

MISQUOTING TEXTS.

Let us be ever on our guard. We can so easily use the Bible to justify our own blunders, to feed our own obstinacy, to cover our own blindness. Texts caught up out of their context, exaggerated by their isolation, misinterpreted become the mere tools by which our selfishness works out its bad will. By the help of texts we close our eyes to the truth; we stuff our ears, we harden ourselves against the light. The holy words fall so pat, and they do actually fit the circumstances so well, and, in spite of conscience pricking, and, in spite of moral instincts, we quote just what suits us, just what corroborates our misjudgment. We strike an alliance between God and our sin. That is a tremendous peril to which believers have again and again succumbed. Nothing can save us from danger but the persistent guilelessness, the unflinching simplicity of a Nathaniel. Transparent surrender to Jesus Christ—that will secure our feet from falling. He, the living Lord, by His Spirit, is our one Guide. Carry Him into every text. Read the Bible in Him. Keep the inner life in its intimate communion under the fig-tree with God. Keep very close to Christ. Be ready whenever He calls, however perplexing it appears, to do what He desires, to test conduct and thought by His mind. Then we need not fear being led astray.

OPPORTUNITY.

In one of the Greek cities there stood, long ago, a statue. Every trace of it has vanished now, as is the case with most of these masterpieces of genius; but there is still in existence an epigram which gives us an excellent description of it, and as we read the words, we can surely discover the lesson which those wise old Greeks meant that the statue should teach to every passer-by.

The epigram is in the form of a conversation between a traveller and the statue.

- "What is thy name, O Statue?"
"I am called Opportunity."
"Who made thee?"
"Lysippus."
"Why art thou standing on thy toes?"
"To show that I stand but for a moment."
"Why hast thou wings on thy feet?"
"To show how quickly I pass by."
"But why is thy hair so long on thy forehead?"
"That men may seize me when they meet me."
"Why then is thy head so bald behind?"
"To show that when I have once passed, I cannot be caught."
We do not see statues standing on

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the highways to remind us of our opportunities for doing good and being of service to others, but we know that opportunities come to us. They are ours but for a moment. If we let them pass, they are gone forever.

BOYS NOT GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD.

I am sorry to say that boys are not generally understood. Between six and fourteen years of age the masculine nature is a mixture of mischief and sensitiveness, and spunk and fun, and pugnacity, which the chemistry of the world fails to analyze. A little girl is definable. She laughs when she is pleased, cries when she feels badly, pouts when she is cross and eats when she is hungry. Not so with a boy. He would rather go a nutting than to eat, forgets at the fish pond that he has not had his dinner, often laughs when he feels badly, and looks submissive to an imposition practised upon him, till he gets the perpetrator alone in the middle of the road, and tumbles him into the dirt, till eyes and mouth and nose are so full the fellow imagines that before his time he has returned to dust. A boy, under a calm exterior, may have twenty emotions struggling for ascendancy. Especially do I feel for a boy who has more fun abroad than he can master. How well I remember the country school-house where we all had to be sedate, though one boy would make a face enough to put the whole school in danger of running over with giggle. It is an awful thing for the child not to dare to laugh when the merriment arises, and swells up till the jacket gets tight, and the body is a ball of fun; and he knows that if out of one of the corners of his compressed lips a snicker should escape, all the boys would go off in explosion. I remember times when I had at school such responsibility of repression resting on me and proved unfaithful.

CHILDISH POLITENESS.

Professor Sully, in an article in The Popular Science Monthly, commenting on the jealous regard for ceremony and the proprieties of behavior as seen in the enforcement of rules of politeness by children, cites a delightful instance that fell under his own observation as he was walking on Hampstead heath. 'It was a spring day, and the fat buds of the chestnut were bursting into magnificent green plumes. Two well-dressed 'misses,' aged. I should say, about nine and eleven, were taking their correct morning walk. The elder called the attention of the younger to one of the trees, pointing to it. The younger exclaimed in a highly shocked tone, "Oh, Maud,

you know you shouldn't point." The notion of perpetrating a rudeness on the chestnut tree was funny enough. But the incident is instructive as illustrating the childish tendency to stretch and generalize rules to the utmost.'

The most remarkable convent in the world is to be found in the catacombs of the Russian Cathedral at Kiev. Deep down beneath the magnificent cathedral are miles of subterranean corridors, lined with cells, in which 1,500 ascetics perform their daily devotions and duties, live, eat, and sleep in the grim company of their dead predecessors. For a short time each day they ramble in the beautiful gardens surrounding the cathedral, only to return from this fugitive glimpse of paradise to the dark, damp cellars, where they live their "death in life."

The last group of the old Testament Scriptures is the series of prophetic writings, in which are mingled certain historical records of the later years of the two kingdoms, the terrible denunciations of their sins, and fearful threatening of the judgments which should overtake their enemies, mingled with the promises of the Messiah who was to come. All these promises held as "parables" until their fulfilment revealed their inspiration.

In the story of St. Peter, his flight from Rome was never counted as an act of cowardice. He had suffered himself to be over-persuaded that his life was necessary for the spread of the truth. But when he gladly returned to Rome, he "sought, with dutiful art, to change the Cross, yet suffer with his Lord." Antiquarians tell us that there is scarcely any doubt that the great Church, the best known in all Christendom, stands upon the site of his martyrdom.

One of the first lessons in the Christian life, for many one of the most difficult, is to gain the virtue of humility. The etymology of the word tells us that it means "as low as possible," "upon the very ground;" and as we think upon the many sins committed against light, against our own resolution, we can strive to realize the lament of the Psalmist, "My soul cleaveth to the dust."

What the Scripture purposeth, the same in all points it doth perform. Howbeit, that here we swerve not in judgment, one thing especially we must observe, namely, that the absolute perfection of scripture is seen by relation to that end whereto it tendeth.

Those who trample on the helpless are liable to cringe to the powerful.

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