

but the contrast holds universally between the false and the true reformer. The one begins with others, the other begins with himself. "Never is the mind less fitted for self-examination than when most occupied in detecting the faults of others." (Whateley). "One that rids himself of the spirit of censoriousness, and seeks to discern the good and not the evil in his neighbor, is prepared to help him to get rid of the evil. It is not the spirit of criticism, but the spirit of charity which is curative." (Abbott). "So far from all christian rebuke being here condemned, there is implicitly a command to exercise this difficult grace, only at the right time and in the right temper. It is not to love, but to hate our brother, under the plea of charity, to refrain from the exercise of it, when it is needed." (Trench).

II. TREES AND FRUIT. 43. For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit—For a religious teacher ever to work any real work of good, the first requirement is that he should be known as a faithful doer of the thing he advocates. (Spence). The fruits referred to are neither the moral conduct of the teacher, nor his doctrines. They are the results of his labors in others. In vain will a proud man preach humility, or a selfish man, charity. (Godet). If you would *do* good, you must *be* good. You must give your own heart to Christ before you have much influence in bringing others to him.

44. For every tree is known by his own fruit—This is true in every way in which the essential character of the man may show itself—in doctrines, conduct, and influence on others. When it was stated that Hindooism was as good as Christianity, Wendell Phillips replied, "India is the answer." **For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes—**Lit. "do they harvest grape-clusters." In Palestine the rough hedges of thorns and brambles surround gardens in which fig trees may be seen completely garlanded with grape vines. The most common kind of thorn in Palestine bears small black berries not unlike grapes. In Matthew, the figs are contrasted with thistles. "There are three kinds of works spoken of in the New Testament, which may all be illustrated from this image: First, *good* works, when the tree being *in* good, bears fruit of the same character; then *dead* works, such as have a fair outward appearance, but are not the living outgrowth of the renewed man—fruit, as it were attached and fastened on from without, alms given that they may be gloried in, prayers made that they may be seen, works such as were most of those of the pharisees; and, lastly, *wicked* works, when the corrupt tree bears fruit manifestly of its own kind." (Trench).

45. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth

forth that which is evil—(Matt. 12: 34, 35). Christ is not here teaching theology but practical religion. He does not mean to imply that anyone is "good" by nature. His language is popular and he speaks of the two classes of men as they commonly reveal themselves outwardly. "The heart of a good man is a treasure of good things. Divine truths, spiritual susceptibilities, holy emotions, dwell there richly and abound. Like a wealthy banker, he has only to draw the precious treasure forth whenever occasion demands." (Whedon). On the other hand the depraved man has his treasury of evil. **For of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh—**Lit. "out of that with which the heart is overflowing," so that with the speaking a partial emptying, outflow, takes place. (Meyer). But the word suggests foaming over by self-increase. If we cherish evil thoughts we will certainly betray them in what we say and do. But if we try to think only what is good and kind and pure our lives will reflect our thoughts (Isa. 32: 6; Jer. 13: 23; Prov. 4: 23; 23: 7).

III. ROCK AND SAND. 46. And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?—(Mal. 1: 6; Matt. 23: 11, 12; Luke 13: 25). It is evident from this heart-stirring appeal of Jesus that he had already obtained a large measure of recognition from the people. He may not have been accepted as the Messiah but he was regarded as a Being of no ordinary power, as a prophet, and probably as One greater than a prophet. (Spence). The connection of thought with the preceding context seems to be, "Do not be guilty, in the dispensation now commencing, of the same hypocrisy as the scribes and pharisees have been guilty of in that which is coming to an end; they render homage to Jehovah, and at the same time perpetually transgress his law. Do not deal with my word in this way." (Godet). In the corresponding passage in Matthew (7: 21) Jesus expressly claims to be Messiah and Supreme Judge. The same idea is implied in the verse before us.

47. Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like (Jas. 1: 22, 25; John 13: 17).

48. He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock—Lit. "He is like a man building a house, who dug, and kept deepening, and laid a foundation on the rock." "The house which a man builds for himself as a secure abode, as a defence and protection, against wind and weather, signifies the abiding and standing before the judgment of God, both in time and eternity." (Stier). The "rock" is Christ (Ps. 28: 1; Isa. 26: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 4). He founds his house on a rock who, hearing the words of Christ, brings his heart and life into accordance with his expressed will, and is thus, by faith, in union with him, founded on him. (Alford). And when the flood arose,