

ages. Jesus' words made those little bits of black metal shine like stars of heaven.

Saint Theresa went to Paris to found a convent. She had but two *sous* to begin with. She said: "Theresa and two sons are nothing; but Theresa and two sons and God are every thing."

English Teacher's Notes

This passage bids us look at Christ as he sat in the temple at the end of that day of questions, as it has been called—the Tuesday in the Passion Week. Pharisees and Herodians, Sadducees, scribes, and lawyers, are all silenced, and even when Jesus now puts a question in his turn to them they cannot answer it. We can imagine the scowls of disappointed hatred upon many faces that afternoon; but it is not so with all, for "the common people heard him gladly," ver. 37. Now, therefore, he turns to them, ver. 38.

And what does he say to the "common people?" We have only a brief summary of it in this passage, but in Matt. xxiii. we have it in full. Even however, if we had only the summary, we might well marvel at his boldness in thus openly denouncing the rulers and leaders of the nation.

There were two things that made these denunciations the more terrible:

First. They were strictly true. Exaggerated or unfounded abuse is not pleasant, but one can bear it in the consciousness of innocence. But let a man expose a real fault of ours, and we feel it keenly. And we may be sure that every word of Christ's on this occasion *told* with irresistible effect.

Second. They came from one who was gentle-ness itself. A passionate or irritable man scolds you, and you say, "O it's his way!" But when severe words come from a gentle person we feel them, because we know they would not be spoken unless they were deserved. What must Christ's rebuke be! The Lamb was slain to save us from the wrath of God, but who shall save us from what the book of Revelation (xi. 16) calls "the wrath of the Lamb?" Well might the psalmist say, (ii. 12,) "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."

What was the chief sin that Jesus denounced? The title of the lesson rightly states it to be *hypocrisy*. He mentions other sins, ostentation in dress, (ver. 38), proud contempt of others and self-seeking, (ver. 39,) injustice and cruelty prompted by avarice, (ver. 40,) but after all

what made these peculiarly hateful in the scribes was the cloak of religion thrown over them. Christ speaks of their "long prayers;" he does not say that all long prayers are wrong, but denounces their being said "for a pretense"—"to be seen of men"—to gain a reputation for great piety which could then be made use of for self-advancement. For instance, this reputation led widows to trust them with their money, which they then use for their own purposes.

Now our boys and girls will never think that they can be like these scribes. But let some searching questions be put to them. Here is one just as a specimen: Have you ever, during school-prayers, put on a demure and devout look in order to be seen by the teacher, and perhaps qualify yourself for a reward, when your heart was far away? Surely this is the very hypocrisy Jesus condemns.

It may be well to add a caution that the fear of being hypocrites is not to make us refrain from "letting our light shine before men"—only it must be a genuine light.

Christ is seated in the Court of the Women, (so called because women went no further into the temple,) where the eleven trumpet-shaped chests stood to receive the free-will offerings of the people toward the expense of the temple service. No doubt the "hypocrites" were there, "doing their alms before men;" but we need not suppose that all the rich who "cast in much" were of that class. A Joseph of Arimathea or a Barnabas may have been there, contributing largely out of a generous heart. But here comes a poor widow—perhaps one of those whose house some wily scribe has "devoured," and she outdoes them all, even the sincere rich givers. Why? Because she gives—never mind how much or how little—"all her living," that is, her daily income, and she will have nothing left until she earns more next day. What love for God's house, and what trust in his providential care, is here implied!

Here is an example to be followed. But how? By giving "mites!" But what is a "mite?" Not a small gift, as some foolishly think. No, we are not giving "our mite" till we give (in the same sense) "all our living."

For Senior Scholars.

1. THEMES FOR BIBLE READINGS,

1. DISPLAY IN RELIGION. 2 Kings x. 16; Matt. xxiii. 5; Luke xviii. 11; Gal. vi. 12; 2 Tim. iii. 5.