

**Articles and Sermons :: Maturity - The Lord's Desire for His People****Maturity - The Lord's Desire for His People - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/4/30 14:43**

Maturity - The Lord's Desire for His People

by T. Austin-Sparks

The great feature of the dispensation in which we live is the gathering out from the nations of the members of the Body of Christ, and then the bringing of them on to as full a measure of maturity as is possible. It is not only the salvation of souls, and it is not only the collecting of believers into a spiritual Body. It is afterward - their coming to full growth - which represents the supreme interest and concern of the Lord in this dispensation.

I think that is perfectly clear as being a great feature of this time: that maturity - full growth, completeness - is the desire of the Lord for His people. Surely this is unmistakable when you read the Word of the Lord along that line. That immaturity is widespread is also, I think, unmistakable. That the Lord is moving in the midst of His own people to bring to fulness as many as will go on with Him into that fulness is, again, a thing which I think is patent.

We know the widespread immaturity; we know that there are multitudes of saved ones - those who are the Lord's people, yet living in the shadows of immaturity - who will not pay the price of going on with the Lord; and we might be tempted, like one of old, to say, "What shall this man do?" And the Lord would say, "What is that to thee?" In other words: "It is not for you to make the immaturity of other people your standard, but what I desire is to be the thing which governs your own thought and occupies you entirely."

So, completeness and fulness being the purpose and will of God, we recognize the meaning of all that the Lord is doing. If the Lord is really bent upon bringing believers to full growth - to spiritual maturity - as one of His supreme objectives in this age, then He will consider no price too great to reach His end; and that fact will explain all the mystery of His ways with His children and all the strange happenings which sometimes seem to be His working against His own interests. To us, very often, it looks as though the Lord were working against our interests and doing everything quite wrong. But the Lord is prepared to take risks (risks to the minds of poor finite people whose understanding is so limited) and to involve Himself in a good deal of misunderstanding if only, thereby, He can reach His end.

The believer has become possessed of an entirely new set of spiritual faculties and is a new spiritual entity - a different species of being, an entirely distinct creature. These spiritual faculties, by which alone the things of God can be known and entered into, have to be developed - have to grow - have to come to a place of spiritual efficiency... just as in the natural child, who has its faculties at birth but has to have a steady development of those natural faculties. The believer is born from above with an entirely new and different set of faculties from that with which he came into this world and which he has by nature, and it is those spiritual faculties and senses which have to be developed in order to make him full grown - spiritually efficient - in the Lord.

The Apostle Paul says that it is "those who have their senses exercised" for whom strong meat is the right kind of provision, and he is deploring the fact that - after years - the Hebrew saints are still unable to take strong meat, because their senses and faculties have not been developed.

The ways of the Lord are past finding out, and they must never be judged according to our human standards. The Lord allows catastrophe to overtake us... but with an end in view - something which, when it comes, will justify Him up to the hilt. You will then see that what you thought was the weakness of God has proved to be His strength; the breakdown has proved to be His supremacy; the foolishness of God has proved to be His wisdom; so He will be justified in the end. In this question of growth by exercise, you have that whole principle involved.

If you look at the passage in which the "exercise" is referred to, you will find that this exercise comes upon us in experiences which God produces:

"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord..."

"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit

of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

By what? By the chastening ("chastening" - a poor English word; better, "child-training," or "discipline") which God takes up with them.

God deals with you as with sons if you suffer chastening. He brings you as sons to maturity. The way the Lord handles you - that is the "exercise."

The Lord may get you off activities and shut you up to inactivity. You go through an awful time and say that the Lord has forsaken you and that all has gone wrong. What is it really? Why, it is growing pains! In the long run, it was not all wrong. .. it was all right. You came to know the Lord, whereas - before - your whole life was taken up with things. You have been shut up, but you have come to know the Lord inwardly; and you have come to a state of spiritual efficiency which is so much greater than before that you can now cope with the external situation. He was misunderstood, but He was working unto your efficiency - exercising you unto efficiency. These growing pains are terrible, but you cannot help anyone who is suffering from growing pains; you must just stand aside and watch him going through.

So through numerous and various directions this growth takes place by the painful exercise which is produced from the way the Lord is dealing with us. We do learn through suffering. Even the Lord Jesus was made "full grown" - complete - in this sense through suffering. We take the same way unto full growth. It is child training, discipline - learning by way of experience. That is chastening - making us sons out of children, full grown men out of infants.

I feel that we need to have more faith in the dealings of God with us along this line. It is painful, sometimes agonizing. What is the Lord doing? Why is there so little space between one thing and another? It does seem that the Lord is pressing to get us quickly to full growth - to get us to the place where we learn something.

The right attitude to take toward every trial which the Lord allows to come upon us - every fresh and difficult thing - is: What is it that the Lord has in view for us to attain to by this experience? It is not to destroy, but to build up; not to take from, but to increase; not to restrict, but to enlarge. Down in the deep place is some treasure of the Lord to be discovered. Some of us can say, "Yes, we have found it like that." We have gone into deep places, found fulness there, and come to know the Lord.

Do you see the one thing that is in view in this passage on "exercise"? It is "to discern"; it is spiritual intelligence that the Lord has in view. We are chosen to make us individually the centers of His own spiritual intelligence - to know Him for ourselves. He wants His children to be individually the centers of His own spiritual knowledge. Then, bringing us together in the one Spirit unto working the one work and thinking the one thing, He will get for Himself an instrument to govern the nations in the ages to come - an intelligent instrument which has come to know the Lord's heart by experience.

This faculty of spiritual intelligence, spiritual knowledge - the inwardness of everything - has to be developed so that we know the Lord within. Every experience deeper than the last means that we are out of our depth - we have not the resource in ourselves to meet the situation. Therefore, in the deep experience we come - by the sheer necessity of the situation - to lay hold of the something more that is in Christ for us; and, by having received that something more, we have grown that much.

We can take one of two attitudes toward the ways of God with us: we can get bitter, sour, hard; or we can be enlarged by exercise - developed by exercise - so as to increase capacity and to bring us into a large place in order that we may be His instrument for governing intelligently under His Headship in ages to come. Things that enter into our history we cannot always fathom; but the explanation which we can give is that, whatever there may be as second causes, the Lord is sovereign, and He thinks it worthwhile sometimes to allow what the world would call the most terrible thing to overtake us for the time being. While it would seem that His Name and interests suffer through that thing, He brings His people through it to a place of maturity; they get to know the Lord for themselves. Through these terrible things we find the Lord produces something that is very much more worthy of Himself in the life of His children. That is His justification - His vindication; if He could do it in any other way, He would. In the long run He does get spiritual maturity among His people; He gets them to the place where they know Him.

He wants to get us to a place where we know the Lord - where we have our senses exercised to know. The Lord give us grace to accept all His dealings with us in the light of His great purpose.

**Re: Maturity - The Lord's Desire for His People, on: 2005/4/30 19:55**

Besides the idea of dispensationalism in your Post, I whole heartily agree with it. The LORD has long patience for the fruit to come to maturity.

Very Good my Brother!

**Re: Maturity - The Lord's Desire for His People - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/5/1 6:49**

Quote:  
-----Besides the idea of dispensationalism in your Post, I whole heartily agree with it. The LORD has long patience for the fruit to come to maturity.  
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Karl, thank you for your encouragement, it is appreciated - I know that many of us feed on these messages of TAS.

Remember, that even though these are indeed my posts, I am not responsible for their content. I didn't even think too much of the dispensational aspect of the message - I was struck by the truth it conveys: The Lord's desire for all of us is to grow. And, if I am not mistaken, spiritual immaturity is THE plight of God's people today.

May we all seek after maturity, and I have the impression that much of what can contribute to our spiritual growth can be found right here on SI.

**Re: - posted by lastblast (), on: 2005/5/1 9:19**

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I agree. I think that is why many of us have been drawn here and continue to stay----to Grow in Him, through whatever means necessary. Thanks for posting that teaching. Blessings in Him, Cindy

**Re: Maturity - The Lord's Desire for His People - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/5/1 12:34**

Almost wanted to disagree with Karl, feeling he was understating it a bit :-P

This is just rich! And precisely what is happening in a personal way, just being schooled so much...

Looking back on things here and recalling to memory there were quite a few of us remarking that they felt they were in this period of just waiting on the Lord and it is very difficult to not get caught up in all the voices screaming for your attention to *go out and do something*, "go win souls", "go preach on a street corner", "go to the mission field", whatever it may be. And by all means if the Lord is telling you to do so, what's keeping you? By the very same token some it seems are being 'held' back as it were for various reasons that only He knows and more and more this seems to be the case for them.

Quote:  
-----This faculty of spiritual intelligence, spiritual knowledge - the inwardness of everything - has to be developed so that we know the Lord within. Every experience deeper than the last means that we are out of our depth - we have not the resource in ourselves to meet the situation. Therefore, in the deep experience we come - by the sheer necessity of the situation - to lay hold of the something more that is in Christ for us; and, by having received that something more, we have grown that much.  
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Development. It's not static, for some it is intercession and/or making disciples. Remember  
([http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic\\_id2428&forum34&post\\_id&refreshGo](http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id2428&forum34&post_id&refreshGo)) DANIEL NASH: PREVAILING PRINCE OF PRAYER ? That 'hidden' work, snatched this quick comment from th

ere:

*A burden of prayer will look like insanity to the outside world, and especially your Christian friends.*

Sorry, thoughts are jumping from thread to thread here. Lahry's comments ringing in the ears, still reading through Aaron's excellent article on 'pontification'... it still seems to keep boiling down to what the Lord would have us to *do*.

Quote:

-----that we know the Lord within  
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**Re: Maturity - The Lord's Desire for His People - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/5/1 14:28**

Quote:

-----This is just rich! And precisely what is happening in a personal way, just being schooled so much...  
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I think the important thing for us, is not really what we do, nor where we go, but to know Him. It is possible to be on the "mission field", active in your church or being busy in "the ministry", without knowing Him. The crucial meaning of the Christian life is:

"That they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.", John 17:3

The preeminent place of the Christian is to be and remain a disciple in the school of Christ.