

that it may last, and the fine gold never become dim, I desire to say to all these watchers, these sentinels along the line—Watch the morning watch; that is, guard this sacred habit as zealously as soldiers guard the tower where the crown jewels are preserved. Watch unto prayer; for you will be tempted either to *give it up* through the sluggishness of the flesh or the sophistry of Satan, or to *keep it up* merely as a formal routine from which the very life and spirit have gone out, as surely as from the praying machines in Tartary. These dread evils can be prevented by *cultivating two graces*, which, like the two angels in the most holy place, look towards the mercy-seat. The first is *regularity*, and the second is *spirituality*. Regularity will see that the fire never goes out, and spirituality will take care that it is fire from heaven that burns on the altar.

Be regular in your devotion. In a little book on "Secret Prayer," which seems to have been written on the very mount of communion, Principal H. Moule says: Those who really make this (the morning watch) their practice find that they can never again forego it without sure and manifest spiritual loss. Under God, immensely much depends on that watch time and its exercises of confession, faith, love, prayer, and praise. Its tendency is to open, as it were, the *soul's window skyward for the day*; to make the continuous acts of self-surrender and faith for that whole day quite different from what they would be otherwise, in their readiness and happiness. Here are ample reasons why we should not give it up. To omit it would be positive pain, and perceptible loss to the soul's health and vigor. It is not that God demands it, like an Egyptian task-master, who will have so much in so long a time; but our spirits require it for their love, joy, and peace, and for the coming hours of toil. For the soul that sings,

"Oh, the pure delight of a single hour
That before Thy throne I spend!"

has also learned to pray,

"Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,
By the power of grace divine."

The work of the day is better, holier, because of that hour of worship, when, like the early Christians, we meet at sunrise to sing a hymn to Christ as God.

A great change was observed in the preaching of a German pastor, and soon a revival spread in the neighbourhood. After his death the secret was revealed. His well-worn Bible showed an entry which

expressed his resolution to rise every morning at four o'clock, to pray till eight for his flock and the work of God in the city. I will also cite the case of a *working man* whom I overtook the other evening going to our prayer-meeting. He was telling me that he had to commence work at six o'clock, and toil in a heated factory for thirteen hours without any rest for dinner. "Then," said I, "this leaves you little time for your Bible." "Oh," he replied, "I get up every morning at half past four to have half an hour's read." This was *wise*, because he gave his fresh powers to God, *blessed*, because to him who overcame the reluctance to rise, God gave "the hidden manna"; *safe*, because, before going down to the battlefield, where the fiery darts of infidelity and blasphemy were sure to fly thick and fast, he had time to put on the whole armour of God. In such a case, surely, some might have deemed it allowable to break so good a practice; but no, he assured me that he had *kept it up with regularity*. So might we keep up this habit, if we valued more highly the inestimable privilege of communion with God, and were always careful to keep the season of prayer sacred. "Tell His Majesty that I will come and attend on him when I have finished my audience with the King of kings," said a great minister of state, who was in secret prayer when the messenger from the palace knocked at his door.

Pastor Stockmayer reminds us that there is a time when we are struggling and striving to rise early, and we cannot; but when we yield to the Holy Spirit, He gives thee energy to rise betimes. Therefore, "be filled with the Spirit!" *Be spiritual in your regularity*. Let your waking be more than the result of a settled habit—let it be a fresh inspiration of the Spirit of God. "Be Thou their arm every morning;" and when you are at your watch, "Walk in the Spirit," and "be led of the Spirit." I enter my study on a dark morning eager to *commune with God* through His written Word. The lamp, all trimmed, stands on the table; but you must light the wick before the page can be seen. Here is the "lamp to our feet"—the inspired Word of God—full of truths divine; but we wait for the Holy Ghost to illuminate both it and us before we can see the mysteries of redemption. Let your first act be that of silent awe in the presence of the King; bow down and wait only on God for His Spirit; let every emotion be enkindled, and every thought inspired by Him; and then you will be spiritually-minded. Here He is in you, as well as with you, for that

very purpose, as surely as the fire was on the altar before the priest put the wood and offering thereon. But mind you *place the wood in order*, and the parts of the sacrifice, that is to say, *place yourself in the attitude for fellowship*. "Prepare to meet Thy God." You can open your Bible if He is to "open your understanding;" you can read through, reverently, the 119th Psalm if He is to "quicken you according to His Word;" you can let your "voice be heard in the morning" audibly if prayer is to be real communion; you can stand erect if you wish to realize, like Elijah, that "the Lord liveth before whom you stand." Use these forms carefully, only to preserve the Spirit, and never to supersede it. They are means to an end; that end is conscious and adoring fellowship with One "whom having not seen we love." And were the watch ever to become a mere routine—a tedious task—it would be better to give it up, saying it is a thing of formality, like Hezekiah, who cast away the brazen serpent, calling it Nehushtan, a thing of brass. Watch the morning watch! "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch!"

TOUCHY PEOPLE.

THERE are people—yes, many people—always looking out for slights. They cannot carry on the daily intercourse of the family without finding that some offence is designed. They are touchy as hair triggers. If they meet an acquaintance who happens to be preoccupied with business, they attribute his abstraction in some mode personal to themselves, and take umbrage accordingly. They lay on others the fruit of their irritability. Indigestion makes them see impertinence in every one with whom they come in contact. Innocent persons, who never dreamed of giving offence, are astonished to find some unhappy word or momentary taciturnity mistaken for an insult. To say the least, the habit is unpleasant. It is far wiser to take the more charitable view of our fellow-beings, and not suppose that a slight is intended unless the neglect is open and direct. After all, too, life takes its hues in a great degree from the color of our own mind. If we are frank and generous, the world treats us kindly; if, on the contrary, we are suspicious, men learn to be cold and cautious to us. Let a person get the reputation of being "touchy," and everybody is under restraint, and in this way the chances of an imaginary offence are vastly increased.—*Selected.*