

Andrew Murray:

"Predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" Romans 8:29.

"I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" John 13:15.

The Bible speaks of two types of conformity, a twofold likeness which we bear. We may be conformed to the world or to Jesus. The one excludes and drives out the other. More than anything else, conformity to Jesus will be secretly prevented by conformity to the world. And conformity to the world can be overcome by nothing but conformity to Jesus.

Young Christian, the new life of which you have become partaker is the life of God in heaven. That life is revealed and made visible in Christ. What the workings and fruits of eternal life were in Jesus, they will also be in you. In His life you get to see what eternal life will work in you. It cannot be otherwise. If for this reason you surrender yourself unreservedly to Jesus and the dominion of eternal life, it will bring forth in you a walk of wonderful conformity to that of Jesus.¹

Two things, especially, are necessary for a true imitation of Jesus in His example and for growth in inward conformity to Him. These are, a clear insight that I am really called to this, and a firm trust that it is possible for me.

One of the greatest hindrances in the spiritual life is that we do not know--we do not see--what God desires that we should be.² Our understanding is still enlightened so little, and we still have so many of our own human thoughts and imaginations about the true service of God. We know so little of waiting for the Spirit who alone can teach us. We do not acknowledge that even the clearest words of God do not have for us the meaning and power that God desires. And as long as we do not spiritually discern what likeness to Jesus is, and how utterly we are called to live like Him, little can be said of true conformity. If only we could understand how very much we need divine instruction on this point.³

For this reason, let us earnestly examine the Scriptures in order to know what God says and desires about our conformity to Christ.⁴ Let us unceasingly ponder such words of Scripture, and keep our heart in contact with them. Let it remain fixed with us that we have given ourselves wholly to the Lord--to be all that He desires. Let us trustfully pray that the Holy Spirit would inwardly enlighten us and bring us to a full awareness of the life of Jesus, so far as can be seen in a believer.⁵ The Spirit will convince us that we, no less than Jesus, are absolutely called to live only for the will and glory of the Father. We are called to be in the world even as He is.

The other thing that we have need of is the belief that it is really possible for us to bear the image of our Lord. Unbelief is the cause of weakness. We can put this matter another way. We think that because we are powerless, we dare not believe that we can be conformed to our Lord. This thought is in conflict with the Word of God. We do not have it in our own power to carry ourselves after the image of Jesus. No, He is our head and our life. He lives in us and will have His life work from within outwards--with divine power through the Holy Spirit.⁶

Yet this cannot be separate from our faith. Faith is the consent of the heart, the surrender to Him to work, and the reception of His working. "Be it unto you according to your faith" (Matthew 9:29) is one of the fundamental laws of the Kingdom of God.⁷ It is incredible what power unbelief has in hindering the working and the blessing of Almighty God. The Christian who wants to become conformed to Christ must cherish the firm trust that this blessing is within his reach and is entirely within the range of possibility. He must learn to look to Jesus as Him in whom, by the grace of God, he can be truly conformable. He must believe that the same Spirit that was in Jesus is also in him. He must believe that the same Father that led and strengthened Jesus also watches over him, and that the same Jesus that lived on earth now lives in him. He must cherish the strong assurance that the Trinity is at work in changing him into the image of the Son.⁸

He who believes this will receive it. It will not be without much prayer. It will especially require ceaseless communion with the Father and Jesus. Yet he who desires it, and is willing to give time and sacrifice to it, certainly receives it.

Son of God, radiance of the glory of God, the very Image of His substance, I must be changed into Your image. In You I see the image and the likeness of God in which we were created, in which we are by You created anew. Lord Jesus, let conformity to You be the one desire, the one hope of my soul. Amen.