

**"THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT"****Introduction**

1. Divisions of this Epistle:
  - a. The gospel of grace
  - b. The nature and necessity of faith
  - c. The Spirit and the believer
2. Our text is from the third division
3. This is the true order: gospel / faith / holy life.

**DOCTRINE**: The gospel produces Christian character – nothing else can produce it but belief of the truth

**1. CHRISTIAN CHARACTER IMPLIED BY ITS OPPOSITE**

- 1) Paul calls it: "the works of the flesh" (v.19): "flesh" is human nature without grace.
- 2) Sin is something "manifest" = for all to see.  
Sin is a force or power in fallen man and it is visible by its behaviour.
- 3) We might say that there are 3 broad classes of sins here –
  - (i) wrong behaviour between men & women (v.19)
  - (ii) false and corrupt forms of worship (v.20)
  - (iii) wrong attitudes towards other people generally (v.20-21)
- 4) All such behaviour is very common in this world because human hearts are deeply influenced by sin.

**OBSERVE**: When the gospel declines all these old evils grow and multiply – society slides downhill – there is no brake put on human conduct because the heart of man, apart from the gospel, is without the Spirit of God.

**APPLICATION**:

- (i) We are shocked by these things but we know that they are inevitable.
- (ii) We all have need to repent, as Christians.

**2. CHRISTIAN CHARACTER**

- 1) It is called "the fruit of the Spirit" because it is the result of the Holy Spirit's indwelling:  
**ILLUSTRATION**: a tree and its fruit.  
**OBSERVE**: Every tree is known by its fruit.
- 2) Conversion means that we come under a new influence: no longer that of Satan but of God's Spirit:  
**ILLUSTRATION**:  
a horse – change of rider  
a car – change of driver  
a class of children – change of teacher
- 3) But the Spirit's influence is greater still, being that of a powerful influence from within our very heart and soul.  
**ILLUSTRATION**: a house under new ownership
- 4) So the believer's condition is very different from that of the unbeliever:
  - (i) his heart is alive to what is good:  
**ILLUSTRATION**: magnetism
  - (ii) he is aware of God's demand on his life: v.14 "the law"
  - (iii) he is "led" by God's indwelling Spirit: v.18  
**ILLUSTRATION**: led by the hand
  - (iv) grace is being imparted to his soul = energy to do what is good.  
**OBSERVE**:
    - (i) The Christian's duty is to mortify sin.
    - (ii) Don't misunderstand v.18

3. **CHRISTIAN CHARACTER IS MARKED BY GRACES WHICH ARE GOD-LIKE AND HEAVENLY**

- 1) The Apostle refers to nine of the graces which make up Christian Character:
  - (i) love: the greatest of all graces
  - (ii) joy: happiness flowing from forgiveness
  - (iii) peace: contentment of soul and life
  - (iv) longsuffering: patience in all our trials
  - (v) gentleness: harmless and kind
  - (vi) goodness: affectionate – well-motivated
  - (vii) faith: perhaps faithfulness
  - (viii) meekness: a lowly opinion of oneself
  - (ix) temperance: control over ourselves
  
- 2) The Christian has these graces:
  - (i) not perfectly but in the bud
  - (ii) sanctification is a growing in these
  - (iii) our failings are a grief to us
  
- 3) **OBSERVE**
  - (i) what a blessing these graces bring!
  - (ii) these are the things found in heaven
  - (iii) we need mortification and vivification

**CONCLUSION**

Rutherford:

"Break off a sin or a piece of a sin each day."

<p><b>PSALM</b></p> <p><b>112: 5 – 10</b></p> <p><b>120: 1 – 7</b></p> <p><b>131: 1 -3</b></p>
--