

Andrew Murray (Christ's Anointed Minister to South Africa) by Vance Christie, Christian Focus Publications, Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain (2015). (22 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols).

1. South Africa's Premier Preacher.

In an era that saw many gifted and diligent ministers, missionaries and evangelists being used by God to powerfully advance Christ's Kingdom work in South Africa, Andrew Murray (1828-1917) emerged as that country's premier preacher, devotional writer and Church leader. [page 9]

2. Profound Awareness of the Presence of God.

While being a man of seemingly constant motion, Murray was also a contemplative individual. His mind constantly probed new avenues and depths of biblical, spiritual truth. His thinking and teaching were deeply devotional in nature. Those who interacted with him sensed that he consistently lived with profound awareness of the presence of God and a preoccupation with matters spiritual. He was deeply devoted to prayer and tirelessly encouraged all Christians to be as well. [page 10]

3. Children's Saving Relationship with Christ.

Murray was deeply concerned about the spiritual welfare of his children and that they would come to have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. On a Sunday evening, following family worship when a child came for a goodnight kiss, he would ask, 'Well, dearie, have you given your heart to Christ yet?' or 'Will you not, before you go to bed tonight, give yourself to Jesus?' On a child's birthday he would say, 'This is your birthday. Are you born again?' [page 19]

4. Delighted in Sunday Services.

The oldest Murray daughter would later testify:

It is sweet to recall those Sundays. Such Sunday keeping has gone out of fashion. Children now would perhaps think it a weariness, yet we cannot remember that we as children ever did . . . On looking back upon it all, it does seem almost wonderful that the children did not weary of the long services. For the morning service lasted two hours, and on Communion Sunday three, and we remained to the end. It is perhaps to be ascribed to habit, or still more to the fact that the parents delighted in the worship of God, so the children learned to delight in it too. [page 20]

5. Ministry in Transvaal Region of South Africa.

Murray's first ministerial itineration north of the Vaal River lasted just over six weeks, from 7 December, 1849 to 22 January, 1850. During that time he traveled some 800

miles on horseback and by ox-drawn wagon. (Ox wagon travel, sometime carried out with a span of eight oxen, proceeded at an aching slow pace of just two miles an hour.) Murray conducted a total of thirty-seven services at six different locations. In addition, he baptized 567 children and interviewed well over 300 young people for church membership, 167 of whom were accepted. It appears he was accompanied throughout much of this journey by three traveling companions, Deacon P. Coetzer, Deacon Caspar Kruger and Frans Schutte.

While Murray would wear a beard throughout most of his adult life, at this time he was still clean shaven and looked quite boyish. He was six feet tall and possessed a slender build. Murray, however, quickly gained respect of the Transvaal Boers through his serious, confident demeanor, his overwhelming fervency and his willingness to sacrifice himself for their spiritual well-being. Some six decades later a Transvaal Christian would relate of Murray's earliest ministries there, 'The old people in the Transvaal used to tell the most wonderful tales about him, his power of endurance, his earnestness in preaching, and how frightened people often were of him, though he looked a mere boy.' [page 61]

6. Absorbed in the Gravity of Murray's Messages.

Douglas speaks of the intensity and gravity with which Murray ministered at that time:

When preaching, so absorbed was he in his message that should he by his violent gestures knock down Bible and reading desk of the impromptu pulpit, he would not notice it. Solemn were the confirmation services when, ... before the final confirmation promise was made, he would lift his hand, and with deep emotion would adjure them not to reject the Savior, saying, 'If you do and promise falsely to be true to Christ, this hand will witness against you in the day of judgment.' [page 62]

7. Known by His Demeanor.

Another incident, of uncertain date, illustrates the influence and reputation Murray came to have among the Transvaal Boers at that time. Arriving one day at the ford of a river, Murray discovered a span of oxen and a wagon stuck in the mud on the river bank. The driver was 'lashing them furiously and cursing and swearing in a dreadful way.' When Murray approached the man and asked him why he swore so, he replied that oxen could never be driven without swearing. 'Give me the whip,' said Murray, taking charge of the situation. Lifting a silent prayer for help, he began cracking the whip and encouraging the oxen. Before long he had the span and the wagon out of the mud. Returning the whip to the driver, he stated, 'Remember, now, you can drive oxen without swearing.' The driver asked who he was and, upon hearing his name, remarked, 'I might have known it by his holy face.' [pages 68-69]

8. Africans Were Also Impressed by Murray's Demeanor.

As on previous itinerations, all arrangements for the transportation of the ministers by ox wagon or on horseback were made by elders, deacons and other supportive individuals at the various places where they ministered. At every stage of this journey Murray and Neethling were accompanied by other traveling companions who counted it an honor to escort them for a couple of days or even a week and to help supply their needs along the way.

The native servants on the journey observed the 'great kindness' and 'eager politeness' the farmers along the way gave the ministers. One evening, the African who led their oxen sat beside the fire with his chin resting on his knees. After staring at the two clergymen for a long time, he then remarked to Neethling in broken Dutch that they 'must surely be great chiefs' since everywhere they went the Boer bazen (masters) removed their hats and invited them into their dwellings. He noted further that long before the ministers arrived, a fresh span of oxen was already collected in the kraal. As soon as the evangelists came, the new oxen were yoked to the wagon and the master called out, 'April, loop!' (April, hasten!).

On another occasion a Kaffir watched Murray closely as he preached with his habitual fervency. The native did not understand a single word of what he heard but afterward stated his impression of what he had observed: 'I never thought that the white men stood in such dread of their chiefs. Look at the young chief yonder [Murray]. He points his finger at the people; they sit quiet. He threatens them; they sit quieter still. He storms and rages at them; they sit as quiet as death!' [pages 80-81]

9. A Very Good Husband.

Writing to her sister Mary early in November, Emma shared intimate thoughts of appreciation, admiration, and affection for Murray:

I am anxious to be a good housekeeper, especially as Andrew never finds fault with anything I do. And I am afraid I don't understand being economical quite yet, though he never says so, or even hints that things might be better. Sometimes I wish he would, as I know so little. And yet he always listens to the smallest little household trouble and tries to find me a remedy, and does everything I ask him and gets what I wish. You cannot imagine a more sympathizing, loving husband, so tender and gentle to his little wife. [page 112].

10. However, Murray Was Human.

[Emma continues:]

I certainly never knew before I could be bound to anyone or love anyone so much. It seems a new faculty I had been perfectly unconscious of, and almost overwhelming in its strength and depth of joy.

The only tinge of sadness is in yet what I scarcely wish otherwise – in deep earnestness and feeling which often exhausts his physical strength and reminds me he is human and life uncertain. Yet I know ‘man is immortal till his work is done,’ and trust he may belong spared to be useful in his day and generation.

[page 112]

11. Murray’s Messages Reached Household Servants Also.

Returning home, the farmer asked his wife whether the servant had previously manifested any concern over the salvation of her own soul. His wife related that only the day before she had been asked by the girl if Christ had died for her also and if she too, like others, could obtain pardon. [page 145]

12. Stronger Temperance Position.

As it turned out, 1883 Synod reached a compromise position in a public statement it issued on the temperance issue. Murray acquiesced in this decision, though he wished the statement could have been more strongly worded. The statement, which was published in *Der Kerkbode*, read:

1. Wine is a good gift of God, to be received with gratitude and to be used to His glory.
2. Scripture nevertheless teaches us that the Christian is at liberty to refrain from the use of such gifts, where such self-denial is exercised in the spirit of holiness, out of love to others, or to protect oneself against temptation to sin.
3. Experience has taught us that for those who are enslaved to drink, or are in danger of becoming so enslaved, total abstinence is one of the most powerful means of protection; and for this reason such persons should be encouraged to undertake it.
4. For those who think that by their abstinence they can encourage and strengthen the weak it is permissible voluntarily to bind themselves to help such weaker brethren by their example and in the fellowship of love.
5. It must be emphasized that, as there is no salvation without faith in the Lord Jesus, so, too, Biblical Temperance Societies only possess value for eternity in so

far as they seek to pave the way for the preaching of the Gospel, and aim at leading their members not merely to a temperate but to a truly godly life.

6. For this purpose it is permissible to enter into a mutual understanding to abstain, with God's help, from the use of all intoxicating drinks, and to put forth every endeavor to oppose the abuse of strong drink on the part of others. [page 231-232]

13. Murray Speaking at Moody's Conference.

From England the Murrays sailed to the United States. Dwight Moody had invited Murray to be one of the chief speakers at the Northfield Bible Conference that summer. For two weeks Murray spoke each morning on the themes then absorbing his thinking – the feeble religious life of the churches and the need for believers to live the Christian life based on faith in God and His Word. In addition to the general public more than 400 ministers attended the conference. [page 260]

14. Murray's Writings Became Widespread.

As a result of Murray's 1895 preaching tour to Europe and America, his writing ministry flourished to remarkable proportions that year and the next. In addition to seven of his addresses being printed as pamphlets, an astounding fifteen Murray books or booklets were published in six different countries during those two years alone! [page 261]

15. The Durban Conference Effected Many.

Large numbers of both Dutch and English residents of Natal made their way to the 1897 Durban conference. The Dutch attendees came in their ox wagons and camped in Victoria Park. Murray spoke on the theme of 'Absolute Surrender.' One conference attendee reported: 'The effect of the convention on the lives of many a Christian was permanent. But perhaps the outstanding feature of this convention was the number of ministers and missionaries who attended, and who from that time became themselves flames of fire.' [page 264]

16. Response to Criticism.

When criticized himself, Murray characteristically responded non-defensively. An acquaintance once came to him 'in great distress over false reports.' In response Murray quoted the latter half of Psalm 31:20: 'Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.' On another occasion a loyal friend strongly resented some 'damaging criticisms' that had been leveled against one of Murray's published addresses. The supporter prepared a written vindication, which he read to Murray and asked his advice about publishing it. 'Do you think this reply will convince our critic?' Murray asked.

‘No, I don’t suppose it will,’ came the reply.

‘Then what will be the use of publishing it?’ Murray concluded. ‘It will only lead to further controversy, from which nothing will be gained.’ [page 265]

17. Murray’s Hymnbook *Hymns for Life and Service*.

It was also at Murray’s instigation that the hymnbook *Hymns for Life and Service* was compiled and produced for the use at Higher Life conferences throughout South Africa. At one of the convention council meetings he mentioned the need for such a special hymnbook. Turning quickly to the convention song-leader, Murray stated, ‘I think we must ask you to undertake the work for us.’ When the new recruit mentioned the considerable labor and difficulty that would be involved in such an undertaking, Murray placed his hand on the man’s shoulder and, with a twinkly in his eye, said simply, ‘Never mind, dear brother. You do the work and we will promise to pray for you.’ Although the sale of the publication had to be limited to South Africa due to copyright restrictions on many of the songs, more than 50,000 copies of the lyrics-only edition were sold. [page 266]

18. Murray’s Ministry Was Widespread.

Later in 1898 Murray [at 70] visited the Orange Free State to take part in the jubilee celebrations of the four congregations – Bloemfontein, Winburg, Smithfield and Fauresmith—that had formed when he first came as their minister half a century earlier. He carried out his ministry opportunities so energetically on that tour that Emma, who was traveling with him, reported, ‘I fear sometimes he will be laid to rest in this country of his first love.’ But she also divulged, ‘I have ceased to be anxious about him but just trust. It is God who gives strength and will give it as long as He sees best. But someone remarked that when he is gone, six ministers will not do his work.’ [pages 268-269]

19. *The Key to the Missionary Problem*.

When the book [*The Key to the Missionary Problem*] was published in 1901, it received extraordinary reviews. Dr. Alexander McClaren, a prominent British minister, stated, ‘It is the *Key to the Missionary Problem* indeed, but it is also the key to most of our problems, and points to the only cure for all our weaknesses.’ Dr. F.B. Meyer, another popular British pastor, declared, “If it were only read universally throughout our churches, by the ministers and [lay] people alike, I believe it would lead to one of the greatest revivals of missionary enthusiasm that the world has ever known. [page 285]

20. Boer War Concentration Camps.

As the war dragged on and as more and more Dutch women and children were confined in the concentration camps, conditions soon became deplorable, then fatal.

More than 100,000 Dutch women and children were detained in a total of forty-five tented camps. The intention was to adequately care for them there while preventing them from communicating with Boer soldiers still in the field. In addition, sixty-four other internment camps were thrown up for some of 107,000 black Africans who were displaced by the war. Inadequate shelter from severe weather conditions, overcrowding, poor hygiene and sanitation, meager food supplies and lack of proper medicine and medical treatment led to malnutrition and endemic diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and measles. Tragically, as a result, over 26,000 white women and children and more than 14,000 blacks perished in the concentration camps. Eighty-five percent of the whites who died in the camps were children under sixteen years of age; they comprised fully half the Boer child population! [page 286]

21. The Second Boer War.

By the time the war ended a staggering 75,000 lives had been lost in the conflict. 22,000 British and allied soldiers had died (7,800 were killed in battle while the rest perished from disease). Between 6,000 and 7,000 Boer soldiers died in battle. Around 6,000 blacks perished on the battlefields. For Britain the Second Boer war was the costliest conflict it waged in the century between 1815 and 1914. It cost Britain 20,000,000 pounds to prosecute this war, which lasted three months longer than the Crimean War (1853-1856). The Anglo-Boer War claimed the lives of more British soldiers than did the Crimean conflict, though more died of disease in the Crimea. [page 287]

22. Taking Everything to God in Prayer.

Murray undertook his ninth evangelistic tour in 1904, again returning to Transvaal and Natal. A witness of Murray's ministry exertions in the Transvaal at that time would later recall to his daughter Mary:

His power for work was something unusual. One day your mother said to him, 'I think we ought to go home now, we are getting old.' He said, 'Speak for yourself only, Mother. I don't want to die, there is much still to be done still.' I was often astonished at the amount of work he got through, even when traveling or having special services.

... I often look back to the days he spent with us. It was a benediction to have him in the house. What made a great impression upon me at such times was the perfectly natural way in which he would take everything to the Lord in prayer. One day there was an argument with another man who was helping with special services here; this man was rather bent on having his own way. We were at dinner, and all at once Mr. Murray said, 'Let us ask God!', and we knelt own at

table while he prayed. It seemed to me that the man looked rather ashamed of himself when we got up; at least he did not continue the argument.

This was surely an unusual and evidently very effective way of dealing with an overbearing brother. Dr Murray had wonderful tenderness and skill in dealing with such persons, and his patience seemed never to fail. [pages 291-292]