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Poetry.

LOWLY SERVICE.

If the dear Lord should send an angel down—
A seraph radiant in robes of light—
To do some menial service in our streets,
As braying stone, we'll say, from morn till
night—
Think you the faintest blush of shame would
rise
To mar the whiteness of his holy face?
Think you a thought of discontent would find
Within his perfect heart abiding place?
I love to think the sweet will of his God
Would seem as gracious in that seraph's
eyes
In the dark, my, crowded lanes of earth,
In the ambrosial bowers of Paradise;
Think you his hands that lately swept the lyre
Would not against their lowly work rebel,
But, as they ever wrought His will in heaven,
Would work it here as faithfully and well

THE LOT OF LIFE.

I know not of the dark or bright
Shall be my lot—
If that wherein my hopes delight
Be best or not.
It may be mine to drag for years
Toil, heavy chain,
Or day or night my meat be tears
On bed of pain.
Dear faces may surround my hearth
With smiles and glees;
Or I may dwell alone, and mirth
Be strange to me.
My bark is wafted to the shore
By brain diviner,
And on he helm there rests a Hand
Other than mine.
One who has known storms to sail
I have on board;
Above the raging of the gale
I hear my Lord.
He bids me when the billows smite—
I shall not fall;
If sharp, 'tis short; if long, 'tis light;
He tempers all.
Safe to the land, safe to the land!
The end is this;
And thee with Him go hand in hand
Far into bliss.

—Dean Alford

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE RELIGION.

A lecture by the HONORABLE BURNETT McGRATH, (of Antigua) written, and delivered nine times by request, in Nova Scotia, now published, in sympathy with the Evangelical Alliance, as a sequel or conclusion to Lord Bacon's Essay "Of Unity in Religion."

My plan of investigation is best subserved by using in their proper meaning the somewhat quaint words "objective" and "subjective" which I have adopted. Objective means relating to the object presented. Subjective means relating to the subject to whom the object is presented. The word subject in this sense has of course no reference to matter of discourse; but means anything, or person which is in subjection to, or acted upon by, anything else. Thus we say that an Englishman is the subject of his Queen, that such and such a man is "subject to rheumatism" and that another is the subject of religious conviction. These phrases are common enough and I hope explain one of the contrasted words.

Our word object here does not mean aim or purpose, but is used in the same sense in which we speak of an "object under the microscope," or of an "object of pity." The object is that which is proffered for our regard. "Certainty, according to the schools, is distinguished into objective and subjective. Objective certainty is, when the proposition is certainly true in itself, and subjective, when we are certain of the truth of it. The one is in things: the other in our minds," says an old treatise on Logic.

Objective religion is religion outside, and subjective religion is religion inside. With this preparatory explanation we proceed with our lecture—which is as announced, on objective

and subjective religion. Real religion is "one thing." For this assertion we have our Lord's own authority—who said "one thing is needful." Religion in its general meaning may be defined as the proper attitude of the creature towards the Creator: and from our Lord's declaration, we may infer the consistent identity of all true religion. The proofs of our Lord's authority we consider to be absolute—both externally from his miracles, his resurrection, and the subsequent acceptance of his Divinity by a large part of mankind; and internally from the correspondence of his doctrine with the teaching of individual consciousness. This responsive agreement of the conscience or consciousness of the rational creature with the authoritative revelation of His Creator is not the less convincing to each individual, because it cannot be transferred to his fellows. For to any self-conscious creature it will appear clearly and entirely reasonable that the Creator should not have left his creature without some special link, some special chord of union, with himself. And we might press this argument into an inquiry as to the connexion of this responsiveness with the responsibility of the creature. But it is not our present purpose to examine what we hold to be abundantly proved—the Divine Origin of Christianity. We shall merely premise that by religion we mean Christianity and that in contemplating it as the most interesting matter to all of us, we shall endeavour to draw every light upon it from the word of truth.

Vital religion, then is "one thing." And yet such is the diversity of opinion among men—all deriving their convictions ostensibly from the same source,—that we rarely have this one thing presented to us with the same aspect. The minds of men are constituted with different tendencies and without impugning the sincerity of the heart, we must admit that the human mind is prone to catch the shade of its own constructions on the bright truth of revelation. Thus, if shaped by the impressions and coloured by the prejudices of one man the features of divine truth may be so distorted and tinged, that they cannot be recognized by another. And even where the variation is not so monstrous some disproportion among the same features may impart a widely different aspect to the face of truth. It is therefore of the utmost importance to us that we should see the truth in its original symmetry, and without any hue except that (if such there be) which our Lord Himself may have shed upon it.

For, looking carefully into this great matter for ourselves, we have a comprehensive justification in that appeal of our Lord's—of which I beg to remind you—in Luke xii. 57, "Yea and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" (Suffer me parenthetically to observe that the use of the Greek verbs "dokimazein" and "krinein" in the two connected verses gives great import to this question.) We shall endeavour therefore to examine into ("dokimazein") the features of our common religion, as presented to us in God's own word in order to judge of, to decide upon, to separate ("krinein") to choose out the one thing needful. And from this statement of our purpose, you will find a reason for that division of our subject-matter which is indicated in the announcement of this lecture.

Christianity like all other truth in its relation to men, is necessarily both objective and subjective. Any truth remains real and unshaken in itself whether men adopt it or not. Thus let us take for instance some generally received truths—as that honesty is the best policy, or, that intemperance is injurious to health. It is obvious that although the thief may assent to the former assertion in words, he does not act on that conviction. And it is plain that the fact, that his health is injured by his intemperance, is not shaken because the drunkard slights it, or refuses to be influenced by it. These are general truths: suppose some more

particular truth—as that there is a Railway from Windsor to Halifax. Imagine a man without any other mode of conveyance refusing to believe it, or incredulous about it, and therefore persisting to walk all the way from Windsor to Halifax. It is plain that this man's incredulity or indifference would not in any way shake the fact that there is such a Railway, or lessen its importance to other persons. But it is equally plain that to the man himself his incredulity would be very material: that in consequence of it, the advantage of the Railway would be thrown away upon him. Just so the truths concerning the value of honesty and of temperance respectively to character and health remain sure and unshaken however slighted by the thief and the drunkard. But in order to be beneficial to men as truths, they must be accepted and acted upon. Now, however plain and perfect a truth there is not an inevitable consequence that it should be cordially adopted and acted upon by men. And hence we are compelled to distinguish between objective and subjective religion—between religion as presented to us and the same as embraced by us. In other words we divide our subject-matter into external and internal religious truth.

Objective religion, then, comprehends all that God has revealed of himself and his creatures: subjective religion concentrates that revelation in the heart of the rational creature. The Almighty's declarations, like all other truth, may receive the assent of the understanding without influencing the conduct. It has pleased the Creator to leave to man the power of an option (if we may so say) upon this point; without divesting the option of its inherent responsibility. Thus objective religion, truthfully delineated to the mind, may remain merely objective, or external, without becoming operative on the life and conduct of the individual. On the other hand since truth must first be presented to the mind before it can be embraced, it is plain that our Christianity must be first objective, before it can be subjective—that subjective, is based upon objective religion, and that objective Christianity (i. e., Christianity as to the truth which it offers for our acceptance) requires our first consideration.

1. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,—whom He hath appointed heir of all things: by whom also he made the worlds;—Who, being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." In these mighty words we have the history of the Gospel condensed. After allusion to the Old Testament dispensation, we find here embodied the incarnation, the inheritance, the glorious nature, and the omnipotent power of the Son of God the universal Creation by Him, his subsequent atonement for mankind and its triumphant result. Our objective Christianity is almost all contained in this sublime passage. (And you must forgive me if I remark in passing that it appears to me the noblest sentence in all language—whether you consider the grandeur of the words, the weight of the matter or its paramount importance to us.) It is an epitome of Gospel truth, and contains in it much that is essential to our purpose.

We shall adopt it as a concise declaration of objective Christianity: for it is impossible in a limited lecture for us to go over all the details of the four gospel narratives although every word in each of them, is valuable to our Christian life.

Observe then—that in the words "by whom also he made the worlds," and "upholding all things by the word of his power," we have the omnipotence of Christ and therefore his Divinity, or Godhead, by a direct inference declared.

Again, in the words "when he had by Himself purged our sins," we have the atonement of Christ indicated. Its infinite merit in the eyes of the Father and its infinite applicability to our wants as sinners, may be gathered from these five words, "By Himself purged our sins." The correspondence of this statement with long previous prophecy is noticeable, as establishing the objective truth which we are considering. Isaiah had said more than 700 years before—speaking of that, as accomplished, which he foresaw by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah liii. 4-6.)

Thus the great matter for our contemplation—Christ's suffering and death instead of us—narrated in the Gospels, and repeatedly referred to in the Epistles was foretold hundreds of years before hand in the prophecies:—so plainly that we, reading these prophecies in the light of the subsequent event, may wonder that the warning was not such as to avert the accomplishment of the event.

We are even told in relation to this event (by St. Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. ii. 8,) that "none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

But the same Almighty wisdom (which foreordained) completed the catastrophe which was essential to our redemption. Let us observe therefore that the central point of our objective religion—from which all other Christian truth radiates—is Christ, our atonement. St. Paul is so clear upon this point that he states boldly to the Corinthians "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." In other places also he gives out the same truth in equivalent words, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid—which is Jesus Christ." Our Lord Himself had said before his crucifixion that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." And subsequently in the Acts of the Apostles we read, of his Apostles, that "daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." We are therefore warranted in affirming that the luminous centre of all our objective religion as revealed to us, is Christ himself. To Him (according to Peter's preaching in Acts x. 43) give all the prophets witness that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. To Him, pointed all the sacrifices under the Levitical dispensation. To Him, the Law was a schoolmaster to bring us. To Him, his forerunner John the Baptist gave this testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." We repeat then that "Jesus Christ whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation." (Romans iii. 25) is constantly presented to us in the New Testament as the chief object of our regard. Our objective religion is Christ. Now having brought you to this point I can imagine that it may occur to some one to remark that Christianity being admitted, this is of course a truism. Perhaps it is a truism inasmuch as a truism is an obvious truth. Unhappily for us it is a truism which we are apt to lose sight of. Yet, while rejoicing that the ample testimonies and reiterated declarations of Scripture make this, to us, a truism, let us not forget that without revelation the scheme of redemption could never have been imagined by the mind of man. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was

manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world received up into glory." (1 Timothy iii. 16.)

(To be continued.)

For the Christian Messenger.

ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MILD WINTER. THE LATE POLITICAL HURRICANE. SCHOOL LAW CHANGES. THE INSTITUTE AND MINISTERIAL EDUCATION. HOME MISSION WORK. REVIVALS, &c.

We are now in the last days of the last month of one of the mildest winters it has been the lot of the writer to see in Ontario or any other part of Canada. We, of course, know not what March may have in store for us, of frost and bluster, but the fact is, nevertheless, that up to date we have had the thermometer down to zero in extremely few instances and on no occasion, if my memory serves me, have our mail or other trains been delayed by snow more than an hour or two. Fortunately for producers and consumers of fuel and other necessities, the ground has, during a part of the winter, been covered with a sufficient quantity of snow to serve, though barely serve, the purposes of locomotion.

The political storm that appeared so suddenly on the horizon, and swept along so fiercely while it lasted is now happily past. The atmosphere is, it is to be hoped clearer and purer in consequence, and if so we should not grumble at the temporary disturbance of the elements. But it would, we confess, be easier to bear such a disturbance philosophically were one sure that the attendant evils were as necessary as they are deplorable. Comparisons in such a matter are difficult, yet it is hoped that the amount of "bribery and corruption" was, on the whole, much less in Ontario, than has been the rule of late. But if this be the exception, alas for those elections which conformed to the rule, for there seems little reason to doubt that in most cases where the result was in the least doubtful, any one having a vote to sell, would hardly escape the foul depth of degradation for want of a purchaser. And then it must be confessed that if there was less of bribery than usual in this contest there was more of another element no less vicious and degrading. Never perhaps in the history of Western Ontario, was an election contest befouled by so much of personal slander—slander often base and baseless. Shall we ever, one is forced to cry out in despair, reach anything like even the very moderate amount of dignity and self-respect in the choosing of our legislators, which prevails in the mother country! I suppose History has words of hope for us, inasmuch as it teaches that she was once as bad as we. And however much we may be inclined to turn away in disgust from some of the scenes and incidents of the struggle we cannot but hope that there was after all a principle which, though often buried beneath the rubbish, still lives and living is leading us a step or two towards a higher place.

Educational questions are just now in their temporary ascendant. The school law of Ontario is undergoing its annual revision by the local Legislature. The two reforms just now on the tapis are the liberalization of the book-depository system, so as to admit of competition on the part of the trade, and the reconstruction of the Board of Education. This latter body has long been, apparently, a kind of irresponsible and antiquated affair, serving, it is alleged, mainly to register the views and decisions of the Superintendent of Education. It is now proposed to so modify its structure as to make its deliberations public and to give teachers and inspectors a representation at its table. The best feature of the proposed amendment is the substitution of a system of election and appointment at intervals of two years for what was virtually appointment for life.

These threatened changes, especi-