

ANDREW  
MURRAY

THE  
INNER  
CHAMBER  
AND THE  
INNER  
LIFE



WHITAKER  
HOUSE

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

Boldface type in the Scripture quotations indicates the author's emphasis.

## **THE INNER CHAMBER AND THE INNER LIFE**

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## PREFACE

**T**he Inner Chamber suggests thoughts of the utmost importance. Among these are the daily need for retirement and quiet, the true spirit of prayer, the devotional reading of God's Word, and the fellowship with God for which these are meant and by which alone they bring a blessing. These thoughts also encompass the spiritual life, which they are meant to strengthen and fit for daily duty in interaction with the world, and the service for the kingdom of God in soul-winning and intercession. All of these truths have play a part in making our devotions a source of joy and of strength. In this little book, I have not attempted to take them up systematically, but I hope that the fragments I have given may bring help to some in the cultivation of the hidden life and its communion with God.

In this South African country there are various diseases that affect our orange trees. One of them is popularly known by the name of "the root disease." A tree may still be bearing fruit and an ordinary observer may not notice anything wrong, while an expert sees the beginning of a slow death. The phylloxera in the grape vineyards is nothing but a root disease. It has been found that there is no radical cure but taking out the old roots and providing new ones. The old sort of grape is grafted onto an American root, and in course of time you have the same stem and branches and fruit as before; *but the roots are new* and able to resist the disease. It is in the part of the plant that is *hidden from sight* that the disease comes, and where healing must be sought.

How the church of Christ and the spiritual life of thousands of its members suffer from root disease, from the neglect of secret communion with God. It is the lack of secret prayer, the neglect of the maintenance of that hidden life "*rooted in Christ,*" and "*rooted and grounded in love*" (Ephesians 3:17), that explains the feebleness of the Christian life to resist the world, as well as its failure to bring forth fruit abundantly. Nothing can change this but the restoration, in the life of the believer, of the inner chamber to the place that Christ meant it to have. As Christians learn, true godliness will flourish when, instead of trusting their own efforts, they daily strike their roots deeper into Christ and make the secret personal fellowship with God their chief care. "*If the root be holy, so are the branches*" (Romans 11:16). If the morning hour be holy to the Lord, the day with its duties will be so too. If the root be healthy, so are the branches.

Most of these chapters have already appeared in *The South African Pioneer*. It is at the request of some who read them that I have consented to these now being republished. I pray that God may bless them for some of His children in the pursuit of the deeper and more fruitful life, the life hidden with Christ in God.

# 1

## THE MORNING HOUR



*“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.”*

—Psalm 5:3

*“The Lord GOD...wakeneth morning by morning,  
he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.”*

—Isaiah 50:4

**F**rom the earliest ages God’s servants have thought of the morning as the time specially fitted for the worship of God. It is still regarded by all Christians both as a duty and a privilege to devote some portion of the beginning of the day to seeking retirement and fellowship with God. Many Christians, especially the Student’s Christian Association, observe the morning watch. The Young People’s Christian Endeavors Society speaks of it as “the quiet hour.” Others use the name of the “still hour” or “the quiet time.” All these, whether they think of a whole hour, half an hour, or a quarter of an hour unite with the psalmist who says, “*My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD*” (Psalm 5:3).

In speaking of the extreme importance of this daily time of quiet for prayer and meditation on God’s Word, John Raleigh Mott has said in his publication *The Morning Watch*, “Next to receiving Christ as Savior, and claiming the baptism of the Holy

Spirit, we know of no act attended with larger good to ourselves or others, than the formation of an undiscouragable resolution to keep the morning watch, and spend the first half hour of the day alone with God." At first sight the statement appears too strong. The act of receiving Christ as Savior is one of such infinite consequences for eternity and the act of claiming the Holy Spirit is one that works such a revolution in the Christian life that such a simple thing as the firm determination to keep the morning watch hardly appears sufficiently important to be placed next to them. If, however, we think about how impossible it is to live out our daily life in Christ as our Savior from sin, or to maintain a walk in the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, without daily, close fellowship with God, we soon shall see the truth of the sentiment, because it simply means the fixed determination that Christ shall have the whole life. It means that the Holy Spirit shall in everything be fully obeyed. The morning watch is the key to the position in which the surrender to Christ and the Holy Spirit can be unceasingly and fully maintained.

To realize this, let us look first at what ought to be *the object* of the morning watch. The morning watch must not be regarded as an end in itself. It is not sufficient that it gives us a blessed time for prayer and Bible study, and so brings us a certain measure of refreshment and help. It is to serve as a means to an end. And that end is to secure the presence of Christ for the whole day.

Personal devotion to a friend or a pursuit means that that friend or pursuit shall always hold their place in the heart, even when other engagements occupy the attention. Personal devotion to Jesus means that we allow nothing to separate us from Him for a moment. To abide in Him and His love, to be kept by Him and His grace, to be doing His will and pleasing Him—this cannot possibly be an intermittent thing for one who is truly devoted to Him. "I need Thee every hour" (Annie S. Hawks), "Moment by moment I am kept in His love" (Daniel W. Whittle). These hymns are the language of life and truth. Words such as "*in thy name shall*

*they rejoice all the day*" (Psalm 89:16) and "*I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment*" (Isaiah 27:3), these are words of divine power. The believer cannot stand for one moment without Christ. The personal devotion to Him refuses to be content with anything less than abiding always in His love and His will. Nothing less is the true scriptural Christian life. And the importance, blessedness, and true aim of the morning watch can only be seen as nothing less than this is its first object.

The clearer the object of our pursuit is, the better we shall be able to adapt the means to its attainment. Consider the morning watch now as *the means* to this great end. I want to secure absolutely the presence of Christ all the day, to do nothing that can interfere with it. I feel at once that my success for the day will depend upon the clearness and the strength of the faith that seeks, finds, and holds Him in the closet. Meditation, prayer, and the Word will all be used as subordinate and auxiliary to this: the link for the day between Christ and me must be renewed and firmly fastened in the morning hour.

At first it may appear as if the thought of the whole day, with all its possible cares, pleasures, temptations, may disturb the rest I have enjoyed in my quiet devotion. It is possible; but it will be no loss. True religion aims at having the character of Christ so formed in us that in our most common acts, His temper and disposition shall show themselves. The spirit and the will of Christ are meant to so possess us that in our interactions with men, in our relaxation, and in our business, it shall be a second nature to us to act according to them. All this can be because Christ Himself, as the living One, lives in us.

Be not disturbed if at first the aim appears too high or difficult and occupies too much of your time in the hour of private prayer. The time you give it will be richly rewarded. You will return to prayer and Scripture with new purpose and new faith. As the morning watch begins to have its effect on the day, the day will

react on its first half hour, and fellowship with Christ will have a new meaning and a new power.

It will particularly have its influence on the *spirit* in which you keep the morning watch. The grandeur of the aim is unbroken fellowship with God in Christ through the day. The true nature of the means to secure it is definite conscious meeting with Christ and a securing of His presence for the day. As these possess us, it will be seen that the one essential thing is whole-hearted purpose, the fixed determination, whatever effort or self-denial it may cost, to win the prize. In study or on the sport field, every student knows what a need there is for vigorous will and determined purpose if one is to succeed. Religion needs, and indeed deserves, not less but more intense devotion. If anything, surely the love of Christ needs the whole heart. It is this fixed determination before everything to secure Christ's presence that will overcome every temptation to be unfaithful or superficial in the keeping of our pledges. It is this determination that shall make the morning watch itself a mighty means of grace in strengthening character and enabling us to say "no" to every call for self-indulgence. It is this determination that shall enable us at once, when we enter the inner chamber and shut the door, to be there with our whole heart, ready for our communion with Christ. And it is this determination that, from the morning watch on, will become the keynote of our daily life.

In the world it is often said that great things are possible to anyone who knows what he or she wills, and wills it with all his or her heart. The student who has made personal devotion to Christ the watchword will find in the morning hour the place where the insight into his or her holy calling is renewed daily. The student will find this to be the place where one's will is braced up to walk worthy of it, and one's faith rewarded by the presence of Christ waiting to meet and take charge of the person for the day. We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us. A living Christ waits to meet us.