

Anjous for Jesus

Jerry A. Stevens

January 21, 1998



Courtesy Alasam's Photostream

The grocer's sticker on the Anjou pear I just happily devoured read: "RIPE WHEN YIELDS TO GENTLE PRESSURE." Believe it: Pears (also, notoriously, peaches) most certainly are fittest to eat when they yield to a *gentle* pressure that confirms perfect ripeness. Too much pressure ruins the fruit by causing unsightly and unwholesome bruises; too little fails of detecting the crucial attribute of perfect, moderate softness.

Eaten before fully ripe, Anjous are disappointingly hard and lacking in that familiar mouth-watering succulence so characteristic only of really superior pears. Eaten just a little too late, they assault one's sensitive taste buds, savoring either of excessive mealiness (Ugh! gritty as sandpaper) or of mush (Yecch! tart and sloppy). Yes, timing is everything when it comes to the optimum gastronomic/aesthetic enjoyment of Anjous.

Hmm. "Ripe when yields to gentle pressure" suggests major implications for the way we choose to live out our days. If we've never felt the gentle pressures that test our ripeness of fruitage, or character, then it is high time we felt them, if we are to mature (ripen) into the sort of persons God can both trust and count on to cooperate with Him in our own salvation, as well as that of others within our unique spheres of influence. On the other hand, if for too long we have ignored the gentle pressure of the Holy Spirit's wooing us to Godlikeness, we end up as unpalatable as

the proverbial lukewarm Christians that Jesus reflexively spews out of His mouth (see Revelation 3:16).

Can there exist indeed such an oxymoron as “lukewarm Christian”? Decidedly not. The two words are mutually exclusive, as Jesus makes abundantly clear to us through John the Revelator and manifestly in His Own life and teachings. Lukewarm Christians are about as palatable to Jesus as Anjous devoid of essential ripeness are to us.

Brothers and sisters, how should we then live? There’s no escaping it: Our plain duty is to yield graciously to the pressure of the gentle, but persistent, Holy Spirit. Just as soon as we hear Him speaking to our mind and heart and soul, the prudent (yea, the only *sane*) thing to do is to obey instantly. Think of the trouble we shall spare ourselves by so doing. Running ahead of Him by doing that which we may deem right but which is contrary to His leading only reveals us to be *underripe* specimens—too hard to yield to the molding action of the unerring Master Potter, fit only to be cast upon the rubbish heap of unfulfilled mortality. Ignoring His pleadings makes us *overripe* specimens—the stiff-necked habit of cleaving to the world just a little too long makes us mushy and unpalatable, and wholly unfit for the Master’s use.

I am determined to prove my Christian ripeness by yielding to the gentle pressure that only the genius of the Holy Spirit knows just how firmly to apply. Above all things, I must not disappoint my Saviour, Whose example of ready obedience to all of His Father’s plans is nonpareil throughout all history, Who died that I might live. Many, very many, of those plans were not only unwelcome but thoroughly repugnant to Christ’s humanity; yet this did not deter Jesus from carrying out His mission—a most inglorious death for an ignoble race of abject sinners. Yet how pleasant to the Father’s palate must have been the savor of His Son’s abundantly fruitful service. The quintessential Anjou, with all the delectable qualities of only the most ideally ripe fruit, was He by His life of uninterrupted, ready compliance to the Father’s will.

Will you pray for me that I will be found faultless when Jesus returns to claim the fruitage of His vineyard? May I pray for you, that you will also be found faithful? “Herein is My Father glorified,” Jesus says, “that ye bear much fruit.” Let us hasten to determine to yield to His gentle pressure, to become (dare I say it?) Anjous for Jesus?