

## **SENSITIVE FINGERS**

Harry Foster

MY friend Paul is blind. He lost his sight in the last world war, but he never ceases to thank God for this trial, for it was used to bring him to know Christ as his Saviour and Lord. He and his wife, Lily, are French, but they visit London occasionally and they once spent a few days in our home. Paul amazed us by his ability to learn his way about the house and by much more too. Of course, Lily was never far away from him, and indeed she is the best example I have ever seen of a Hobab, the man to whom Moses said: "thou shalt be to us instead of eyes" (Numbers 10:31).

Paul's hands also acted as eyes for him. One day they were examining our garden. Lily took him round, explaining the colors, letting him enjoy the scents, and then letting him feel the flowers. He had such sensitive fingers that he could get the full enjoyment of our Dutch tulips by feeling up the stem and then gently following the shape of the bloom with his hands. His fingers told him a great deal that we can only know because we have sight. One only had to ask him the time and he would quickly raise the cover of his wrist watch and then report the correct time without any hesitation at all. [79/80]

He managed wonderfully at mealtimes, too, with only a little occasional help from Lily. I noticed, however, that at breakfast he always refused marmalade. Now our continental friends usually seem to like English marmalade, especially the home-made kind, which ours was, so it rather surprised me to see that while Lily enjoyed toast and marmalade. Paul always said 'no', and kept to plain bread and butter. We even asked if he would prefer honey, but again he said 'No, thank you' to that and still kept to plain bread and butter. At last I asked him if he did not appreciate our English marmalade. He replied that he did, in fact he liked it very much, but still he would never have any.

I was so curious that at last I asked him the reason, and it was so interesting and so important that I would like -- with his permission -- to share it with you. His fingers were eyes to him, but only if they were clean. Anything sticky would spoil their

sensitive touch. Now, as you know, it is very difficult to eat bread and marmalade without getting just a little stickiness on your fingers, even if you have your sight. It may be so little that it does not matter to you or me, but supposing Paul wanted to feel the time on his special watch and had sticky fingers! He would not have been able to do it. So, although the marmalade was sweet and pleasant he refused it, so that he should not spoil his sensitive contact. The most important thing for Paul was to keep his fingers quite unsoiled in any way. He dare not allow anything, however nice, to interfere with this.

How many things there are in the life of a Christian which can spoil our spiritual sensitivity! They may be sweet things, they may be very good things in themselves, and yet they may make us insensitive to the will of God and to His gentle Holy Spirit. It is not a question of what others can do. The rest of us could rightly eat the marmalade, but Paul dare not do so. And although others may indulge in many things, we who love the Lord must give first priority to keeping our contact with Him.

There is only one way to do this, and this is to follow the example of my friend Paul, learning to say 'No, thank you' to all such things. This will help us to avoid losing our close contact with the Lord and keep us always sensitive to Him. It will help us to obey the command: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

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