I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2)

Definition of False Teacher: One who presumes to teach in the Name of the Lord when God has not sent him.

False Teacher - Andrew Murray

Christlike Antichrist

There is not a more horrible sight to Heaven than men trying to appear heavenly. It is the arrogance of men who say in their hearts, “I will be as God,” whereas Jesus Christ is God saying, “I will become a man.” Christ comes to consume those who consume Him, thereby making them one with God according to His will and doing. Thus is Jesus’ saying fulfilled: “Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke on you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30 MKJV).

Anti (”instead of” and therefore “opposed to”) Christ

When I first believed on the Lord Jesus Christ in 1973 and entered the evangelical Christian world, I was introduced to literature by many popular Christian teachers, one of those being Andrew Murray. I recall several leaders in the churches raving about him and his books; they would collect them and pass them on to others. It seemed every Christian bookstore carried them and likely still does.

Yet whenever I tried to read Murray’s work, I was bored nearly to death. I found it so dry, although I found the Bible alive and intensely interesting. Murray’s books presented an impossible challenge to me: How could someone be so spiritual? I felt like I was condemned because I simply could not relate to God the way he seemed to. I just did not measure up to Andrew Murray.

By the way, before I believed, the Bible was perfectly dead to me (in retrospect, I realize it was the other way around - I was dead to the Bible). Before I entered into faith, I knew nothing about Andrew Murray, but I know I would have found him to be dead whether I believed or not. Not so with the Bible, which became alive to me when I believed.

This matter with Andrew Murray perplexed me for a while. Whenever I tried reading his books, I would ask myself doubting questions. Wasn’t I spiritual? Wasn’t I right with God? Was there sin in my life? Perhaps my conversion wasn’t real?! Was there something wrong with me that I could not appreciate Murray’s material, as others professing faith in Christ seemed able to do?

Without answers to these questions, I simply laid Murray aside. But I noticed that people who praised him never had anything substantial or specific to say about him or his writings, just that he was a wonderful Christian writer with such deep and wonderful things to say and ways to say them. I thought, “I’m just not there yet.”

Today, I realize that Andrew Murray was not speaking of Jesus Christ, but of his carnal perception of Him. Murray put on a great show of imitating Jesus Christ as he perceived Him. It
was all religiosity, a product of flesh born of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Murray pleased and impressed men by imitating Christ.

Presuming to imitate Jesus Christ is never good; it is thoroughly evil, because it makes God (Jesus Christ) in man’s image, thinking it pleases Him. But it doesn’t please Him at all; it grieves and angers Him. Why is that? After all, what is wrong with supposedly focusing on Him, talking about Him, and bearing witness of Him to others? How can that be anything but so very good?

This paper exposing Andrew Murray was prompted when I recently picked up his book, *Like Christ*. I looked inside and the subject matter was described as, “thoughts on the blessed life of conformity to the Son of God,” suggesting we should try to be like Him. Then it hit me. “Like Christ”? Can we really presume to even know what He is like, much less be like Him in our own knowledge, strength, and judgment? Would we not have to be God, Who alone could make that judgment of His nature? Is this not the height of arrogance and presumption? Indeed, it is!

Nowhere in Scripture are we exhorted to be like Christ or imitate Him. We are called to believe, love, and obey Him, and to follow in His steps, which all may seem like, or be interpreted as, imitating Him. But the truth is that God is at work with us as His children, and as His children, we are called to obey, not to imitate.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be the First-born among many brothers” (Romans 8:29 MKJV).

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when He shall be revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2 MKJV).

God is the Potter, we are the clay; He is the One doing the conforming in us. Some mistakenly think the following Scripture endorses Murray’s approach to being a Christian, with man conforming to God:

“Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1 MKJV).

But Paul was not talking about imitating Christ according to his own understanding, but following Christ as He leads and reveals Himself:

“But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother’s womb, and having called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the nations, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood” (Galatians 1:15-16 MKJV).

This happens by the initiation and empowerment of God. Paul was calling others with like faith, the gift of God, to follow him in what Christ gave him:

“Because of this we also give thanks to God unceasingly, so that when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you received not the word of men, but just as it truly is, the Word of God, which also is at work in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13 EMTV).

Let me put it another way: Children can learn to do things as their parents teach, as with eating, washing, combing hair, reading, and writing. But are they expected to comb their hair in the exact same way, to eat the same quantities and combinations of foods, and to read and write like them personally? While we are called to godliness generally, we are not called to imitation. Our very nature, created by God, rebels against this notion.

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When a son tries to imitate his father’s voice, intonations, hand gestures, and style of preaching, as does John Hagee’s son, you know there is something wrong. It is man’s works. Children must grow up to be individuals with their own personalities, mannerisms, abilities, gifts, and calling. As John Hagee’s son should not try to be as his father, so we should not try to be as our Heavenly Father. While God commands we be holy as He is holy, we are not called to imitate His holiness, however we perceive that to be.

God does not take pleasure in copycats. He is in the business of making us in His image and has no desire for us to make ourselves in an image we conceive of Him. Indeed, that is antiChrist. This copycat mentality and attitude, in essence, is Andrew Murray’s great sin.

As I perused this book that I had not seen for decades, I recalled the effect Murray’s doctrine had on me. As a believer, I was turned off, although I couldn’t define what was wrong; I thought, surely he speaks nothing wrong, so the fault must lie with me.

But this time, decades later, I did not feel guilt or condemnation. I felt anger and indignation that anyone should be so daring as to presume to copy Christ or pretend to know Him intimately by his carnal senses and knowledge; and, adding sin to sin, gloat about it before the world. What chutzpah!

All Murray’s writings are self-exaltation. In Absolute Surrender, one must take his word that he is absolutely surrendered; we assume he wouldn’t talk about it if he wasn’t. In The Deeper Christian Life, he has this deep Christian life, or he wouldn’t talk about it. In speaking of the “Secret of True Obedience,” the “Morning Watch in the Life of Obedience,” and the “Entrance to the Life of Full Obedience,” all chapter titles in his book, The School of Obedience, he speaks of himself.

As I scanned his sermon - The Power of Persevering Prayer - I could find no substance, nothing practical; it was all theory and condescension. He was really saying, “Look how godly I am, how deeply spiritual and Christlike. Watch me, believe me, talk like me, and you will be a saintly person (just like me - and I will get the glory!).” It is all theory, intelligent and spiritually-eloquent perhaps, but diabolical.

His preaching is the letter that kills the spirit. We are called to imitate Murray as he presumes and pretends to imitate Christ. He follows and preaches another “Jesus,” a man-made or devil-made one, the kind the apostle Paul warned about (2 Corinthians 11:4).

Just what is Murray’s fruit? Have you ever wondered about the mealy-mouthed, pretentious, sickly sweet deportment of those who try to imitate Christ or let others know they are Christians? It is men like Murray who produce and promote that spirit and attitude. The Christian is called to be godly, not to have a show of godliness.

Those who recommend Murray’s books couldn’t care less about the Lord Jesus Christ. They are there to make themselves look good: “I am reading Murray, so you see that I understand these deep things of God; I am a praying Christian (the “a” in “praying” should be exchanged for an “e”); I am committed, devoted, and eternally secure. Behold, ME!” They themselves get nothing from his books because both they and the books are dead.

It is like the emperor with no clothes. Though people see or understand nothing from Murray’s books, they rave about his works because they want to be perceived as deeply spiritual. And no one speaks up saying, “There’s nothing here!” Now we do! Emperor, you are stark naked! Shame on your exposing yourself that way, and in God’s Name yet!
Murray’s work is the satanic angel of light being glorified and promoted, and not the Lord Jesus, Whom fawning Murray admirers profess to love. Imitators eat it up because it has a form of godliness; it is their ticket to avoid reality and having to face themselves.

Andrew Murray titles himself, “Reverend.” From cradle to crypt, he has been a part of the system, being ordained by men at age 20 and serving in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, steeped in men’s religious works.

Note that Murray’s writings are not nearly about the Scriptures as about his personal take on them. His is more of an opinionated, psychological, and social commentary than anything of Holy Substance and Subject. And do watch out for the man who speaks in contemporary English and then changes over to King James English for public prayer. That is sure evidence of a religious spirit that glorifies the flesh.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and pray at length as a pretense. Therefore you shall receive the greater condemnation” (Matthew 23:14 MKJV).

Men like Andrew Murray are the more colorful and deceptive kind of serpents, angels of impressive illumination, though they will not deceive true sheep, those who follow their Shepherd.

“The doorkeeper opens to Him, and the sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. And when He puts forth His own sheep, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him. For they know His voice. And they will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers” (John 10:3-5 MKJV).

For more substance to verify what I say concerning the spiritual fallacy of this man, go to The True Marks of a Cult.

How subtle are Satan’s ways! What smokescreens the Devil raises to deceive the unwary! It doesn’t matter if Andrew Murray was sincere or not, it only matters that he was deceived and has served to deceive others. Nevertheless, saints are tried and strengthened by these temptations; they learn to know the difference between good and evil, and when they come to maturity, they rejoice in the One Who kept them safe and sound from the subtle beast.

I don’t have any reason to believe Andrew Murray was deliberately deceptive - he was raised in an active environment of religion and continued only in that which he knew, but which he, of course, also personally chose.

So what, then, is my purpose for speaking of Andrew Murray? I speak to warn, to alert spiritual sojourners of the dangers and pitfalls on their path of truth to the Celestial City of God. I want people to know that what is promoted as Christ most often is not Christ. I want them to know the difference between the real and the counterfeit. I want to confirm to those who sense falsehood in such men that they are indeed sensing truly. I would like to see confusion removed from their lives, a confusion that troubled me when I first began my walk of faith in Christ by His grace.

Most importantly of all, I want the new believer to know that he or she does not grow in Christ by trying to be like Him. Such efforts on our part are what the Bible calls men’s works, works of the flesh, which God hates and which war with the soul. No, the process of salvation is strictly God’s work:
“For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10 MKJV).

We do not make ourselves Christians, and we do not make Christians of others. Those who presume to make of themselves, and of others, Christians are the children of hell (darkness and bondage) of whom Jesus spoke:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you compass sea and the dry land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (Matthew 23:15 MKJV).

There is no proselytization in the Kingdom of God and nothing but proselytization in the kingdoms of men. There is a great deal of difference between proselytization and true Christian discipleship, the work of God. The former is works of men through and through, the paths of the destroyer - works of wood, hay, and stubble, all of which will be committed to the flames.

1 Corinthians 3:9-14 MKJV
(9) For of God we are fellow-workers, a field of God, and you are a building of God.
(10) According to the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let every man be careful how he builds on it.
(11) For any other foundation can no one lay than the one being laid, Who is Jesus Christ.
(12) And if anyone builds on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble,
(13) each one's work shall be revealed. For the Day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try each one's work as to what kind it is.
(14) If anyone's work which he built remains, he shall receive a reward.

“Concerning the works of men, by the Words of Your lips, I am kept from the paths of the destroyer” (Psalms 17:4 MKJV).

Discipleship is working in Christ with God as He works. It is working with, and in agreement with, what God has initiated.

“Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do. For whatever things He does, these also the Son does likewise” (John 5:19 MKJV).

For those who would enter the Kingdom of God, put your trust in Jesus Christ. Depend on Him to usher you into the Kingdom. Ask Him to give you to know what is of Him and what is not, to know the difference between His anointed shepherds and Satan’s messengers who, as sincere as they may seem, come deceiving as presumptuous and presumed ministers of Christ and of righteousness. Don't be afraid. The Lord is quite able to save, and He will in no way refuse or neglect any who come to Him.

Victor Hafichuk