

J.R. Miller:

"This is to my Father's glory" that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." John 15:8

What is fruit in a Christian? We know what fruit is in the natural world, and we know its uses" but what is fruit in the spiritual world? It cannot be merely Christian activities. It is true that well directed activities are fruits; but there is danger in these days, when Christian work is so lauded, that we overlook another kind of fruit which is certainly as essential as the putting forth of consecrated energy.

In nature, fruit is part of the branch itself, not something apart from it. There are spiritual fruits that are part of the life: growths into holiness and Christlikeness. Thus Paul says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Very evidently, these fruits are such as appear in the character itself.

The aim of Christ's religion is not merely to make workers of us, to send us out to do good in the world, to fight against evil, to help the weak, and to minister to the sorrowing and the suffering. Its first aim is to make us godly, to transform our character, to produce in us the likeness of Christ. Then we shall be ready to minister. While, therefore, we are to be fruitful in every good work, we are to seek also to be fruitful in the qualities of Christlike character.

In nature the tree's fruits feed the hunger of men. No tree consumes its own fruits; it drops them for those who come to gather them. This suggests that we should not be selfish in our fruit bearing. We should not seek the culture of our characters" merely for our own sake. Our aim should be to provide something in our lives, which will feed others and bless the world. All around us are hungry hearts. There are those who crave sympathy and love, those who yearn for comfort, those who desire to be saved. We are so to live, that our lives shall yield bread for these.