

ferent from what it is, but purifying our imagination and cleansing our thoughts will in time transport our dreams into sinless domains.

Our responsibility for what our mind does in sleepless hours of night is of necessity far greater. For in the darkness of night our spirit can invite the world, or it can meditate and ponder on holy things. It can also toss itself about in us without will and without aim. What our spirit then must do in the darkness, is to open the door to holy things and dwell in a higher world. Even when in the midst of sleep there is a quarter of an hour of wakefulness the mind can and should engage itself with God. The first thought on awaking must be again of God. "O God, Thou art my God: early in the morning will I seek Thee" (Ps. 63:1 Dutch version). For him who so understands it, sleepless slumber is a spiritual gold mine.

In such sleepless nights many people have been wonderfully enriched in spiritual things. Here also is Divine mercy. Sleeplessness is occasioned by our misery, but this misery also God by his grace transposes into supreme mercifulness. In such nights God has remembered his own with such spiritual benefits that a night of sleep has sometimes seemed a loss. Divine work goes on through the hours of night in the souls of his elect in a way that glorifies his name.

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"I WAIT FOR THEE ALL THE DAY
LONG."

The Spirit, with the Father and the Son, maintains all power, and causes it to work not only in

forest and wilderness on earth, but also in sun, moon and stars. Wherever there is a creature, the Spirit operates in it. Without the operation of the Spirit no force of nature is even thinkable. And this spirit, which thus operates in every creature, is none other than the Holy Spirit, who is to be adored in the Triune Being as the third most holy Person. But this is the difference: This Spirit is not known nor worshipped in his holiness, as the Holy Spirit, save among creatures who are themselves spiritual of nature, and who have become conscious of their spiritual character. Above, the angels of God; here on earth, the children of men.

A star in the firmament is brute matter and has no knowledge of holiness. A plant is without any sense of it. And though Scripture attributes a soul to an animal, and though it has certain intelligence and power of will, an animal is outside of the sphere in which the holiness of the Lord is acknowledged. The connecting sense of the holiness of the Lord is found here on earth in man alone. Not immediately upon birth. The infant in the cradle lives only after the flesh. It knows nothing as yet of holy sensations. Only as it develops and matures, this sense is gradually awakened. Even then it often takes many long years, before the higher moral sense of the holinesses of God awakens sufficiently for the conscience to react forcibly against the unholinesses of this world.

But even so, it is all as yet outside of the holy sphere of our Pentecost. The church alone knows the grace of Pentecost. It is the holy privilege of the ransomed of the Lord. The world does

not know this grace and does not see it. It has not even the faintest idea of what this grace might be. For this very reason it should be strongly guarded against, that on the ground of this privilege, the church should imagine that the Spirit does not operate in this as yet unregenerated world, and that he is a total stranger at least to the forces of nature in the material, unconscious creation. This error is fundamental among those who are too mystical and over-spiritual. Hence it must every time be confessed again and brought to mind: The Spirit is in every creature. The Holy Spirit works in every creature of rational life. But the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, which the miracle of Pentecost brings, is only known and tasted in the church of Jesus Christ.

The working of the Spirit, the activity of the Holy Spirit, and the fellowship of this Holy Spirit must be collected in this mutual relation as in one bundle. Or else the child of God mercilessly abandons the unconverted world, in direct conflict with the prayer of the Lord: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that (in the world) Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (St. John 17:15).

And now the second point which should be carefully considered. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out for the first time and once for all, and he has been in the church ever since, never to leave her again, but to dwell in and with her forever more. But . . . and this is all too frequently forgotten. What is in the church is therefore by no means yet present in everyone that is counted in the church. The true church of the living God is the body of

Christ, the mystical body of which he is the Head; and in this mystical body the Holy Spirit dwells, first in the Head, and from this Head, along all articulations, tissues and veins inspires every one who as a living member has been incorporated in this Body, and lives in connection with this Body. It is not an individual here and an individual there, who each by himself receives the Holy Ghost, and who now by uniting together constitute the Body of Christ. A body does not originate in such a way, that first there are the members, and that afterward these individual members are joined together into a body. The body is conceived and born with the crust and with the beginnings in it of every member that later on is to come out from it. Even the beard, which only covers the chin in later years, is not brought to it from without, but grows from a germ which the infant at birth brought with it. And in this body is the life. Not in one member by itself. An amputated leg is dead. Even an arm that is still joined to the body can be rendered as good as dead, and only becomes alive again when from the body the blood flows into it.

And so it is with the Body of the Lord, which is the Congregation of the Saints. The head of that Body can not be touched. Christ is in glory. The Holy Spirit never departs from Him. And while Christ as the Head is inseparable from that Body, the Holy Spirit, the life of the Church, is always insured and guaranteed in that Sacred Head. However nearly life may be extinct at a given moment in the members of the Body, it flows with irresistible pressure from the Head to the members again. And even presently exercises

that wonderfully assimilating power again which shows itself so gloriously in every reveille. Of course, this Body is not identical with the visible church. But the visible church also is not alive save by the Holy Ghost, who, flowing out from the Head of the invisible Body of the Lord, keeps the church alive so long as she does not cut the vital connection with the invisible Body.

And this is the effect of this indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the church that he who is connected with this church in an organic, spiritual way, knows and tastes a fellowship with the Triune Being, such as is not possible outside of it. There is, indeed, a certain sense of the existence of God among the unconverted. Also a certain feeling of dependence upon a higher Power. The voice of conscience is also heard in their hearts. When advanced in years, they frequently think of what is to come after death. But not with all. Far from it. It can not be denied that the number of those who have no more concern about God than about their sin and about their future after death is steadily on the increase.

But this does not deny that in Christian as well as in heathen lands there are always many people who still hold a certain general religiousness in honor. But what these people altogether miss is not the working of the conscience, but fellowship with the Holy Ghost. And fellowship with the Holy Ghost is, of course, nothing else than fellowship with God himself. Not the fellowship of the flock with the Shepherd, not outward submission to the appointments of God in our lot of life, not an all-sided dependence upon God, but fellowship with God in the sense

of the immediate meeting of the Ego of God and the ego of the heart in the mysticism of grace.

We have heard of the holy Apostle, and in reading his Epistles we have a certain fellowship with the Man of Tarsus. But it would be something entirely different if we lived with St. Paul for a whole year. This difference applies here. You may have heard of God, of his wondrous deeds, of his virtues, of his powers, and God may still be a stranger to you. But fellowship with the Spirit allows the soul to meet God personally, to learn to know God personally, to associate with the Eternal Being personally, and even as a child with his father to hold converse with the Triune God.

This is what waiting on the Lord brings you. A friend meets friend and presently they part again. But a child waits for his father because he belongs with him and misses him when he is away. And so it is in this fellowship with God through the Holy Ghost. He who has come to know God personally as his Father and has been initiated in his secret fellowship, can not therefore always continue therein. The many activities of daily life do not allow it. The distractions of the world prevent it. We cut it off continually by sinful suggestions from our impure heart. And then the Lord frequently withdraws this fellowship from us in order to stimulate anew and make stronger the desire after it. But, and this is the characteristic, a child of God, who first enjoyed this fellowship, and lost it, misses it, he feels the need of it, and has no rest till it is found again; even on waking from sleep in the morning, the first impulse is to obtain this fellowship again.

Of two things one: either the child of God has this fellowship, or he longs for it, he prays for it, he waits for it all the day long (Ps. 25:5 Dutch version). In conversion it is a seeking for what was not as yet possessed. Afterward it is a seeking back what has been lost. And here also it applies: "He that seeks, shall find; he that knocks, it shall be opened unto him."

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"O GOD, MY GOD."

The flower-bud of prayer unfolds slowly in the soul of a child. Not that there is no certain sacred inclination to pray in the heart at a very early age. But while the bud is early set, the question is when it will blossom. For many months the young child was present when mother prayed, but had no understanding of it, and not infrequently disturbed mother's prayer by crying. But at last the moment arrives when for the first time in prayer it undergoes a peculiar sensation and is impressed by what is holy. Tender mother piety tries to confirm this impression. And before long the child kneels down when mother kneels, and when he is put to bed the first efforts are made to teach him to pray himself. Then mother folds the little hands, closes the eyes and says a simple prayer. Ten, twelve words. And the dear little one brokenly repeats them after her.

Here the form is ahead of the reality. The impression of reverence and awe before the Divine Majesty is there. A young child loves that first prayer. But the Eternal has not yet revealed himself in a clearly conscious form to the heart.