







*To our beloved church family members,
present and past,
at the Aurora Evangelical Free Church
with whom it has been our privilege
to share life and ministry for many years
and with deep appreciation
for your unfailing support and encouragement.*





INTRODUCTION

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.

From his early twenties till well into his eighties Murray was a dynamic, sought-after preacher. Hundreds and even thousands of people eagerly gathered to hear him preach. His sermons were characterized by overwhelming intensity, depth of spiritual insight and evident empowering by God's Spirit that stirred, instructed and challenged his hearers. Fluent in both English and Dutch, Murray communicated with great effectiveness to audiences in South Africa, Europe and America.

Murray served for fifty-seven years as an active minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. He pastored four separate congregations, including his final pastorate of three and a half decades. His ministerial colleagues repeatedly chose him as their leader by electing him to serve six terms as Moderator of Cape Colony's Dutch Reformed Synod. Murray became the foremost minister both in terms of prominence and influence not only in Cape Colony but also in the Orange River Sovereignty (later the Orange Free State), the Transvaal and Natal. He travelled and ministered more extensively throughout all of South Africa than any other minister of any denomination in his day.

As a primary and visionary spiritual leader not only of his denomination but also of his country, Murray actively advanced





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a wide variety of causes that promoted the well-being, spiritually and in other ways, of both Church and State. He helped establish congregations and recruit pastors to serve in Cape Colony and its neighboring republics. He played a key role in the founding of several educational institutions, not only for the purpose of providing young people of various socio-economic classes with the opportunity to gain an education, but also to train teachers and missionaries. Murray personally carried out several major evangelistic tours of different parts of South Africa, pointing large numbers of people to salvation in Christ. He took the lead in establishing and promoting the work of various foreign missionary societies to carry the Gospel to unreached people groups outside the bounds of the Colony. Murray sponsored and was featured at numerous conferences aimed at calling believers to a higher plain of Christian living and service. He actively supported a number of student ministry organizations as well as home mission works that ministered to military personnel, the poor and moral outcasts. Though Murray did not normally involve himself directly in politics, he sought to lead people in responding appropriately to the sometimes turbulent political events of the day. Periodically he was called on to fulfill a more direct role in working through those challenging situations.

While being a man of seemingly constant action, 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 a 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. He had an appreciation for the writings of certain Christian mystics and has sometimes been classified as being a sane, sanctified mystic himself.

Through his prolific writing endeavors, which saw nearly 240 works (including over seventy books) published, Murray was able to have a worldwide ministry to hundreds of thousands of Christians during his lifetime. To this day dozens of his works continue to be



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published and read by believers throughout the world. Murray's writings, in fact, are what he is best known for today.

Murray's books divulge his fervent spiritual perspectives. But they reveal virtually nothing about his personal history and ministry. The present volume shows the many events and other factors that went into Murray's personal development and into the formation of his viewpoints and convictions.¹ The current work also reveals that Murray's writing ministry, though truly impressive in its scope, was but one of several major emphases in his remarkably broad and fruitful career of service.

Past Murray-biographies have tended to relate the first half of his life in chronological order, while presenting various aspects of his ministry in the latter half of his life – such as his efforts to promote education, evangelism and missions – in topical (but non-chronological) fashion. The present biography is the first to offer a chronological account of Murray's life from start to finish, presenting the events and developments of his life and ministry in the order in which they unfolded. This has the added advantage of enabling one to gain a clearer understanding of the wide variety of ministries Murray was simultaneously involved in during the different periods of his ministerial career.

Several abbreviations are used in the current volume for various ministry organizations or geographical locations that are referred to repeatedly – for example: CGM for Cape General Mission; CEM for Christian Endeavor Movement; OFS for Orange Free State. One abbreviation, DRC, signifying Dutch Reformed Church, is sometimes used of that denomination and at other times of a local congregation belonging to that denomination. The context makes clear which is intended.

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1. While this volume naturally gives some attention to Murray's beliefs and spiritual perspectives it focuses on the events and formative features of his life. For a helpful summary of three of the key components in Murray's teaching, see W.M. Douglas, *Andrew Murray and His Message, One of God's Choice Saints* (London and Edinburgh: Oliphants, 1927), pp. 261-344. Douglas reviews Murray's teachings on prayer, holy living and the Holy Spirit.



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Slight, inconsequential changes have been made to some of the cited quotations in order to standardize punctuation, the spelling of various words and the form of biblical references. Some Dutch words or phrases were eliminated and only their English translation was retained when it seemed appropriate to do so. Run-on sentences, which were common in Murray's era, have sometimes been divided for the sake of clarity. All these changes in no way alter the meaning of the quotations. Plenty of unique expressions and stylistic features are retained in the citations.

Andrew Murray steadfastly refused numerous requests to record his personal memoirs. He included virtually no autobiographical references in his published writings. He was reluctant even to share his personal testimony of Christian growth lest the attention of others be directed to his experiences rather than to the teachings of Scripture. Instead of drawing attention to himself, Murray habitually pointed people to Christ (His example, presence and power) as well as the empowerment of His indwelling Holy Spirit as the key resources for successful Christian living and service.

Consideration of Murray's personal example in the pages to follow is very worthwhile and beneficial. It can be used of God to inspire and instruct. But as Murray himself would certainly desire, and as is only right, may people comprehend that he accomplished what he did by the power of God working in and through him. Therefore, may God alone receive all the glory.