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A FRAGMENT OF MODERN SCRIPTURE.

BY EMMA HARDINGE.

Who is there at some period of their early youth, that has not been referred to the Bible as authority upon human life and conduct? When little children err, how common a mode has it become among their Teachers, of disposing of their pros and cons by which their offence could be analyzed, and clearly set forth in its causes and effects, by turning to the history of Elisha—the bears and the little mocking children—and thus save half an hour of judicious reasoning, by a few minutes' injudicious terror. When young men are to be warned off from the gambling table and play-house, they have the fear of husks and swine food forcibly held up to them in the touching picture of the prodigal son; large and little fibbers are constantly warned by the fate of Annanias and Sapphira, whilst of the fate of the young man, who, sleeping under the preaching of St. Paul, fell from an upper win-

dow, &c., &c., is one of the most orthodox incentives which pious parents can present to sleepy and unappreciative listeners to keep awake under somnolent preaching.

One of the most pathetic and to my mind attractive models that has ever been forced through Bible prestige upon human humiliation, is the story of the poor Widow with her two mites. While I have always regarded the warnings of the Bible, (*as presented by such teachings as the above,*) as far too awful and sacred to belong to anything but the Bible—as somehow connected closely with Sunday, best bonnets, and long faces under them, no play, no enjoyment, and the very most solemn bearing that youth could ASSUME, so these warnings, have become too intensely *Sundayfied* to be appreciated at any other time, place or thing, and by being invariably mixed up with external bearing, restraint and gloom, are generally presented in too awful a form to connect themselves with simple daily practice and too conventional to affect us beyond the tympanum of the ear. Not so with the poor Widow and her mites. I wonder if there was ever a very poor supplicant at the bar of public Treasuries, who had not some tender though dim memory of the gentle,

humble ones of earth, by whom their bitter necessities are so invariably responded to, on the principle that "the poor man alone, can feel for the poor man's moan;" when straight-way rises up the vision of the very poor Widow, with two very small mites—her rich heart and richer possessions in the Treasury, where hearts, not mites, are the current coin.

My aim, in this fragment, however, is not so much to deprecate the custom of referring to the Bible for models of imitation and warning, as referring to that as the *only scripture, the only model, the only warning*;—"prove all things—hold fast by that which is good," will serve to-day as well as yesterday; but to those that the all things of this passage does not mean *one* thing only, and that there are scriptures of every-day life, writing themselves upon every foot-print of our pilgrimage, if we would but search within and around us instead of without and behind us.

Permit me to refer to one little incident occurring on the page of modern times and daily history, and though in those respects, perhaps, unworthy of record as teachings, if weighed by its intrinsic worth. I cannot help thinking it only wants the prestige of a

thousand years antiquity to make it a real passage of Scripture.

Last 24th of February, 1860, on a certain Monday evening, I undertook to deliver a lecture in the city of Cleveland, Ohio, in aid of the funds of an Institution Farm, endeavoring to found for the reclamation, refuge, and instruction of fallen outcast women.

The subject (the Magdalene, her faults, woes, degradation and wrongs, together with all the piteous details which must necessarily grow out of a true presentation of this most harrowing subject,) worked its legitimate effect upon a throng of the most intelligent and humanitarian minds it has ever been my pleasure to address. The house was very full, and some of the most respected and respectable of the inhabitants of Cleveland composed the chief of my auditory. At the close of the lecture, and in response to a most touching addenda to my own remarks, tendered by my kind "High Priestess," Mrs. H. F. M. Brown, who officiated as one of my chief aids de camps on this occasion, the audience rose almost en masse, and, pressing forward to the platform, wrote their names on the subscription lists, and poured their dollars into my

Trustee's hand, with a noble haste and generous impetuosity that entered a protest forever against the doctrine of universal depravity in the city of Cleveland, at least. On the verge of this well-dressed throng stood, as I am informed, a little lad without shoes or stockings, with a very questionable looking jacket, and a yet more sorry looking cap on his head; at first the child looked wistfully at me, but, as in my central position and oratorical prominence, I seemed to offer a too formidable treasury bar to the little bare-footed subscriber, he shuffled about until he reached Mrs. Brown, and recognizing that, by common consent, she is the approachable of every threadbare figure, especially in the shape of a little boy, he doffed his questionable cap, and, respectfully holding out his hand with two pennies in it, said, bashfully, "please take that, Mrs. Brown, IT IS ALL I HAVE." O, Dollars and Cents!—gold, silver, lace, and rustling silks!—how paltry cold, unmeaning and illusive you showed before the low pattering of those little bare feet, as they quickly sought shelter amidst the crowd, and carried their thrice blessed owner out of sight before the many bystanders, who noticed the act, had time to

tarnish it with their worldly praises, or alloy it by the presents which many a kind but injudicious heart would have bestowed. The boy is not known here, but his true mark is made in heaven, and the best monument that can ever be upreared to the gem of tender sympathy which welled from his heart in the rough coating of two copper pennies, will be found in the brick which they shall lay in my intended refuge for the homeless ; the lost ; sheltered and saved by such acts as these.

Read barefooted boy for poor widow,—pennies for mites,—Cleveland for Jerusalem, and then ask whether you need to search back 1800 years ago for the scriptures which shall point out the way to the kingdom of heaven.