

The Testimony of the Fruits

by Bishop W. F. Mallalieu

Bishop W. F. Mallalieu explores the significance of the fruits of the Spirit as evidence of true conversion and assurance of salvation.

Scripture: John 15:2, Romans 8:16, Galatians 5:16, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 5:8

Topics: "Inward Holiness", "Fruits Of Spirit"

Description

Bishop W. F. Mallalieu preaches about the importance of inward holiness and the testimony of fruits as evidence of true conversion and adoption into God's family. He emphasizes the need for a heart that is surrendered, submissive, meek, and renewed in every thought, reflecting the love and purity of Christ. The sermon highlights the fruits of the Spirit as outlined in Galatians and Ephesians, such as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, and goodness, as indicators of a transformed life in Christ. Bishop Mallalieu stresses the significance of the logical testimony, where one's inward experiences and outward actions align with the standards set by God's Word, leading to a rational conclusion of salvation.

Transcript

O for a heart to praise my God,

A heart from sin set free!

A heart that always feels thy blood,

So freely spilt for me!

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,

My great Redeemer's throne;

Where only Christ is heard to speak

Where Jesus reigns alone.

O for a lowly, contrite heart,

Believing, true, and clean,

Which neither life nor death can part
From him that dwells within!
A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine.

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;
Come quickly from above;
Write thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of love.

-- Charles Wesley.

What is our calling's glorious hope,
But inward holiness?

For this to Jesus I look up,
I calmly wait for this.

I wait, till he shall touch me clean,
Shall life and power impart,
Give me the faith that casts out sin,
And purifies the heart.

When Jesus makes my heart his home,
My sin shall all depart;

And, lo! he saith, "I quickly come,"

To fill and rule thy heart.

Be it according to thy word!

Redeem me from all sin:

My heart would now receive thee, Lord;

Come in, my Lord, come in!

-- Charles Wesley.

Help, Lord, to whom for help I fly,
And still my tempted soul stand by
Throughout the evil day;
The sacred watchfulness impart,
And keep the issues of my heart,
And stir me up to pray.
In me thine utmost mercy show,
And make me like thyself below,
Unblamable in grace;
Ready prepared and fitted here,
By perfect holiness to appear
Before thy glorious face.

-- Charles Wesley.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. -- Gal. v, 16.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. -- Gal. v, 22-26.

For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. -- Eph. v, 8, 9, 10.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. -- John xv, 2.

THE testimony of fruits is the fourth of the fourfold testimony that the soul has of its conversion and adoption into the heavenly family. These fruits consist of inward experiences and outward actions or manifestations. The hymns and Scripture passages quoted at the head of this chapter will clearly, though but partially, indicate what are the fruits that may reasonably be expected of any one who has really passed from death to life, of one who has indeed become a child of God.

When the work of grace is wrought in any human heart, God will not leave the person upon whom this work is wrought without a witness, and the witness, we may well believe, will be adequate to the needs, sufficient, at least, to remove all ground of doubt. God deals with us as rational and intelligent beings, and so, in addition to the threefold testimony already considered, we have what may be called the logical

testimony. It presents itself in this form. If we are really converted and adopted, our inward emotions and experiences, and also our words and actions, will show a decided change. Hence, if we have a standard by which we may try ourselves, we may come to a logical conclusion concerning our relations to God, and also concerning our spiritual conditions. The quotations already given, and we might add the twelfth chapter of Romans and the Sermon on the Mount, furnish an infallible standard. Now, if in heart and life we realize this standard, if we measure up to it, then we may rationally and logically conclude that we are saved.

Yet all this is no other than rational evidence, the witness of our spirit, our reason or understanding. It all resolves into this. Those who have these marks are the children of God. But we have these marks. Therefore we are the children of God. -- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. I, p. 87.

Although no man on earth can explain the particular manner wherein the Spirit of God works on the soul, yet whosoever has these fruits can not but know and feel that God has wrought them in his heart. -- Wesley's Works, Vol. V, p. 46.

Neither is it questioned whether there is an indirect witness, or testimony, that we are the children of God. This is nearly, if not exactly, the same with the testimony of a good conscience towards God; and is the result of reason, or reflection on what we feel in our own souls. Strictly speaking, it is a conclusion drawn partly from the Word of God, and partly from our own experience. The Word of God says, every one who has the fruit of the Spirit is a child of God; experience, or consciousness, tells me that I have the fruit of the Spirit; and hence I rationally conclude, therefore I am a child of God. -- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. II, p. 94.

In regard to the direct witness of the Spirit it may be said: It differs from the testimony of the fruit of the Spirit in this, that in the latter there is an inference that we are sons of God, because we see the correspondence between their characteristics as noted in the Bible, and those observed in ourselves. This inference will never be indubitable and satisfactory, much less joyful, unless it be preceded by the direct witness as above defined. Both must go together. The influential or corroborating must always accompany the immediate testimony of the Spirit as a safeguard against deception and fanaticism. While the direct voice must be added to the indirect testimony of the Spirit, which is the attestation of our own consciousness, in order to keep us from sinking into despair or falling into a flattering and fatal mistake. -- D. Steele: "Love Enthroned," pp. 34, 35.

But how does it appear that we have these marks? This is a question that still remains. How does it appear that we do love God and our neighbor, and that we keep his commandments? Observe, that the meaning of the question is, How does it appear to ourselves? (not to others). I would ask him, then, who proposes this question -- how does it appear to you that you are alive, and that you are now in ease, and not in pain? Are you not immediately conscious of it? By the same immediate consciousness, you will know if your soul is alive to God; if you are saved from the pain of proud wrath, and have the ease of a meek and quiet spirit. By the same means you can but perceive if you love, rejoice, and delight in God. By the same means you must be directly assured, if you love your neighbor as yourself, if you are kindly affectioned to all mankind, and full of gentleness and longsuffering. And with regard to the outward mark of the children of God, which is, according to St John, the keeping his commandments, you undoubtedly know in your own breast, if, by the grace of God, it belongs to you. Your conscience informs you, from day to day, if you do not take the name of God within your lips, unless with seriousness and devotion, with reverence and godly fear; if you remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; if you honor your father and mother; if you do to all as you would they should do to you; if you possess your body in sanctification and

honor; and if, whether you eat or drink, you are temperate therein, and do all to the glory of God. -- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. I, p. 87.

Q. But how do you know that you are sanctified saved from your inbred corruption?

A. I can know it no otherwise than I know that I am justified. "Hereby know we that we are of God [in either sense], by the Spirit that he hath given us."

We know it by the witness and by the fruit of the Spirit And, first, by the witness. As, when we were justified the Spirit bore witness with our spirit that our sins were forgiven, so when we were sanctified he bore witness that they were taken away. Indeed, the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first (as neither is that of justification); neither is it afterward always the same, but, like that of justification, sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter. Yea, and sometimes it is withdrawn. Yet, in general, the latter testimony of the Spirit is both as clear and as steady as the former. -- John Wesley: "Plain Account."

Q. When may a person judge himself to have attained this?

A. When, after having been fully convinced of inbred sin by a far deeper and clearer conviction than that which he experienced before justification, and after having experienced a gradual mortification of it, he experiences a total death to sin and an entire renewal in the love and image of God, so as to "rejoice evermore," to "pray without ceasing," and "in everything to give thanks." Not that "to feel all love and no sin" is a sufficient proof. Several have experienced this for a time before their souls were fully renewed. None, therefore, ought to believe that the work is done till there is added the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing his entire sanctification as clearly as his justification.

Q. But whence is it that some imagine they are thus sanctified, when in reality they are not?

A. It is hence: they do not judge by all the preceding marks, but either by part of them or by others that are ambiguous. But I know no instance of a person attending to them all and yet deceived in this matter. I believe there can be none in the world. If a man be deeply and fully convinced, after justification, of inbred sin; if he then experience a gradual mortification of sin, and afterward an entire renewal in the image of God; if to this change, immensely greater than that wrought when he was justified, be added a clear, direct witness of the renewal, I judge it next to impossible this man should be deceived herein. And if one whom I know to be a man of veracity testify these things to me I ought not, without some sufficient reason, to reject his testimony. -- John Wesley: "Plain Account"

Q. By what "fruit of the Spirit" may we "know that we are of God," even in the highest sense?

A. By love, joy, peace, always abiding; by invariable longsuffering, patience, resignation; by gentleness, triumphing over all provocation; by goodness, mildness, sweetness, tenderness of spirit; by fidelity, simplicity, godly sincerity; by meekness, calmness, evenness of spirit; by temperance, not only in food and sleep, but in all things natural and spiritual. -- John Wesley: "Plain Account."

Let none rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness. There may be foretastes of joy, peace, and love, and those not delusive, but really from God, long before we have the witness in ourselves; before the Spirit of God witnesses with our spirits that we have "redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins." Yea, there may be of longsuffering, of gentleness, of fidelity, meekness, temperance (not a shadow thereof, but a real degree, by the preventing grace of God), before we "are accepted in the Beloved," and, consequently, before we have a testimony of our acceptance; but it is by no means

advisable to rest here; it is at the peril of our souls if we do. If we are wise, we shall be continually crying to God, until his Spirit cry in our heart, Abba, Father! This is the privilege of all the children of God, and without this we can never be assured that we are his children. Without this we can not secure a steady peace, nor avoid perplexing doubts and fears. But when we have once received the Spirit of Adoption, this "peace which passes all understanding," and which expels all painful doubt and fear, will "keep our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ." And when this has brought forth its genuine fruit, all inward and outward holiness, it is undoubtedly the will of Him that calleth us, to give us always what he has once given; so that there is no need that we should evermore be deprived of either the testimony of God's Spirit, or the testimony of our own, the consciousness of our walking in all righteousness and true holiness. -- Wesley's Sermons, Vol. II, p. 100.

The value of absolute certainty in matters of vital importance and far-reaching consequence can not be overestimated. Surely it is a matter of eternal interest to know whether one is indeed a child of God and an heir to a heavenly inheritance. Is it possible for one to know that his sins are all forgiven? Pardon, justification, regeneration, and adoption are the logical and natural steps according to the constitution of man's nature and the Divine order. They are each and all involved in the common Methodist use of the word conversion. May one know that he is truly converted with certainty? Yes.

We have now gone over the grounds upon which knowledge may be based. We have seen, from quotations from our hymns and from the Scriptures and from the works of John Wesley, that such knowledge is possible. Many indeed may not clearly note the steps involved in conversion, but they may still come to the knowledge practically. On the other hand, those who are instructed in the ways of God have placed before them the open path, which following they will assuredly come to know by the fourfold testimony that they are converted and saved. The testimony of personal consciousness; the intellectual testimony; the testimony of the Holy Spirit; the logical testimony, or the testimony of the fruits -- and there is no reason why they should not be conjoined in the experience of intelligent persons when taught from the Scriptures -- and so banish every fear, elucidate all perplexities, and triumph over all doubts. If there be patient continuance in welldoing, combined with unfaltering faith, the blessed results so much to be desired will be realized.

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