

haps so; for see what they presently did. vers. 53, 54.—“began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things, laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.” These striking words, which I referred to in the preceding Note, belong to this passage; and, according to the best manuscripts, they are immediately preceded by words not in our version, “as he went out,” from which I gather that he did not stay for the meal, but, having delivered his testimony, rose and left the house amid the bitter taunts and revilings of the company. Then see the first verse of the next chapter: “In the meantime” a great crowd had gathered outside, where the disciples were awaiting him; and on coming out, he solemnly warned his followers in the presence of the multitude to “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which was hypocrisy.”

I have tried to picture this scene as it probably occurred, as I think it helps us to understand the scathing terms in which Jesus rebuked the proud and double-faced hypocrites who surrounded him on the occasion. Observe that his indignant words were not spoken in the hearing of the people, or even of the disciples. Alone, amidst his enemies, but calm and fearless, he exposed them without reserve. It was not till the last day of his public teaching came, three days before his death, that (as above mentioned) he uttered similar denunciations publicly, as a final testimony.

Of the six things of which he condemns the Pharisees in our passage, five have a “woe” declared upon them. Four of these are connected with “woes” also in Matt. 23, together with four other forms of wickedness not here mentioned. The other two occur in Matt. 23, without woes. The expression “Woe unto you,” must not be understood as the pronouncing of a curse by Christ. Perhaps “Woe for you” would better give the force of the Greek, which expresses sorrow on account of an inevitable fate as well as indignation at the sin that was incurring that fate. The anger of Jesus was no hard mercilessness. Pity for the sinner was mingled with wrath with the sin.

The six charges will, of course, be explained to the class; and an effort be made to show in what way they might apply to ourselves. Thus—

1. Ver. 39, the outside and inside of cup and platter. How many boys and girls there are who look fair and pure enough outside, but if we could see into their hearts—!

2. Ver. 42, the tithe of herbs, while “judgment and the love of God” were forgotten. A boy may be no hypocrite, strictly

speaking, and yet be guilty of this. In sincere self-deception he may think a reverent demeanor at public worship, a careful handling of the Bible, and so on, is real religion, while he is selfish, passionate, prayerless.

3. Ver. 43, the chief seats in the synagogues. In some classes the best child sits next to the teacher, (not a good plan in my judgment,) and is vain of his place and of the merit which has earned it. Many other cases will occur to every one.

4. Ver. 44, the unnoticed graves, defiling the unwary traveler. Has not a pure minded boy sometimes been defiled (and not ceremonially, but really, in his mind) by contact with a bad companion having a sleek exterior?

5. Ver. 46, laying burdens on others, but not touching them ourselves. Is not this the exact spirit of the bully?

6. Ver. 47, building the sepulchres of the prophets. Well, says a boy, I am not like *that*. Are you sure? How do you treat your mother? and if you had to stand by her grave next week, what would you think of her then?

But let us not finish a lesson like this without pointing to the blood of Christ, which can cleanse us from past sin, and to the spirit of Christ who can keep us from future sin.

BEREAN METHODS.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Notice, and endeavour to fix the time, circumstances, and places in the lesson.... The Pharisees, their spirit, character, and usages.... The secret of their opposition to Jesus.... The events leading to the reproof in the lesson.... The washings here referred to.... For what were the Pharisees rebuked? (See Analytical and Biblical Outline).... What is here shown as the duty of those who would serve God?.... Explain “sat down to meat;” “outside of the cup;” “ye fools;” “give alms;” “tithe, mint, rue,” etc.; “judgment;” “uppermost seats;” “greetings in the market;” “graves which appear not;” “sepulchres of the prophets.”

...ILLUSTRATIONS. The spirit of the Pharisees, shown by an Italian robber, who, on his errand of plunder, stopped at every shrine by the wayside to say his prayers.... A building in India fell, and the posts on which it rested were found to have been eaten through by white ants, so that, while apparently strong, inside they were turned to dust.... A ship, when wrecked, was found to have its rotten timbers covered and concealed with paint.

References.—FOSTER'S PROSE. Vol. I. 4215, 4432, 5289. Vol. II. 7341, 7396, 9385,