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Poetry.

"GOD HATH HIS PLAN FOR EVERY MAN."

Take this maxim home to your heart,
If groping in earth's shadows;
And the blossoms of faith and hope will start,
And brighten life's dreary meadows.
And the clouds give place to sunlit gold,
And the rocks grow green 'neath the mosses;
"God hath his plan
For every man."
Though mingled with flowers and crosses.
Though weary and long the time may seem,
Ere the veil of the future be lifted,
And many a radiant hope and dream
Have into oblivion drifted;
Yet after awhile the light will come,
And after awhile the glory;
"God hath his plan
For every man."
And the angels whisper the story.
Then, why should ye murmur, and sigh, and fret,
And follow each bent and calling;
The violet patiently waits to be wet
With the dew at the night time falling;
And the robin knows that the Spring will come,
Though the winds are around her wailing;
"God hath his plan
For every man."
And his ways are never failing.
Thea gird ye on the armor of faith,
And onward your way keep pressing;
It may be through valleys of carnage and death,
Or up on the Mount of Blessing;
And if by His counsel guided, at last
He'll lead you up to your glory,
"God hath his plan
For every man."
And the angels whisper the story.
Zion's Herald.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

BY JOHN STUART MILL, LONDON,
1873; pp. 313.

This is a melancholy book. Many Christians will weep over it.

It is the autobiography of an extraordinary man—a man of rare mental powers—of untiring industry—of apparently amiable temper—and thoroughly independent. His education was going on all his life, and he did much to educate others, by his numerous and luminous publications.

J. S. Mill began to learn Greek when he was three years old, and in the course of the next five years he had read Xenophon's Anabasis, Herodotus, the Cyropaedia, the Memorabilia, and some of the writings of Lucian and Plato. In his eighth year he began to learn Latin, and between his eighth and twelfth year he had read Virgil, Horace, Sallust, Ovid, Livy, portions of Terence and Lucretius; and had read besides, in Greek, the Iliad, the Odyssey, Thucydides, and parts of Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, Aeschines, and Anacreon. In the same time he had studied algebra and geometry, had read a large number of books in history and general literature, and had written a history of the Roman government, which, if printed, would have filled an octavo volume.

So it went on, all his life long. He commenced authorship when but a mere boy, and a stream of literature flowed for half a century, in Magazines, Reviews, (including the Edinburgh and the Westminster) pamphlets, and volumes. The entire collection would be as large as an encyclopaedia.

But what about the higher life? Alas! it is a sad story. Mr. Mill's father, James Mill, the historian of India, was also his teacher; and of his religious views, Mr. J. S. Mill gives the following account:—

"My father, educated in the creed of Scotch Presbyterianism, had by his own studies and reflections been early led to reject not only the belief in revelation, but the foundations of what is commonly called Natural Religion."

"He yielded to the conviction, that, concerning the origin of things nothing whatever can be known."

"He found it impossible to believe that a world so full of evil was the work of an Author combining infinite power with perfect goodness and righteousness." * * "His aversion to religion, in the sense usually attached to the term, was of the same kind with that of Lucretius; he regarded it with the feelings due not to a mere mental delusion, but to a great moral evil. He looked upon it as the greatest enemy of morality; first, by setting up fictitious excellences,—belief in creeds, devotional feelings, and ceremonies, not connected with the good of human-kind,—and causing these to be accepted as substitutes for genuine virtues; but above all, by radically vitiating the standard of morals: making it consist in doing the will of a being, on whom it lavishes indeed all the phrases of adulation; but whom in sober truth it depicts as eminently hateful. I have a hundred times heard him say, that all ages and nations have represented their gods as wicked, in a constantly increasing progression, that mankind have gone on adding trait after trait till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise, and have called this God, and prostrated themselves before it. This *ne plus ultra* of wickedness he considered to be embodied in what is commonly presented to mankind as the creed of Christianity." pp. 38-41.

Our readers need not be reminded that this is wicked slander. The slanderer has had to give an account of it in the presence of the All-Just One.

There is no reason to think Mr. J. S. Mill, differed materially from his father. He says (p. 43). "I am thus one of the very few examples, in this country, of one who has, not thrown off religious belief, but never had it: I grew up in a negative state with regard to it. I looked upon the modern exactly as I did upon the ancient religion, as something which in no way concerned me." He lived and died an unbeliever in Christianity. His fine powers were wasted on the earthly, the human; he ignored the heavenly, the spiritual. The same account must be given of a large number of the literary men of the present day. "The world by wisdom knew not God."

In politics Mr. J. S. Mill was an advanced Liberal, in other words a Radical Reformer, considerably ahead, in many respects, of Reformers generally. He represented Westminster in Parliament, in 1867-8, being elected without any expense to himself, and without any personal canvassing. "It was, and is," he says, "my fixed conviction that a candidate ought not to incur one farthing of expense for undertaking a public duty. Such of the lawful expenses of an election as have no especial reference to any particular candidate, ought to be borne as a public charge, either by the State or by the locality. What has to be done by the supporters of each candidate in order to bring his claims properly before the constituency, should be done by unpaid agency, or by voluntary subscription. If members of the electoral body, or others, are willing to subscribe money of their own for the purpose of bringing, by lawful means, into Parliament some one who they think would be useful there, no one is entitled to object: but that the expense, or any part of it, should fall on the candidate, is fundamentally wrong, because it amounts in reality to buying his seat." p. 280.

C.

CHRISTIAN WALKING.

BY REV. A. L. PARK.

It is a curious fact, that more than forty of the books of Scripture represent the religious life as a "walk." This favorite figure the sacred writers employ hundreds of times. It is more remarkable, after so much repetition and reiteration, that the world is gen-

erally agreed in rejecting what this definition of piety implies.

The multitude are firmly persuaded that salvation is a ride, and substitute numerous vehicles for the walk with God along the upward path. Intended merely for walking sticks, the ordinances are abused as conveyances. Many Protestants received all their Christianity at their "christening," and have as high an opinion of baptism as Simon Magus had of confirmation, with about as much profit to their character. Riders upon the eucharist will plead in the great day, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence." Many mount the carriage of Christian profession, and having attained to good and regular standing in the church, their strength is to sit still.

Wiser ones see that ceremonies and outward position have little power to advance men to heaven. They hope to be carried through the pearly gates upon some phase of inward goodness, beautiful and all too rare—benevolence perhaps, or honesty. These traits they have inherited, or else cultivated by long habit, and in them they unquestionably excel. Nobler specimens of manhood than any forms or ordinances can make, these have some grand elements of excellence. Better a moralist than a ritualist. But we remember how a young man, many years ago, laboriously built a carriage out of the ten commandments. Six of them, he was sure, were spokes in his wheels, and no doubt he would have claimed the other four if they had been mentioned. Never was so well-built a turnout; even our Lord, as He looked, admired; if a man could ride to heaven on anything, here was a passenger. But when our Savior pointed out the defect in the vehicle, the occupant alighted and went away sorrowful.

Only one fiery charioteer rode to glory; two men have been translated. Therefore a ride is but half as likely as a translation. In other words, it is twice as certain as death that we must walk to reach Paradise.

The oddest mistake of those who attempt to ride is, to select a gig. When a boy, I hailed a doctor, and asked for a lift, but he replied that there was not room he was in a gig. How many there are who not only intend to be borne onward and upward, but to make the journey alone. We are required to walk so as to help other pedestrians along the way; but gig-religion plants itself comfortably in the pew to enjoy the Sunday ministrations, careless about wayfarers. Those who sit in one-seated vehicles will never arrive where they expect to. In truth, the road to the New Jerusalem is like that to its Judean namesake. It is a footpath. You cannot reach either Jerusalem in a wheeled vehicle.

But another reason doubtless, why the Bible has so much about Christian walking, is to remind us that the religious life is not an entrance. Many read the Pilgrim's Progress only so far as the account of the wicket-gate. In 1857-8, or longer ago, they thought they knocked at the door of repentance, and it was opened to them; and ever since, they have sat there querying whether they have actually got through. If they have, they suppose the journey is made. But Evangelist told them that the gate was only a landmark on the way to the Celestial City, and the most of the footpath was beyond. Many a year have they been debating whether or not they have got so far, when they ought to have been walking on.

Salvation is as much a continuing, as a beginning. Not to keep on is as bad as not to start. Saints will persevere and be saved; others will draw back, and the Lord will have no pleasure in them. Promise there is none to those who make an entrance, unless they walk on in patient continuance in well doing, and endure to the end. The persevering saints do not appear to be very numerous, compared with the large numbers who tire and faint, and walk the ways of God no more.

Dr. Payson used to wish that his church could be disbanded, and the

members re-admitted. Many of them, once out, would not get in. Any old church accumulates much dead material. It is like a coal fire that has not had the grate tipped up for many days, choked with clinkers and slate; you cannot easily separate coal from stone till the two have burned awhile together. Dissolve an old church and let members one by one be called before a committee of spiritual men, to present evidences that they are fit for the ordinances. They relate exercises of mind which appear very like conversing. The question is put, "When was it that you felt thus and so?" One answers, "Fifteen years since;" another, "Twenty-five." Well, the church would say, that is good so far as it goes; but what we want to learn is not your state a quarter of a century ago, but to-day. What are your evidences now that you are a child of God?

Owing to this mistake of supposing religion to be an entrance, rather than a walk, many nominal Christians are in our churches merely because it is not practicable to put them out. Church privileges are of no value to such. It was well for Lazarus to be washed, and sit at table with his sisters; but if he had not been first made alive, water and food would have been in vain.

Besides the elements of effort and progress, walking is like the Christian life, in being a steady and seemingly slow movement, step by step. We look at a mountain top, far off and white, and think it would take almost a lifetime to walk it by merely putting one foot before the other. But we set out, and in a few hours find ourselves at the summit, scarce knowing how the weary distance was vanquished. So when we survey the summits of Christian character that glisten in the Bible, we think we can hardly ever achieve them; but if we will go on our way, stepping in the right direction, we shall attain all that is shown us, and shine at the top among the saints in white. Long the walk may be, but not wearisome, if the joy of the Lord be our strength. It will be like that of two disciples one afternoon in spring, whose burning hearts made the walls of Emmaus loom up so quickly that they were surprised; for we may have the same company, and inward joy that forbids fatigue.—*Congregationalist.*

AN ANCIENT ENGLISH BAPTISTERY.

BY WILLIAM CATHCART, D. D.

In the seventh century, Northumberland in England was the scene of numerous and wonderful conversions from paganism, and of a grade of piety not unworthy of the best days of Christianity. Aiden, Coleman, and their followers, and the venerable Bede himself, in the end of the seventh and in the beginning of the eighth century, exhibited a love for the Bible and practiced the graces of a Christian life in a way that commands our highest admiration. In Northumberland, organized resistance to Romanism lived longer than in any other part of Saxon England. Only in A. D. 664 was the Papacy able to triumph over the Bible Christians of Northumbria through the council of Whitby and fierce king Osway.—*Bede's Eccles. Hist. book iii. ch. 25.*

About eleven miles from Cheviot Hills, separating England and Scotland, and about the same distance from Alnwick Castle, the celebrated seat of the Dukes of Northumberland, and near the village of Harbottle, there is a remarkable fountain. It rises on the top of a slight elevation, and just now it is thirty-four feet long, twenty feet in breadth, and two feet in depth, but it is capable of being made deeper by placing a board over an opening at one side. A stream issues from the spring which forms a little creek. A few shade trees and benches surround it, bearing the usual knife-marks of visitors. The traditions of Northumberland point out this fountain as one of the baptisteries of Paulinus, the apostle

of the North of England, where he immersed 3,000 during the Easter of A. D. 627. The "History of Northumberland" contains and confirms the testimony of tradition. The spring is a place of public resort for the population for many miles and for numerous strangers, on account of its early baptismal associations. The writer saw several visitors during a half hour which he spent beside its clear waters. An ancient statue as large as life, which formerly lay prostrate in the spring, now stands against a tree on its margin. The drapery of "the bishop," as the statue is called, shows that it was set up at a very remote period, probably only two or three centuries after Paulinus, whom it was doubtless intended to represent. A large crucifix now stands in the centre of the fountain, erected under the superintendence of the aged vicar who graduated at Oxford, which bears the following inscription: "In this fountain, called the 'Lady's Well,' on the introduction of Christianity, in the Saxon reign of Edwin, and early in the seventh century, Paulinus, an English bishop, baptized about 3,000 people." A short distance from the spring is the village of Holy Stones, where a nunnery once stood, to which the well belonged. Some scanty remains of the convent are still to be seen, and the stones can easily be detected in the houses of the hamlet. This establishment was located near the spring, at an early day, to gain a special blessing from so holy a fountain; and it is strong corroborative evidence of the sacred use to which Paulinus devoted its crystal waters.

Paulinus universally employed wells and rivers for baptismal purposes. Bede, himself a Northumbrian, speaks of this illustrious missionary in these words: "Paulinus coming with the king (Edwin) and queen to the royal country-seat, which is called Adger-trin, stayed with them thirty-six days, during which days, from morning till night, he did nothing else but instruct the people resorting from all villages and places, in Christ's saving word; and when instructed, he washed them with the water of absoluton in the river Glen which is close by. These things happened in the province of the Bernicians; but in that of the Deiri also, where he was wont often to be with the king, he baptized in the river Swale, which runs by the village of Cataract.—(Eccles. His. book ii. ch. 14.) The "Lady's Well" is some thirty or forty miles from Newcastle, and is full of interest to the antiquary.—*Religious Herald.*

TAKE HEED.

Every case of open declension into sin that we have ever studied, had its origin in small beginnings—in apparently slight departures from the straight line of right. But few men go down Niagara by one deliberate plunge. They have commonly been for a time in the rapids before they reach the cataract. No man can possibly fall while he is planted on the Everlasting Rock, and is keeping fast hold of the hand of God. It is when they are decoyed off the Rock, and over on the thin, slippery ice of "expediency," or self-indulgence, or sly deception that they begin to slide. The first sinful step does the business. Every church member, who has tarnished his good name for integrity, saw the time when he twisted his first lie, or pocketed his first dishonest dime. Perhaps he quieted his conscience with the wretched sophistry that he "needed the money," or would make "a good use of it." Anhow he never intended to do wrong but once.

He would just pull out into the rapids far enough to catch something that was floating past, but never dreamed of going over the falls. Men often feel the greatest security when in the greatest danger. The presumptuous spirit goeth before destruction. "Who is afraid? not I," has been the ruin of thousands. And thousands have been