

Jan 4th 2013: The Deeper Life is a Fruit-bearing life

When we immigrated to Canada many years ago, we bought an old house in Toronto. In the garden were four fruit trees but of which kinds I did not know, not being a horticulturist. One summer's evening my wife and I sat on our garden swing listening to a strange groaning noise as though someone was in pain. Then I noticed a branch on a tree was straining and swelling until out popped a beautiful red apple. Then another apple came with accompanying groaning and swelling. My wife and I sat astonished! We looked at the other trees as they also produced fruit with effort and groans. Soon we had a wonderful orchard of apples, plums and cherries.

Now I'm sure none of my readers believe what I have just written – such foolishness! No fruit ever grows that way. It's just as foolish as the man or woman who tries to produce the fruit of the Spirit by **their own efforts!** It cannot be done! Such fruit only comes to the one who is '*like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth his fruit in his season;*' Psalm 1:3. Today's devotional by A B Simpson identifies that river of water as the Holy Spirit without whom the fruit of the Spirit would be impossible. Such fruit must not be identified with personal attributes – love, joy, peace, etc., admirable though they may be, even in an unbeliever. The natural man cannot receive them – they are foolishness to him (1 Cor 2:14). Only the Spirit-filled believer can have these in them and they do not grow 'overnight'.

The Psalmist declares that the fruit-bearing man is as a tree "planted". This implies stability and endurance. Jesus said it this way; "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me" (John 14:4). Every born-again believer has Christ within and is "in Christ", but many are still carnal, having not come to the place of **abiding** (dwelling habitually).

I suggest that this is another aspect of the "deeper life" – an abiding life – a fruit-bearing life. **"O Lord, as I hunger after You, please establish me and prune me to be a tree bearing fruit in its season."**