

Evidence of the True New Birth

by Stella Paterson

In the "Christian" community we see vast multitudes who name the Name of Christ. What is it that leads people to the place where they lay claim to that Name? Is it because of the apostate gospel? What do the unbelieving see in the masses of 'christians' that might attract them to this One who's Name is above all names? What kind of witness is the modern-day Christian? We could ask the question, what kind of witness are we? Do our lives point to Jesus? What (or who) do the unbelievers see in us?

Let's explore what the Bible says about the evidence of a true new birth - the only way to become a disciple of Jesus. How, then, do we follow Him and learn of Him? What does He ask of us?

The new birth transpires when we come to Christ and allow His Life to begin living through us. That is why it is referred to as the "new birth." The old heredity of mortal flesh is replaced by a new heredity, with the entrance of the Life-giving Spirit of the risen Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:45 tells us that "*the first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam [Jesus] was made a quickening spirit.*" To "quicken" means to "revitalize" and to "revitalize" means to "*bring vitality back to after a decline.*" Although the first man was made a living soul, the "*decline*" to mortal flesh [death] came with the knowledge of good and evil. But Jesus came as a "quickenning Spirit" to bring Life to all who would repent of "self" and the flesh life and come to Him. Like He told Nicodemus, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" (John 3:6)

What is the evidence of one who has been "revitalized," or "regenerated" to use a term we are more familiar with? It is the "quickenning Spirit" who regenerates us, giving us a new heredity. Therefore, the evidence of this completely new heredity would be **Fruit of the Spirit**. It is not a great mystery - it is 'natural' in one who has died to self and is risen with Christ.

In his wonderful letter to the Galatians, Paul the Apostle very eloquently and forcefully shows the difference between flesh and Spirit. In the 5th chapter he tells how flesh manifests, with a list of things that most Christians would agree are very "sinful". Here is what Paul said: "*Now the **works of the flesh are manifest**, which are these; fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, division, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they which **practise** such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*" (Galatians 5:19-21) Why do they "practice such things"? It is because they are flesh.

If we study the whole book of Galatians, or even just that one chapter, we will see that Paul is speaking of the manifestation of flesh - not merely "sins". His next words are: "**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts [Greek: 'influences and longings'] thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not be vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.**" (Galatians 5:22-26) The 26th verse indicates how the context of Paul's message is "relationship one with another." We can also see this in his next words with the beginning of "Chapter 6."

A closer look at the Fruit of the Spirit

In one who is truly born from above, having the new heredity birthed by the Spirit of God, there will be a manifestation of fruit of the Spirit. It will not be works of the flesh. Try as we might, we can never duplicate the Spirit's fruit - our efforts will be fruitless, futile and anything but pleasing to God. This is where faith comes in, with its definition of "entrusting one's spiritual wellbeing to Christ." And like Hebrews 11:6 tells us, "*Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to God.*"

According to Paul, this is the fruit of the Spirit: "**love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.**"

The very first and most important fruit of the Spirit is LOVE. Of those who receive Jesus as their Life, He said this in John 13:35: "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have **love one to another.***" There again is the reference to relationship.

What is love?

The Greek word "agape" is translated "love" and means "*affection or benevolence.*" In the study of "love" you will find all references using this word "agape." If you read all those references you will see the importance of this most prominent "fruit."

1 Corinthians 13 tells us that if we have no love, all else is worth nothing. But this "love" is not of our doing; it is Fruit of the Spirit. Oh, yes, we can love with human love and emotion but the only LOVE that is of value to God is the love that comes from Him. He is Love, and with the new heredity we have His love in us for we are dead and our "*life is hid with Christ in God.*" (Colossians 3:3) How can we not love when LOVE has made His abode in us? How many times do we find ourselves in a situation where it is only by the Grace of God that we can have love for someone who, in our own strength, it is impossible to love? This is where the Holy Spirit comes in. If we, like Paul, will die daily, God's love will surely manifest. "*We know that we have passed out of death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death.*" (1 John 3:14)

What is joy?

The Greek word translated "joy" is "chara" and means "*cheerfulness, that is, calm delight.*"

In John 15:10-12, Jesus shows the relevance of "love" and "joy". Look at what He said: "*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my **love**; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that **my joy** may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, even as I have loved you.*"

In one who is truly born from above, there will be "*cheerfulness, that is, calm delight.*" Each day can be filled with a sense of the presence of Jesus. This is what He wants for us. In John 17:13, in His prayer to the Father, Jesus said "*But now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that **they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.***"

We also have Paul's words in Romans 14:17 where he tells us, "*For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and **joy** in the Holy Ghost.*" The context of the passage tells us that our walk with Jesus is not about what we eat or drink, or whether we do or do not; all these things pertaining to life in the flesh. Paul also speaks of judging others by our standards. The true Kingdom of God is none of those things, but it is "*righteousness, and peace, and **joy** in the Holy Ghost.*" If only we could take our eyes off of this life in the flesh and walk IN HIM. Then, and only then, will we know true Joy.

What is peace?

In the above quote, Paul included both **peace** and **joy** along with "righteousness."

"Peace" is translated from the Greek word "eirene" and literally means "*peace.*" The Hebrew word for "peace" is "salem" and makes up part of the word "Jerusalem" which is the name given to the Holy City, the Bride of Christ. The meaning of the Hebrew word is "*founded peaceful.*" Is it any wonder there is so much opposition to peace in the earthly city of Jerusalem?

The fruit of peace is ours and we will be a part of the New Jerusalem, the "founded peaceful," because we have the new heredity by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised this when He said, "*Peace I leave with you, **my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.***" (John 14:27)

In Romans 15:13, Paul the Apostle said "*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and **peace in believing**, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost.*" There again we have reference to both joy and peace as well as the "power of the Holy Ghost." Notice, too, that it is "*in believing* [Greek: 'entrusting

our spiritual wellbeing to Christ]." We will never know the true peace of God unless we die to the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit and allow His Life to live through us. We cannot "work out" our spiritual wellbeing - we must let go and let God. That is not an uncommon phrase which I'm sure we have all heard, but to "let go and let God" is a good way to describe death to self.

What is longsuffering?

From the Greek word "makrothumia" we get "*longanimity*" or "*forbearance*" which has been translated "longsuffering." The word "longanimity" means "*patient endurance of injuries*" or "*patient restraint*."

Paul the Apostle told the Ephesians, "*I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with **longsuffering**, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" (Ephesians 4:1-3) Again, we have other Fruit of the Spirit included in the passage - meekness, love and peace.

The same Greek word was also translated "patience" as we read in the great "faith" chapter in Hebrews 6:12: "*That ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and **patience** inherit the promises*" Of course, the "imitation" is not of our flesh but through "reliance upon Christ for salvation" [faith], with His Spirit's fruit of "*patient endurance*" evidenced in our lives.

Have you ever tried in your own strength to be longsuffering when provoked to the limit? It is impossible, isn't it? What is impossible with man is possible with God.

What is kindness?

"Kindness" is translated from the Greek word "chrestotes" which means "*usefulness, that is, moral excellence (in character or demeanor)*." In the revised KJV, the word "gentleness" is found only as "fruit of the Spirit" in Gal. 5:22.

Here are some examples of the use of "chrestotes":

"*Behold then the **goodness** and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, **God's goodness**, if you continue in **his goodness**: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*" (Romans 11:22) How do we continue in His goodness? By entrusting our spiritual wellbeing to Christ.

The folly of operating in the knowledge of good and evil, with the old heredity, can be seen in Romans 3:12 where Paul is referring to both Jew and Gentile. Here, the word "good" is used in translation of "chrestotes": "*They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth **good**, no,*

not so much as one." Try as we might, we can never be good. What may look like "kindness" to others can even result in the approval of man. But "*moral excellence in character or demeanor*" comes only from God. It is fruit of His Spirit.

In this passage, we find "kindness" as well as other fruit of the Spirit. "*Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, **kindness**, humility, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any: even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye.*"

What is goodness?

The Greek word "agathosune" is defined as "*goodness, that is, virtue or beneficence.*" "Beneficence" is "*the quality of being kind or doing good,*" according to Webster's dictionary.

Paul the Apostle recognized that "quality" in those he was addressing when he said, "*And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of **goodness**, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.*" (Romans 15:14)

Paul's constant prayer was that Christ would be seen in those to whom he wrote and spoke. It was his deep desire and heart-cry, himself knowing the power of the Holy Spirit and the necessity to walk by the Spirit. To the Thessalonians, he wrote "*Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his **goodness**, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12) Paul did not use empty words for the sake of filling up the parchment; his words always carried a powerful message.

It is possible to fill our days with "doing good," but is it from God? Is it His Spirit leading and directing us as the inner Voice from within our spirit? Or is it from our mind, with our thoughts as to 'what can I do FOR God today?' He wants nothing from us but our absolute surrender. How many times have we missed His best because we are so busy trying to DO our best? He must be so tired of hearing us ask for His blessing on the things we think WE should do for Him.

Does this mean we do nothing? Not at all! Our life can be very full of ministering to the needs of those whom God brings across our path. If we live by His design rather than our own, whatever we do in obedience to Him will be far more effective. Picture our Lord preparing a soul to receive Him and placing them in our path, but we have made OUR plan so we rush to do our "ministry" and fail to see that one whose life we are meant to minister Jesus' Life to. If Jesus went aside to spend time in prayer with the Father, how much more should we do the

same? God is able to accomplish far more in less time if we would only love and worship Him first in complete surrender!

What is faith or faithfulness?

The revised KJV uses the word "faith" in Galatians 5:22, while the older 1611 version uses "faithfulness." It is translated from the Greek word "pistis" which means "...*especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly constancy in such profession...*" This would indicate that both faith and faithfulness are fitting, depending on the context. We must keep in mind that it is fruit of the Spirit - not of "self".

I recall hearing a preacher of "grace" say that it is not necessary to "believe" because "believing" is something we do. He had no idea of the definition of "faith" or "believing." Both are the opposite of "doing" - they are about BEING in Christ, having died to self. That same man is now a universalist, has divorced his wife and announced to the world that he is "gay." He believes that we don't have to "believe" but that God's grace covers all and that all will be saved. He sat with my husband and I one time and said that he wished he had time to spend in the Word like I was doing. I had been sharing some of the riches the Lord had revealed to me. But he was so busy coming up with new material to teach at his seminars to the increasing number of "followers" that he had no time for Jesus. Look where that got him. The teaching he previously did was excellent but he got off into the flesh because he neglected his spiritual life and the faith he once had.

The fact that "faith" is fruit of the Spirit can be seen in this verse: "*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the **faith of Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in [Greek: 'entrusted our spiritual wellbeing to'] Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the **faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*" (Galatians 2:16) Without the keeping power of the Holy Spirit we can never be justified; we cannot do it on our own through the works of any law; whether Moses' Law or a man-made law.

Another example of "faith" can be seen in Paul's words to the Ephesians. "*For by grace are ye saved through **faith** [reliance upon Christ for salvation]; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*" (Ephesians 2:8-9) "Faithfulness" comes by the power of the Spirit of Grace, and "grace" is the "*divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life.*" What could be more descriptive of the Holy Spirit's work in us?

Look again at the phrase, "**work of faith with power**" found in a previous quote under "goodness." (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12) The "work of faith" is instrumental by a "relation of rest" [with] in "power" [Greek: 'dunamis'] - the wonderful, miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.

What is meekness?

From the Greek word "praotes" we get the definition of "meekness" as used by the translators of the KJV Bible. The actual definition is "*gentleness; by implication humility.*"

The word "meekness" was used in the earlier quote of Ephesians 4:1-3. We also find it in 1 Timothy 6:10-11, which tells us, "*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after, have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after [Greek: 'pursue'] righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, **meekness.***" Paul included the additional fruit of "love" and "faith" in his words to Timothy.

True *gentleness and humility* will be evident in one who pursues a daily relationship of surrender to the Holy Spirit. Remember what Paul said in Romans 8:13: "*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye **through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body,** ye shall live.*" The deeds which must be mortified are all deeds of the flesh - good and bad.

What is temperance?

The Greek word "egkrateia" is defined as "*self control (especially continence).*" Of course, the "self-control" would not be accomplished by "self" but by the Holy Spirit's empowerment to keep us from getting into "self" and, ultimately, walking by the flesh and not the Spirit.

I recall one day, after spending time with the Lord in prayer, it was necessary to go downtown and run some errands. While driving down the avenue, another driver came from a side street and cut me off. My reaction amazed me. I didn't get angry, honk my horn, or even utter a word about the other person's driving. The Lord must have heard my thoughts of amazement because He said it was because I had been with Him and HIS Spirit manifested HIS fruit. I know this is a rather homely example, but it really is possible to walk by the Spirit. For this to become a reality, we must spend quality time with Jesus, or "pray without ceasing" in a moment by moment love relationship with Him.

In a powerful passage by the Apostle Peter, we read "*Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge **temperance;** and in your **temperance** patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness love of the brethren; and in your love of the brethren love. **For if these things are yours, and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.*" (2 Peter 1:5-9)

Like Paul, Peter does not stoop to trifling words but speaks strongly of the need to walk by the Spirit.

No "law against" the Fruit?

In verse 23 of Galatians 5, right after "temperance," we find the phrase "*against such there is no law.*" This is not only in the KJV but all versions seem to have followed suit, but does it make the translation accurate? It is confusing.

Although the Greek word "kata" has varied uses and is translated "against" in some verses, it was mistakenly used in place of the more accurate "according to," "pertaining to" or even "touching." The phrase "*against such there is no law*" should read "*pertaining to such there is no law.*" God does not ask us to produce "fruit," therefore there is no law because laws are of the flesh to be obeyed in our own strength. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is HIS WORK in and through us. It is anything but "self". (Interesting note: The Greek word "anti" means "opposite" and is used very few times in the New Testament and not even once as "against.")

These words of Paul's are so powerful: "*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*" (Romans 13:14) It is not about "getting into sin" as perceived by religious, self-righteous people. It is about making no *provision for the flesh*, which includes judging and self-righteousness. One of the hardest things to do is to allow this area of our flesh to be crucified. But we must! We dare not revert to operating with the knowledge of good and evil, which is what that is. If we want all that Jesus has for us, we MUST DIE to everything that would quench the Spirit's flow in our life.

When we come to Christ, He keeps us here; He does not take us to be with Him. This is so that we can be His witnesses in the earth. This describes it well: "*He that believeth on [Greek: 'entrusts his spiritual wellbeing to'] me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit...)*" (John 7:38-39a) We are to be channels for the flow of that Living Water so that others may come to Jesus.

I will close with these very sobering words from our Lord's lips: "*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without me ye can do nothing.** If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*" (John 15:5-6)