

F.B. Meyer:

Our senses give warning signals when danger is near. This is perhaps their secondary use, but it is the most vital. The eye, ear, nose, the senses of taste and touch, are the channels through which the most exquisite pleasures are wafted to us--rapturous glimpses of natural beauty, sweet sounds, fragrant scents, delicious viands, and soft contacts; but they are also the avenues along which ride post-haste the couriers, warning of the approach of assassins that menace and imperil life. For the most part what is inimical to health is odious and distasteful to our senses, and the quicker these become the more likely we are to preserve the springs of life from being poisoned and vitiated.

We are told in more than one Scripture, and notably in Hebrews 5:14, that there are spiritual counterparts to our senses, and that we should exercise these to discern good and evil. It is highly important to do so; for as attention to the warning of the physical senses will preserve the health of our body, so attention to the warnings of our inner senses will forewarn and forearm against the influences that are hostile to spiritual life.

Take the Ear of the Soul. In the case of the savage the ear is trained to such precision as to detect the footfall of a stranger at an immense distance; and in the case of the trained musician to discriminate between the most delicate shades of sound. Indeed, it would be impossible to train a singer for a place in the front rank of the profession whose ear was not extremely delicate and sensitive; and natural gifts in this direction may be still further trained to almost any degree of nicety. If the ear is not sensitive to the slightest discord, the voice can never be modulated to the finest harmonies.

And is there anything more necessary than to have the inner ear trained and exercised by contact with the Divine notes of an infinite charity! You may hear people talking most discordantly with this, criticising their neighbors, discussing their friends, uttering sharp and unkind judgments, all of which would be impossible if their ears had only been educated to detect the discords of their speech. But they talk on for years in utter oblivion of their false and dissonant notes. Amid so much discordance let us constantly seek for a pure ear, which will tell us in a moment when we have spoken a single word that is inconsistent with the perfect harmonies of the nature of God, which is love.

The Eye of the Soul The eye detects the approach of danger, and, in the case of a savage, can do so in symptoms which are altogether meaningless to the ordinary vision. That bent blade of grass, that snapt twig, that almost imperceptible trail! Away on the mountain side the trained observer can see masses of troops where another finds only the shadows of passing clouds.

But the training of the eye of the soul is even more necessary, because it can anticipate the advent of temptation. It is bad when we have no warning of the stealthy approach of our worst adversary, till like a midnight assassin he has broken into the house of our life. Well is it when we can descry the gathering storm when it is still on the horizon, so as to reef our sails in time and be prepared for the squall; when we can detect the pitfall before we come to it; and see the brigand gang lying in wait before we reach the dark thicket; and anticipate complications and perplexities before we are amid them. By that clear prescience which is not the least of God's gifts we are the more likely to pass unscathed through life's ordeal because more able to appeal beforehand to Christ for succor.

The Scent of the Soul It is good to have a keen sense of smell; it will save us from many a noisome pestilence arising from the drain, or brooding in the plague-laden air. If it were not for this invaluable gift, we might linger and sleep amid deadly gases, unconscious of the peril we were incurring. It is well to have this sense exercised. I remember once, after a voyage across the Atlantic, visiting friends, who were spending their summer holidays within a mile of a sewage farm, the near neighborhood of which was not noticeable to them, but to which the pure ozone of the ocean had made me extremely sensitive.

If our soul's sense of smell were more keen, we should be quicker to perceive when there was impurity in the speech or behavior of our companions, and should turn from them with disgust. The pure lad would blush and hasten from the way of the ungodly and the seat of the scornful. The highly spiritual and nobly tempered woman would take no pleasure in the double allusions of the music-hall, or the highly spiced conversation of children of fashion. The pure in heart would rush from the obscenity and oaths with which too much of the talk of so-called gentlemen is interlarded, as if they had suddenly become aware of the presence of an open sewer.

The Taste of the Soul The sense of taste sits as a sentinel at the entrance of the alimentary canal to prevent hurtful and deleterious substances from entering. How often has our first bite of some fruit or food led us to

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eject it from our mouth with disgust, thereby saving our life! The rule is not invariable. There are substances which are most distasteful, but are nevertheless good as medicines, and palatable things are sometimes harmful to a degree; still, as a general rule, the palate may be trusted.

Now, how much evil might we be saved from, if only the taste of the soul were more highly educated in respect to the books which come into our hands. How often do young and inexperienced minds devour from beginning to end books, novels, treatises, which are highly inimical to their soul-life. If only they knew how to distinguish between good and evil, if only they could detect the subtle poison that had been instilled into those pages from the fangs of the great serpent, if only they were on the alert to reject that which blasts and blights the delicate growth of the better life,—how much suffering and consumption would be averted!

The Soul's Sense of Touch. The touch may be brought to an amazing degree of perfection, and become so sensitive that it can distinguish between the slightest variations in fabric or temperature. In members of the feline tribe the cat or tiger-- this sense is developed to its fullest perfection. But in man also it may become extremely acute.

Would that we might have that same sensitiveness to right and wrong, that We might with a touch be able to discern the one from the other, and have grace enough to accept the good and reject the evil. As the experienced hand can tell in a moment when a coin is light or not, so we might know whether a doctrine or statement tallied with the standard of God's truth or fell beneath it.

These distinctions are not to be learned in a moment. We may train our faculties from less to more; by reason of use they may be exercised; when the Spirit comes on us we shall, like our Master, be "quick of scent." But it is certain that we cannot long preserve the fine temper of the soul in such a world as this unless we carefully attend to the least monitions of the Divine Spirit operating through the senses of the soul.