

*Daily in
His Presence*



Andrew
MURRAY
with BRUCE WILKINSON

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His Presence*



A Classic Devotional
*from One of the Most Powerful Voices
of the Nineteenth Century*

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MURRAY
with BRUCE WILKINSON



MULTNOMAH
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About This Book

Written over a period of twenty years, these devotions were composed by Dr. Andrew Murray to help his South African congregation experience “ongoing spiritual revival.” The congregation consisted mostly of farmers who traveled a great distance to town only once every month to receive communion. So Dr. Murray compiled a series of thirty-day devotionals, each centered on a specific theme, in order to help the farmers to remain in the Word throughout the month.

In 1950, these devotionals were first collected and published in the Afrikaans language. Recently, a team comprising author Rev. Willie Botha, Pastor Roger Witter, and historian Dr. J. J. Joubert carefully adapted Murray’s original text into modern English.

In 2002, international best-selling author Bruce Wilkinson first visited the town of Wellington, South Africa, where Andrew Murray helped set ablaze one of the greatest spiritual revivals Africa has ever known. Dr. Wilkinson was fascinated by Murray’s work and, in his studies, came to link up with Dr. Joubert and Lux Verbi, the longtime publishers of Murray’s books in South Africa. Dr. Wilkinson later helped to develop the concept for this devotional, selected the monthly themes, and wrote the monthly introductions, as well as approved the contemporization of Murray’s writings.

Preface

Andrew Murray

Servant of God, Man of Revival

Bearing the name given to both his father and his grandfather, Andrew Murray was born in the small but attractive town of Graaff-Reinet in the Cape Province of South Africa on May 9, 1828. As the second son and second child of sixteen, he began his days in the pastoral home of the town's strong and flourishing Dutch church. His father, along with several other Scottish divines, had earlier responded to a need created by the reluctance of clergymen from the Netherlands to come to the Cape after its occupation by the British in 1860.

Thus, six years before the advent of his more famous prodigy, Andrew Murray Sr., having first spent some ten months studying the Dutch language in Utrecht, left his home and the church he pastored in Aberdeen to take up his new assignment as the ordained minister of the Graaff-Reinet congregation. It was here that the young Andrew received not only a godly father's reverence for the Scriptures, but also a profound respect for time spent in prayer, as imparted by his mother. This exceptional woman, born Maria Susanna Magdalena Stegmann, taught her children to read and to write and demonstrated to them the need and effect of prayer in the practicalities of daily life. Of Andrew's father, a friend would later describe him as, "a man with a warm heart and a courageous spirit, who loved hard work, and who had an unquenchable love for his Master and for the people whom he served."

The markedly spiritual tone of the Murray home may explain its choice as a refuge and stopover point for so many missionaries, including such well-known names as Moffat and Livingstone. The family's involvement with missionaries may also account for the fact that almost all of the Murray sons entered one form or another of Christian ministry, and the majority of the daughters married men of the cloth. In addition, some nineteen grandchildren went on to become missionaries, as did a further thirty of the following generation!

Early Days in Scotland and the Netherlands

Aged only ten and twelve years old respectively, Andrew and his elder brother, John, were, after much prayer and deliberation by the Murray family, sent to further their education in Aberdeen, Scotland. A remarkable aptitude and devotion to study saw both brothers graduating with Master of Arts degrees some seven years later.

In June 1845, Andrew and John left for Utrecht in the Netherlands, with the intention of studying the Dutch language, as well as theology. It was in Utrecht that Andrew truly submitted his life to God. In a letter to his father, he wrote, "I've been led to throw myself completely on Christ." From that day on a sharper, refined personal experience was destined to become part of all his future sermons. However, at the time, in what was a theological institution of predominantly liberal persuasion, Andrew was dismayed that he could not freely talk or write about his newfound experience and convictions.

In retrospect, however, the Murrays' exposure to the liberal theology of their day actually had a positive influence on their lives, as well as on those to whom they would later teach and minister. The rather unaccommodating situation in which the brothers found themselves forced them, after serious examination, to commit themselves unequivocally to a passionate propagation of the gospel of their Lord and Master.

The two brothers were ordained as ministers by The Hague Commission on Andrew's twentieth birthday in 1848. They returned to South Africa after a moving farewell from their own circle of student friends.

The First Years of Ministry

After eleven years abroad the brothers ascended their father's pulpit on their very first Sunday in Bloemfontein. In the morning the elder brother, John, with his clear power of thought, preached the sermon. That evening it was the turn of the younger brother, Andrew, who, with his seriousness and passion, exceeded the expectations of the congregation.

On May 6, 1849, three days before his becoming of age, Murray

was inducted in Bloemfontein by his father. His pastoral responsibilities extended to Winburg, Smithfield, and Fauresmith—virtually the entire area between the Vaal and Orange Rivers. In addition, from the very beginning he had his eye on the neglected situation of expatriate church members in the Transvaal.

Journeys were invariably difficult and dangerous. Many roads were mere tracks in the veld, left behind by other travelers or traders. Bridges were few and pontoons were used, but travelers most frequently had to search for fords where it was easier to cross the rivers. The vastness of his place of work and the poor amenities on the long journeys by horse or ox-wagon exhausted the eager young clergyman in the beginning of his ministry, making his years in Bloemfontein extremely demanding. Distances were great and danger from wild animals was a daily occurrence.

Thus he ministered to some twelve thousand souls across a territory of fifty thousand square miles. But across the Vaal River another seven thousand immigrants were moving about without a clergyman, and Murray could only visit them during his vacations. Four long and exhaustive journeys to the people in Transvaal seriously impaired Murray's health. Still, from the very beginning he gave his all and was soon greatly respected and loved among the farming communities of the Transgariep.

Worcester and Revival

In 1856, eight years after arriving back in the land of his birth, Andrew Murray married a truly remarkable woman. Emma Rutherford came from a prominent and respected Cape family. She was educated and excelled in literature, music, painting, French, German, accountancy, and home craft—a background much of which was destined to lend support to the many books which Andrew later wrote. He immediately appointed her as a sounding board and critic of his sermons, as well as his secretary to cope with his correspondence, which was later to assume significant proportions. In addition, Emma played the organ and served as a Sunday school teacher. Furthermore, in consequence of his many travels, she was mainly responsible for the education of their eight children, with whom both she and Andrew shared a very close and special bond.

In 1860, four years into his marriage, Andrew Murray was called to Worcester, and although it was very difficult for him to break the bond with his Bloemfontein congregation, he accepted.

Murray's induction into the church at Worcester coincided with the great spiritual revivals that were taking place at the time in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Sweden, and across the seas in America.

News of what God was doing soon reached South African shores, arousing among ministers and church members alike a longing for a similar outpouring of the Spirit of God. Several prayer meetings for revival commenced spontaneously. As a spirit of expectation began to take hold of the people, the attendance at church services and prayer meetings increased rapidly.

Over the eighteenth and nineteenth of April 1860, shortly before he assumed his duties as the minister of the Worcester congregation on Sunday, May 27, Murray attended and participated in an inter-church conference held in the town. It is generally agreed that it was this event that triggered the powerful revival that immediately followed, and moreover that it all began with a prayer that Murray delivered at that memorable gathering.

Almost immediately following the conference, revival broke out in the town of Montagu, some fifty miles southeast of Worcester, while in the congregation newly acquired by Murray, a mighty outpouring took place among the youth of the church, which then spread to the rest of the congregation, as well as to prayer meetings which were being held at the time among the outlying farms.

Approximately four months later, the revival spread to the town of Wellington, which housed the congregation that a little more than a decade later was to become the center of Murray's ministry and achievements.

In the year following these events, revival fire spread to numerous other towns in the area, including Calvinia, Richmond, Graaff-Reinet, Murraysburg, and Beaufort-West, to name but a few, and thereafter beyond the Cape to towns such as Fauresmith and Kroonstad in the Orange Free State, Ladysmith in Natal, and Hartbeesfontein in the Transvaal.

These powerful revivals were accompanied by an intense outbreak of unremitting prayer from young and old, rich and poor, white

and black. Thousands turned to God in remorse and repentance. Frequently, entire congregations would break into simultaneous vocal prayer, often accompanied by fervent public confession of sin.

The results in many cases were of a lasting nature, with churches having to greatly extend their seating facilities to accommodate the large numbers of people being added to the family of God. For many churches it was a veritable resurrection from the dead. Homes where previously only idle chatter was to be heard became houses of prayer. Long-standing and respected church members suddenly sought deliverance from enslaving and often secret habits. Superficial Christian living gave way to an earnest seeking after holiness and sanctification. Denominational church reports over the ensuing five or six years reflected significant congregational growth, a marked increase of interest and investment in missionary endeavors, and a general spirit of love and unity prevailing among the believers.

Wellington and Missions

In 1864, Murray accepted a call to Cape Town, where he was inducted on November 11, 1864. There he gave special attention to the plight of the less fortunate and young people, and in 1865 the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was founded under his guidance.

Although he ministered in Cape Town for almost eight years, Murray somehow seemed not to form close ties with the city, and on September 21, 1871, having accepted a call to Wellington, he was inducted into his fourth congregation, where he conducted his greatest work till his retirement in 1906. These years were the prime of Andrew's life. His clear insight and comprehension, as well as his astonishing enterprise, helped him to tackle projects under which people with fewer talents would have succumbed.

Murray played a major role in the training of missionaries in the land of his birth, as well as in supporting personnel who were involved with missionary work. And it was in Wellington that Murray found his real calling and his missionary zeal found its fullest outlet. In October 1877 the Missionary Institute in Wellington was opened to train missionaries and teachers of religious education. Murray and his willing congregation shouldered the burden of this

institution until it received synodical support in 1903.

Murray entertained high expectations from especially the sons and daughters of his own people to become missionaries and teachers. His intense missionary zeal, which inspired the Wellington congregation, directly or indirectly led to the founding of at least five missionary organizations and an enterprising missions publication.

Along with his missionary vision, education shared an important place in Murray's heart and life, resulting in his leaving his congregation for months on end to proceed on fund-raising journeys, which provided him with an opportunity to visit former parishioners.

Andrew Murray as Author

One of the most prolific of Christian writers, Andrew Murray occupies a position that could perhaps be regarded as unique in terms of his ongoing popularity among contemporary readers. Few writers of his era can be said to enjoy the wide readership that Murray's works still command today. Though written in the classical style of a bygone Victorian era, the timelessness of his message concerning a deeper life and commitment to Christ has continued to ensure the reprinting of scores of his writings.

Between 1880 and his death, not a year passed in which Murray did not publish a book. His most fruitful year was 1895, when no less than sixteen of his works were published. He is perhaps best known and loved for his numerous shorter works consisting of thirty-one or fifty-two chapters, which were originally intended to be read every day of the month or per week by his many far-flung farming parishioners, whose church attendance was severely limited due to the great distances they had to travel.

Andrew Murray the Preacher

As a young boy, Murray was greatly influenced by the famous Scottish preacher, W. C. Burns and, like Burns, the young Murray's sermons became known for the employment of "naked and plain" language. As was the case with his early mentor, Murray's preaching was devoid of poetry or sentiment and exhibited the same passionate seriousness and lively conveyance of faith.

His performance in the pulpit was magnetic, and his seriousness moved people. Being bilingual, Murray could preach in South Africa, the Netherlands, Britain, or the United States with the greatest of ease. Yet he never saw himself as an orator, only as a servant of the gospel.

In 1893, Murray sustained a permanent back injury in a horse cart accident in Natal. This changed his previously buoyant, upright figure to a more bent, nearly crippled appearance. He later resorted to sitting while preaching, a practice which did nothing to impede the seriousness of his message, which was frequently punctuated by a pounding of his Bible and the cushion upon which he sat.

Of that period of Murray's ministry, a Presbyterian minister who saw him preaching at the Keswick Convention in 1895, witnessed, "The sober, venerable reverend disappeared and an old Hebrew prophet stood in front of us."

H. V. Taylor wrote of Murray in *The British Weekly* of December 6, 1894:

When preaching or conducting a service, his whole being is thrown into the task, and he glows with a fervency of spirit which seems impossible for human flesh to sustain. At times he startles and overwhelms the listeners. Earnestness and power of the electric sort stream from him and affect alike the large audience or the quiet circle gathered round him. In his slight, spent frame of middle height, he carries in repose a volcanic energy which, when he is roused, bursts its barriers and sweeps all before it. Then his form quivers and dilates, the lips tremble, the features work, and the eyes spasmodically open and close, as from the white-hot furnace of his spirit he pours the molten torrent of his unstudied eloquence."

Murray's own father once said to him, "William is my beloved 'John,' but you, Andrew, are Boanerges, the son of thunder."

Murray the Missionary and Evangelist

The most active time of Murray's extremely busy career in Wellington was from 1879 to 1891. During that time he undertook no less than seven evangelistic tours to all parts of South Africa, some of which lasted for weeks, others several months. Before and during his journeys he wrote down even the smallest planning details and continually strove to keep to his predetermined plans. Therefore, even the routes, distances, resting places, and the number and duration of meetings were recorded before he undertook the journeys. In addition, he particularly saw to it that very thorough spiritual and psychological preparation was done. It was his practice to send ahead packages of his latest books, in order to prepare the hearts of those to whom he would be ministering.

There can be little doubt that events overseas had an effect on much of Murray's life and ministry. This is particularly true as regards the news that reached South Africa of how the American evangelists Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey's revival services in Britain had set the whole world in uproar. Stirred by the reports of what God was doing overseas, Murray was keen to travel the country to bring the gospel to the countless numbers of its people who had yet to enter the kingdom of God.

In 1879, when about to undertake the first of seven large evangelistic tours, Murray wrote in *De Kerkbode* the reasons behind his undertaking, and mentioned the conditions that could lead to results. It was not some new gospel that he would be preaching, but simply the old, yet ever new message of great joy. "At these special services," he said, "a person could, by means of the continual repetition of the calling to repentance and faith, be led to a point where he will have to decide for himself what he will do." He made repeated mention of the need for good preparation and the cooperation of all the faithful.

The spiritual results of that series of services were both substantial and permanent. A typical congregation in the interior reported that the "complaining, doubtful language of many was changed into the thankful language of the assurance of faith, and we walk the road to Zion with new courage."

Away from home, Andrew Murray was, and still is, internationally regarded as an esteemed and respected Christian leader of his time. In addition to his many activities and achievements in South Africa, he traveled extensively, visiting Europe five times. Several of his approximately two hundred and fifty English and Dutch publications have been translated into at least fifteen languages, including French, German, Spanish, modern Greek, Danish, Swedish, Japanese, and Russian, as well as three different Indian languages and several forms of Chinese.

His Final Days

The year 1905 was a dark year for Murray and his family. Mrs Murray died suddenly on January 2, 1905. Murray's health also took a turn for the worse. On December 25 he applied to the church council to retire. It was granted and he was released from his duties on February 20, 1906. The minutes of the meeting that effected his retirement include the following:

We record that we cannot express in words what the Rev. Murray has meant for this congregation. His life and example in our midst for so many years was worthy of a servant of the gospel and a man of God. His preaching of the Word occurred with much blessing and power, and it can be eminently mentioned that it was Christ's preaching...and it is with deep emotion that we testify of the severance of such a tender, sincere and important bond of so many years."

In August 1916, Andrew Murray contracted a cold that soon developed into pneumonia. And on January 18, 1917, the old prophet breathed his last. Two days later he was buried in front of the church he had so faithfully and lovingly served.

The town council of Wellington accepted the following motion at its meeting on February 6, 1917:

This Council on behalf of the whole community of Wellington wish to place on record their deep appreciation of the great services rendered by Dr. Andrew Murray, not only to the whole of South Africa, but specially to Wellington in what he did in the cause of Education, of which the Huguenot Seminary and Ladies' College will ever remain as living monuments to his memory.

A long obituary in *The Paarl Post* of January 20 started as follows:

Father Andrew Murray is no more. Last Thursday, towards the evening, when the birds returned to their nests, his soul flew to the place of rest and peace. His career has ended and his work, for which God had placed him on earth, is accomplished.

The Secret of Adoration

Why are so many Christians reluctant to spend time in prayer? If, on the human level, spending time in the company of a parent is normally something quite natural and enjoyable for a child, what is it that hinders God's children from doing the same with their heavenly Father?

One answer could be that we are too focused on our human limitations, on our own meekness and sinfulness, and not enough on God's greatness, holiness, love, and omnipotence. The thoughts and feelings that fill our hearts and minds influence our prayers.

If we dwell upon our own needs and desires, our own efforts, and our own faith, we shall soon find that there is no real power in our prayers. It is essential that we see prayer in the light of *God*: the deep interest He takes in us, the great love with which He desires to answer prayer, the omnipotence of His power, and the magnitude of His strengthening grace.

As with all else, in prayer God must be first. Prayer, to be effective, needs to first be approached in the light of heaven and the infinite glory of the living God. It is when, by this marvelous grace, we have been lifted up into His fellowship and love that He bestows upon us the blessings we need. The first thing, then, must be to bow in lowly reverence before God, offering Him our adoration and worship.

We need to take time to adore God and to secure some sense of His presence. Give God time to reveal Himself to you. Then adore Him. God is in the temple: Let all who appear before Him do so in awe. Prostrate yourself before Him with deepest reverence. Own Him alone as your God and Savior, and praise His name forever.

True Worship

Worship God!

REVELATION 22:9

What might be the reason that prayer is not for us a greater joy and delight? How can we bring down the power and the blessing on those for whom we pray?

The primary answer is undoubtedly that our experience of the presence of God is too limited. When we pray, we do not seek after His presence with all our hearts. We think mostly of *our* need, *our* weakness, *our* desire, *our* prayer. We forget that in every prayer *God* must be first and foremost. To seek Him, to find Him, to linger in His presence, is the approach that gives prayer its inspiration.

How then can you acquire an intimate experience of the presence of God in your communion with Him? The answer is quite simple:

Believe with your whole heart that He offers Himself as the listener. Give God the opportunity to make Himself known to you when you approach Him in prayer. You will never discover this, however, if you do not take time to have genuine fellowship with God. The power of prayer does not lie in the number or earnestness of the words you use, but in a living faith that God Himself accepts both you and your prayer into His loving heart.



*Lord, lead me into
a true experience
of Your presence.
Teach me to adore
You with all my
heart.*

It is the goal of this month's readings to help you to meet with God every time you pray. Each day you will be given one or more texts, with which you can bow before God in adoration, waiting for Him to lead you into a real experience of their truth and power. Therefore, begin the day with the desire, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalm 42:2).



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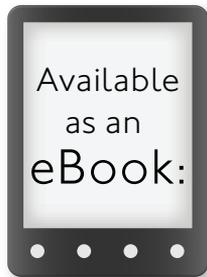
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