maxim has been his watchword through life, "If anybody ever did it, I can do it." Though he is now over seventy years of age, he is still engaged in active business life; and whatever business or enterprise he undertakes, the watchword still is, "If anybody ever did it, I can do it."—*F. Crafts in S. S. Times.*

THE MORTGAGE.

We worked through Spring and Winter, through Summer and through Fall,
But the mortgage worked the hardest and the steadiest of them all;
It worked on nights and Sundays, it worked each holiday;
It settled down among us and it never went away.
The rust and blight were with us sometimes, and sometimes not;
The dark-browed, scowling mortgage was forever on the spot.
The weevil and the cut-worm, they went as well as came;
The mortgage stayed forever, eating hearty all the same.
It nailed up every window, stood guard at every door,
And happiness and sunshine made their home with us no more;
Till with failing crops and sickness we got stalled upon the grade.
And there came a dark day on us when the interest wasn't paid,
And there came a sharp foreclosure, and I kind o' lost my hold,
And grew weary and discouraged, and the farm was cheaply sold.
The children left and scattered, when they hardly yet were grown;
My wife she pined and perished, and I found myself alone.
What she died of was a "mystery," an' the doctors never knew;
But I knew she died of mortgage—just as well as I wanted to.
If to trace a hidden sorrow were within the doctor's art,
They'd ha' found a mortgage lying on that woman's broken heart.
Worm or beetle, drought or tempest, on a farmer's land may fall,
But for first-class ruination, trust a mortgage 'gainst them all.
—*Will M. Carleton in Phila. Press.*

ONLY ONE FAULT.

I was riding through a bowery town in Vermont, when I chanced to notice a concourse of people in the church-yard, evidently encircling an open grave.

It was a warm day and I had ridden ten miles, and I drew the rein under some trees that arched the road, to allow the horse to cool and rest.

Presently a villager came towards me, and I said,—

"There is a funeral to-day in your town?"