**VOLUME 1; CHAPTER 13 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.*

*Galatians 5:22-23*

"THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE." WHILE PERHAPS THE sublimest statement the Bible contains concerning God is the brief monosyllabic declaration of the Apostle of love, "God is love," I am inclined to think this is the sublimest statement it makes concerning the issue and finality of Christianity.

It is quite impossible to exhaust so broad and spacious a statement in one meditation. If we take the widest outlook, that of the purpose of God in the race, Christianity will have won its victory finally and perfectly when love becomes the sole law of life and conduct. It is certainly true in the narrower realm of the Church, in which is deposited and through which is communicated the dynamic which moves toward the larger realization, that in proportion as Christ's Church lives in love it is able to fulfil its mission in the world. Again, Christianity wins its final victory in the individual life when that life becomes love-mastered, love-driven. That is the first meaning of the text, although I have set it last in order.

The Apostle here has been describing the difference between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. He gathers up the whole truth into this one brief sentence, which he afterwards explains by the other words which lie within the compass of my text. Everything is written when this is written, "The fruit of the Spirit is love."

Let us examine this statement in three ways, passing very rapidly over the first two and giving the greater part of our time to the last.

The declaration is, first of all, a revelation of the method of Christianity in its use of the word "fruit." "The fruit of the Spirit is love." It is, in the second place, a revelation of the dynamic of Christianity in the use of the word "Spirit." "The fruit of the Spirit is love." And, finally, it is a revelation of the issue of Christianity in its use of the word "love." "The fruit of the Spirit is love."

Our thoughts gather round the three outstanding words, "fruit ... Spirit ... love," the first indicating the method, the second revealing the power, and the last declaring the issue.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love." The word "fruit" pre-supposes life. There can be no fruit apart from life. The word "fruit" indicates cultivation. Fruit comes to perfection only in answer to the touch of cultivation. Fruit, finally, suggests sustenance. Fruit is a food. In these simplest thoughts concerning the word we have a revelation of the whole method of Christianity.

Fruit suggests life. The Apostle writes, "the works of the flesh," but "the fruit of the Spirit." As my friend, Samuel Chadwick, of Leeds, once forcefully put it, "The word works suggests the factory: the word fruit suggests the garden."

Works, the works of men, are always operations in the realm of death, and they forevermore contain within themselves the elements of disintegration. Fruit is always an operation in the realm of life, containing within itself the power of propagation.

The finest works which man has ever wrought are all operations in the realm of death. If your quickly moving mind questions me about the flowers and tells me that they are man's work, I reply that it is where man's work ceases and God's begins that life proceeds. Man's work is always an operation in the realm of death. Take the building in which we are gathered. It is useful, necessary, proper, but it could not be erected save as man-handled dead materials. The tree in the forest with its rising sap and its budding life was no use to the builder. It must die before man could begin his work. Man's works being operations in the realm of death, they contain within themselves the elements of break-up. While this building was being erected, long ere the builder put on the final stone with rejoicing, old mother nature with mossy fingers had begun to pull it down, and, notwithstanding the fact that we have reconstructed it, she is busy destroying it at this moment. As quickly as man works, his work crumbles and passes. That is the figure the Apostle used when he was speaking of the flesh. The works of the flesh are operations in the realm of death. The finest thing a man can do within his own self-centered life is a thing of decay and break-up, which perishes and passes and cannot abide.

Fruit is an operation in the realm of life, that mystic fact, which we all know by observation and none of us knows by final analysis and explanation. Life is of God as much in the flowering of a daisy as in the blossoming of stars. It owes its origin to God as surely in the sparrow as in the seraph. Fruit is God's work. You may paint fruit, but it fades upon your canvas though you mix your colours with the skill of a Turner, You may make your fruit of wax, but it perishes, notwithstanding the fact that you put it under a glass case. Fruit has in it the properties of perpetual life: "the tree bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after its kind." There is the potentiality in all fruit of unceasing propagation. It is a thing of life. Christianity is a thing of life. The love which is its final fruitage cannot be manufactured; it must grow, and it must grow out of the principle of life.

Fruit implies cultivation. There can be no perfection of fruit without cultivation. Let the tree in your garden run wild, never use the pruning knife, and all the fine quality of the fruit will pass away from it. The fruit of Christianity, which is love, comes to perfection only by the processes of cultivation, not your cultivation, but Jesus'. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman ... ye are the branches." Let me turn aside for one brief, passing message to some heart in trouble. You are passing through the fire, you are overwhelmed with sorrow. You crept up to the assembly of the saints feeling inclined to say, "Has God forgotten me? Why this pruning, this beating, this buffeting?" Hear this: The perfection of Christian character comes only by cultivation. "My Father is the husbandman." He holds in his hand the pruning knife. "All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous: yet afterward ..." God help you to look to the afterward, and to know this, "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and to see that by these processes of cultivation He is perfecting the fruit.

Finally, fruit suggests not merely life and cultivation, it suggests sustenance - sustenance for God. "God is love." God's heart hungers after love. God can be satisfied only with love. Listen to the wailing minor threnody of the old Hebrew prophets. They are from beginning to end the sighing of God after the love of His people. I shall never forget what a revelation of God came into my own life when a few years ago I gave myself to the study of their writings. I had thought of them as men of thunder and found them to be men of tears. I had thought of them as men of wrath, uttering denunciation of sin and proclaiming the terrible judgment of God's holiness. They are all that; but I found that at the back of all the thunder was the infinite disappointment of God because men did not love Him. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" That is the cry of a Being hungry for love. If you go a little further back in your Bible to the old story in Genesis, you find God saying to Adam, "Where art thou?" That is not the arresting voice of a policeman. It is the wailing voice of the Father Who has lost His child. God is hungry for love. Take a figure nearer home. We believe He is here in this house. He has come to His garden. He is among the branches of His own vine. What is He seeking? Love. The proportion in which he finds love in your heart, dominating, flourishing, mastering, is the proportion in which God is satisfied with you. The fruit of the Spirit which is for the sustenance of God's own heart in its hunger is love.

Pass to the second of these thoughts, and I dismiss this even more rapidly. Our text is a revelation of the dynamic of Christianity in the use of the word "Spirit." Let me only take the thought that Christianity is a life. How is life generated in man? By his being born of the Spirit. If that life needs cultivation toward perfection, how is it cultivated? By the ministry of that Spirit Who is grieved when we violate the law of love. If Christianity is indeed the fruit which is sustenance for the very hunger of God's heart, how does it come to its perfect fruitage? Only as my spirit becomes by close identity the very Spirit of Jesus Christ. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." But if he have the Spirit of Christ it is the Spirit of love, and God finds the answer to His hunger in me as He finds Christ formed in me by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The fruit comes through the life which the Spirit gives. The fruit is cultivated toward perfection by the Spirit in all His tender, gracious work in the heart. Love is sustenance for God's hunger, and it is His Holy Spirit in perfect co-operation that makes my spirit Christ's Spirit, and the fruit for which God seeks.

Now we come to that which is the plain meaning of the text. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." I can well understand that some of you are saying, "Why do you take this one word 'love'?" Because when this one word is uttered there is no more to say. It is perfectly correct to take all the words which follow. The Apostle wrote them under inspiration and with deep significance. You will see at once there is difficulty in the text. It reads, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." You feel there is difficulty in saying, "The fruit of the Spirit is," and then reciting nine words. Men have recognized the grammatical difficulty of the "is," and quote the passage, "The fruits of the Spirit are ..." That is grammatical. That reads smoothly. Hence the popular supposition that there are nine fruits of the Spirit.

But we have no right to interfere with the text in that way. Our business is to find out what the text really means. The Apostle wrote, "The fruit of the Spirit is love ..." It is one, not nine! It may be objected that the affirmation does not remove the difficulty in the text. The one thing in your Bible which is not inspired is the punctuation. If I were writing this text out for myself I would feel I was perfectly warranted in changing the punctuation, and I would read it like this: "The fruit of the Spirit is love," and then I should indicate a pause by some means other than a comma, say a semicolon and a dash, and then read on: "joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." The Apostle reaches his climax, and he writes the full and finale fact concerning Christian experience in the words, "The fruit of the spirit is love." Then there breaks upon his consciousness the meaning of love, and in order that we may not treat the word as a small word, that we may not pass it over and imagine there is nothing very much in it, that it is merely a sentimental word, he gives us the qualities and quantities and flavours of the fruit by breaking it up into its component parts. To change the figure, the Apostle writes the word "love," and there surges through his soul all the harmonies of the Christian life. It is a great orchestra - love - and he listens and picks out one by one the different qualities of the music, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.

If you have love you have all these things. If you lack love you lack them all. If that can be proved, then I think it is proved that love is the all-inclusive word, and the words which follow break it up and explain its meaning.

"Joy." This is a commonplace word. It does not signify an ecstasy which occurs once, and passing leaves the soul on a deader level than it occupied before it came. It does not indicate one of those red days in one's life aflame with high passion. These are not to be undervalued; but this word does not indicate any such experience. "Joy" is a simple word which means cheerfulness, gladness, common delight, that peculiar and wonderful quality which, present in the life, transmutes everything into light and peace and happiness; that consciousness in the life which sings through all the livelong day; that happy cheerfulness, alas! too sadly absent from our life today, which sings in the midst of a November fog just as much as on a glorious June day. What is equal to keeping a man cheerful in all circumstances? Nothing other than love. I make no apology for taking my illustration from that wonderful realm - the newborn love of youth and maiden, of Christ and the Church, of the bridegroom and the bride. It is God's own illustration. I read in the old prophets, "I will betroth thee unto Me forever." Let such love take possession of the heart of youth and maiden, and they are perpetually cheerful. You button your coat around you and say, "It is a drab day." They say, "No, it is saffron." If you say the sky is gray they say it is purple. They are cheerful from morning to night with the cheerfulness which comes with love's first young dream. If you would be cheerful through all vicissitudes of life you must have love in your heart. Love is a singer that never tires. Love is a nightingale which sings while the sun flames, and keeps singing when the rains descend. Joy is love's consciousness.

"Peace." This word indicates not stagnation, but the peace which follows battle - the harmony of opposing forces. What is equal to making peace after battle? Nothing other than love. Two nations are at war. The stronger defeats the other by force, and I take up my newspaper and read that peace has been declared. Is it peace? For all national and political purposes, yes; but in the deepest fact of things it is not peace. If - and it is a great if - the stronger nation can so deal with the conquered nation as to make that conquered nation feel that the conqueror loves it, then you will have peace. Two people are at strife in the Church. Forgive the illustration, but these things do exist. They come to me as their pastor and say, "We have settled this business." "How have you settled it?" I ask. "We have agreed that it cannot be settled, so we have decided to bury it and never talk of it again." Then, in God's name, dig it up. That is not peace. The buried hatchet can always be unearthed. Learn to love, and you will have peace. Peace is love's confidence.

"Long-suffering." May I put that in another form and say long-temperedness. I very seldom find people who easily understand that word. Let me suggest another, "short-temperedness." I find most people understand that. Long-temperedness is the exact opposite of short-temperedness. Long-temperedness is the great and marvellous quality which endures. You heard the great love poem which I read to you from the Corinthian letter, "Love suffereth long." That is the same word. Love is long-tempered. That is not all Paul said. "Love suffereth long and is kind." That is the marvel of it. You have suffered long, the sense of your own dignity has made you silent; but there comes a day when you say, "I have suffered this long enough, and now ..." We all know what you mean. That is not love. "Love suffereth long and is kind." Love is the over-plus of patience. Can you think of anything else that would make you long-suffering? I suppose you will agree with me that the most long-suffering people in the world are mothers. Why? I can give you the answer in a word. Because they love. There are all sorts of foolish proverbs abroad. Men tell me that love is blind. Nothing of the kind. Love sees most keenly and acutely and correctly. You tell me I am wrong, and say, "Look at that woman. Her son is going wrong. We have seen it for a long time. She is blind. She does not see it." Let me tell you she saw it long before you did. Then you say, "Why does she not heed us when we try to tell her?" Because "love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." That is the story of a mother's love. That is long-temperedness. Long-temperedness is love's habit.

"Kindness." The Greek word here is one which refers not to sentiment, but to service. Kindness is usefulness in a good sense, and always in small things. The word "kindness" refers to that attitude of life which makes men see the little thing which, being done, will minister to some other soul. I submit to you, is there anything equal to maintaining you in the kindness of doing little things except love? I am afraid it must be granted that there may be motives for great philanthropies other than that of love. Amos was a wonderful prophet, and he, when he was dealing with the men of his day, said, "They proclaim freewill offerings and publish them." Love is not necessarily behind the published gift. It is told of Sir Moses Montefiore that after he had passed away there was found a little book in which were entered gifts which far surpassed those which had been publicly acknowledged during his lifetime. On the front page of this book these words were written, "The gifts which men acknowledge do not count in the ledgers of heaven." That was Hebrew, but it was coming very near to the heart of Christianity. Here is a young man who, if he were talking to me, would tell me he loves his mother. He would even tell me that he was willing to die for her. Nonsense! Stay at home tomorrow night and read to her for half an hour. Kindness is the willingness to do simple things to help other people. When Jesus approaches a subject He says the last thing. According to Him, the cup of cold water, which costs nothing but the trouble of seeing that it is wanted and the giving, counts in heaven. What will make a man keen-eyed enough to see the thousand and one little needs of life and meet them? Nothing but love. Kindness is love's activity.

"Goodness." Goodness is - just goodness. I wish we used that word more than we do. We have been talking much about holiness - not too much - but we have been talking a great deal too little about righteousness. What is holiness? Rectitude of character. What is righteousness? Rectitude of conduct. What is goodness? Both. Goodness is the greatest of all the words. That is one reason why I love the hymn:

There is a green hill far away,

Outside a city wall,

Where the dear Lord was crucified,

Who died to save us all.

He died that we might be forgiven,

He died to make us good,

That we might go at last to heaven,

Saved by His precious blood.

There was no other good enough

To pay the price of sin;

He only could unlock the gate

Of heaven and let us in.

What is the inspiration of goodness? Goodness is a word which we have relegated to the nursery. We still tell the children to be good. What, then, is the inspiration of goodness in a child? Love. You may keep your boy good in the externalities by being a moral policeman. If you want to bind him to goodness through the coming years you must make of him such a boy that when he comes up to the city and sin confronts him he will say, "No, I cannot do it. It would whiten father's hair and break mother's heart!" Love is the only sufficient inspiration of goodness. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." That is the whole philosophy of goodness, and you will never be good while you are aiming to be good because you may lose your respectability by badness. When love is in your heart, and you can say, "I cannot grieve my Father," that is the true inspiration of goodness. Goodness is love's quality.

"Faithfulness," which may with perfect accuracy be translated "fidelity," is the good old-fashioned virtue of being true to your compact and your duty. What is equal to keeping a man true in the sense of being faithful to his compact? Nothing but love. You talk to me about infidelity - of infidelity in the marriage relationship, or in business. W hat is its reason? There is no love. Love makes such infidelity impossible. Where love is sentinel I shall always be at the post of duty. Where love is the inspiration, I shall never fail in faithfulness to my compact with friend, or lover, or acquaintance. I shall never fail in my business integrity if love stands sentinel over all my actions. Faithfulness is love's quantity.

"Meekness." What is meekness? Active humility. Unconscious humility. Believe me, it is good sometimes to use that word "unconscious" before humility to see what humility really is. Humility is always unconscious, and that is meekness. There is a so-called humility which parades itself. It is not humility. There are people who are always willing to take the lowest room at the feast, provided they come late enough for everyone to see them do it! There are people who say to me sometimes when they are talking about their work for God, "Well, yes, we are doing what we can in our humble way." And I always know they are the most conceited people for five miles round. The man who is humble does not know he is humble. Meekness is the ability to stay doing the commonplace drudgery of the carpenter's shop for eight-teen years. Meekness is the ability to leave the carpenter's shop and face the crowds and deliver God's message when He so wills. Meekness is the unconsciousness of self that bears to Calvary the rugged cross in the sight of all the world. The Master said, "I am meek and lowly in heart." What was the inspiration of His toiling in the carpenter's shop, the driving power in His preaching, the reason of the cross? There is only one answer. Love. It was love that made Him true in the commonplace of the carpenter's shop, that made Him true to the prophetic message, that made Him true to God's purpose even in the mystery of His Passion. Meekness is love's tone.

"Temperance." What is temperance? Not merely the thing with which we so often associate the word today. Tee-totalism may be intemperate. Temperance is a greater word - no one need be anxious, I am a total abstainer - it is self-control. Tell me, what is the power of self-control? What alone is sufficient to induce anyone to attempt self-control? I think you will find by long testing of my question that it is nothing but love. A man comes to me and says, "You should not indulge in any excesses, you will injure yourself, you will spoil your chances in life." All very right and proper, but it is not a final argument. I am inclined to say to the man, "Mind your own business and leave me alone." But if a man should come to me and say, "Sir, walk carefully. You have four boys who are coming after you, and what they see you do they will do." That is my motive for self-control. Self-control is the victory of love, and the victory of love is the issue of the work of the Spirit. Do not be misled into imagining that you can control yourself in any way other than by the Spirit's interpretation of love to you and the Spirit's realization of love in your heart. That is the secret of self-control. Temperance is love's victory.

That analysis is rapid. I have attempted it only that I may bring you face to face with the real meaning of the statement, "The fruit of the spirit is love." If you have love you have all these things. Joy is its consciousness. Peace is its confidence. Long-suffering is its habit. Kindness is its activity. Goodness is its quality. Faithfulness is its quantity. Meekness is its tone. Self-control is its victory.

How shall I love? I take you back to my first word. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." I cannot love so as to have this joy, this peace, this long-suffering, this kindness, this goodness, this faithfulness, this meekness, this self-control by any way other than by handing my whole life over to that Spirit Who comes to communicate the very life of Jesus that there may spring up within me the first moving of love. Someone says, "I am far away from all that." Let me ask such a one: Do you know this first movement within? Have you felt the first thrill of love? Have you felt a tenderness born within you? Then remember God's order, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." This fruit of the Spirit can be perfected only through cultivation. Thank God if the first movement is in your heart. If at the back of all your thinking and planning and doing lies selfishness, then yield yourself tonight to Him Who alone is able to give you the victory over self by the inflow of God's own love.