

Spiritual Fruit Production

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SPIRITUAL fruitfulness glorifies God, demonstrates discipleship, and discloses the quality of the tree. "Filled with the fruits of righteousness," was Paul's prayer for the Philippian Christians.

A skilled horticulturist recently advocated two principles, viz.—"First, 'Grow only the best fruits.' Secondly, 'Use only a few carefully selected varieties.'" Paul gave similar advice nineteen centuries ago to the Galatians. He declared that certain fruits were worse than worthless, they were corrupt, dealing death, not life. They had no commercial value, so to speak, in the spiritual market, as reputable people would not buy them. He classified them as "fruits of the flesh," known as—"Adultery, Fornication," and such like. He commended certain varieties of spiritual fruits that had stood the test of experience in every age and clime. They were "Fruit of the Spirit," shrinkable, always fresh, luscious, wholesome. He named nine special varieties, such as—"Love, Joy, Peace," and such like. Those fruits, like the standard Crawford peach and California seedless orange, are always in popular demand with people of knowledge and experience.

Fruits have a law of orderly progression from blossom to maturity. The plantlet of to-day will not yield ripe fruit to-morrow. Have patience like God. "In his season."

Genius for producing fruit has an orderly development. The expert fruit producer has slowly mastered the nature of seeds, plants, nourishment, treatment, etc., through observation, experiment and experience. As order, beauty and fruitfulness appeared in the fields, a similar development of order and beauty took place in the mind. The expert producer inside mind advanced together. Neither the mind nor the garden could be matured horticulturally alone. Mind and matter are wedded. Matter is the ladder; mind is the climber. This law holds spiritually. We behold a ripe Christian like the late Hon. Mr. Young, of Galt, whose heart was like a garden full of precious fruit. Upwards of seventy years were spent in ripening those fruits. How were they produced? Well, he took a deep interest in society, in his neighborhood, Church, city, Province and Dominion, working zealously to produce truth, honesty, justice, love and goodness in the great multitude. He gave his mind, heart, pen and tongue through years to enriching and perfecting society. To this end he counselled with God; he tolled with Christ, he sought the Spirit and studied the Bible. Years passed, and lo! he and his companions discovered that the graces and virtues which he sought to propagate in society had matured in the garden of his own heart. F. W. Robertson said, "He who performs an act of humbleness has the spirit of humbleness deepened in his own heart." Thus the mother who strives to set up Eden in the heart of her children finds Paradise set up in her own.

Therefore physical nature and society afford men golden opportunities for orderly progress towards maturity. By working on the problems presented by the universe Godward. Working out the mathematical problems in nature without, man is fashioned into a mathematician within. Solving the astronomical problems of the heavens above man is made an astronomer below. Mastering geological problems beneath his feet, man becomes a geologist. Man masters the ocean and becomes a navigator. The without and the within go hand in hand.

Society is man's second agency towards the goal. The serious and judicial citizens undertake by the announcement of

general principles and the formulation of wise laws to perfect society. But lo! and behold! they are changed into politicians and fashioned into statesmen, and parliaments arise. Thoughtful citizens attack ignorance and challenge misconception, unfolding stores of knowledge in an orderly fashion. But lo! as they labor on society, the teacher, the philosopher, the scientist, the professor and the university spring into being. Generous hearted men go forth to heal the wounds and cure the maladies of society, and lo! the physician, the surgeon and

medical college bloom forth. Zealous people go forth to heal the spiritual sores of society, unbelief, hatred, vice and selfishness. They cultivate among the people love, goodness, virtue, truth, and find their own heart garden full of these ripe fruits anon. Man develops spiritual manhood by investing his gifts in activities to bless his fellow man. Man reaches God *via* his neighbor.

The principle of spiritual fruit culture is to forget self, like Jesus and Paul, and "go about doing good," setting up the kingdom of God, cultivating in other hearts and lives the fruits of the spirit, and lo! the seed handled will fall on the soil of our own heart, and behold a golden harvest!

"Blessed Are They That Hunger"

REV. J. W. MAGWOOD.

WE have here an acknowledgment that man is a hungry creature.

This indeed, is his distinguishing characteristic. "As hungry as a bear," we sometimes say, but man is infinitely hungrier than a bear. He has an hundred appetites where the bear has one. The bear, with his stomach full, goes off to his den to sleep, but man with his physical needs supplied is more restless and discontented than ever and is off, like Alexander of old, to other worlds to conquer.

The inspired penman has said "that godliness with contentment is great gain." There is a sense in which this is true, but another sense in which it is not and never can be true. The most absolutely discontented people in the world are the godly people. It is simply impossible to satisfy them. One object achieved becomes the inspiration for larger and more far-reaching enterprise. The godly races are the masterful, conquering races, they will yet subdue the whole earth. Godliness and contentment are contradictory terms. Were it not for this holy discontent which Christ has inspired in the hearts of his people we might as well despair of ever saving the world. St. Paul says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark." Now it is to this divine discontent that we owe all progress of every worthy kind.

And the more you educate man and the higher he climbs the ladder of human attainment the hungrier he becomes. This is well illustrated on the mission field. The late Rev. Dr. John G. Paton told us of the effect of the gospel upon the inhabitants of the New Hebrides. As they gradually waked up, their wants increased until at length those who aforesaid were naked savages roaming the wilderness, demanded clothing, properly cooked food, respectable dwellings and all the conveniences of civilized life. So it ever is, and when a man or a nation ceases to have these larger hungers he or it is dead and only awaits the hour of burial.

When the Pharisee stood up in "meeting" and thanked God that he was so good and expressed great satisfaction with himself, he proclaimed himself to the world a moral dwarf, but when the poor publican would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner," he uttered an infallible prophecy of his own future greatness. Upon our attitude implies that there is more than one thing for which a man may hunger, therefore our appetites must be disciplined. In the matter of food and drink the animal is guided by instinct, but not so man. Man must exercise discretion, he must make intelligent choices.

So too in intellectual hunger, for not all books are good nor all papers. The same critical vigilance must be exercised with regard to social hunger. Perhaps more people are damned on the one hand and saved on the other through their social instincts than in any other way. There are many doors open to those who are seeking social satisfaction. The theatre, the concert hall, the bar-room, the pool room, the public library, the Y.M.C.A. and the churches are all extending their invitations to one, one must exercise wise discretion. But the beatitude pronounces blessing upon those who hunger for righteousness, upon those who hunger for liberty and freedom and opportunity and cleanliness and purity and beauty and fellowship and Christ and God and heaven, and assures us that all such shall be satisfied.

But when Christ says blessed are they who hunger he is not promising a reward for perfection, but pronouncing a benediction upon all those who aspire, who long for righteousness, who are of the right attitude to God. And this hunger for righteousness is present and touches this world. Men thirst for righteousness here and now. They are not satisfied to wait till they get to heaven to obtain justice. They want it now and why should they not have it? This is God's world and men are his creatures, his sons. There is nothing against which men kick so hard and so legitimately as injustice. To be denied their God-given rights, their right to life itself, their right to freedom, their right to make an honest livelihood for themselves and their families, is more than men can be reasonably expected to stand without protest.

But this hunger for righteousness is also subjective. When men hunger for righteousness they hunger for God and God comes in to fill the soul with his own presence, and in that presence there are the highest and deepest and holiest satisfactions.

How Many in the Ark?

Little Harry, Kitty and Jane received a Noah's ark from their Christmas tree. Having divided the animals to their satisfaction, Harry said to Kitty: "I give you six pigs for a horse, then you will have twice as many animals as I."

Said Kitty to Jane: "I'll give you fourteen sheepies for one horse, then you'll have three times as many animals as I."

"Oh, no," said Jane to Kitty. "I'll give you four cows for a horse, then you'll have six times as many animals as I."

How many animals were there in that Noah's ark?—*Sol.*