

INTRODUCTION



IT is often said that the great aim of the preacher ought to be to translate Scripture truth from its Jewish form into the language and the thought of the nineteenth century, and so to make it intelligible and acceptable to our ordinary Christians. It is to be feared that the experiment will do more harm than good. In the course of the translation the force of the original is lost. The scholar who trusts to translations will never become a master of the language he wants to learn. A race of Christians will be raised up, to whom the language of God's Word, and with that the God who spoke it, will be strange. In the Scripture words not a little of Scripture truth will be lost. For the true Christian life nothing is so healthful and invigorating as to have each man come and study for himself the very words in which the Holy Ghost has spoken.

One of the words of Scripture, which is almost going out of fashion, is the word Covenant. There was a time when it was the keynote of the theology and the Christian life of strong and holy men. We know how deep in Scotland it entered into the national life and thought. It made mighty men, to whom God, and His promise and power were wonderfully real. It will be found still to bring strength and purpose to those who will take the trouble to bring all their life under control of the inspiring assurance that they are living in covenant with a God who has sworn faithfully to fulfil in them every promise He has given.

This book is a humble attempt to show what exactly the blessings are that God has covenanted to bestow on us; what the assurance is the Covenant gives that they must, and can, and will be fulfilled; what the hold on God Himself is which it thus gives us; and what the conditions are for the full and continual experience of its blessings. I feel confident that if I can lead any to listen to what God has to say to them of His Covenant, and to deal with Him as a Covenant God, it will bring them strength and joy.

Not long ago I received from one of my correspondents a letter with the following passage in it:- “I think you will excuse and understand me when I say there is one further note of power I would like so much to have introduced into your next book on Intercession. God Himself has, I know, been giving me some direct teaching this winter upon the place the New Covenant is to have in intercessory prayer . . . I know you believe in the Covenant, and the Covenant rights we have on account of it. Have you followed out your views of the Covenant as they bear upon this subject of intercession? Am I wrong in coming to the conclusion that we may come boldly into God’s presence, and not only ask, but claim a Covenant right through Christ Jesus to all the spiritual searching, and cleansing, and knowledge, and power promised in the three great Covenant promises? If you would take the Covenant and speak of it as God could enable you to speak, I think that would be the quickest way the Lord could take to make His Church wake up to the power He has put into our hands in giving us a Covenant. I would be so glad if you would tell God’s people that they have a Covenant.” Though this letter was not the occasion of the writing of the book, and our Covenant rights have been considered in a far wider aspect than their relation to prayer, I am persuaded that nothing will help us more in our work of intercession, than the entrance

for ourselves personally into what it means, that we have a Covenant God.

My one great desire has been to ask Christians whether they are really seeking to find out what exactly God wants them to be, and is willing to make them. It is only as they wait, “that the mind of the Lord may be showed them,” that their faith can ever truly see, or accept, or enjoy what God calls “His salvation.” As long as we expect God to do for us what we ask or think, we limit Him. When we believe that as high as the heavens are above the earth, His thoughts are above our thoughts, and wait on Him as God to do unto us according to His Word, as He means it, we shall be prepared to live the truly supernatural, heavenly life the Holy Spirit can work in us the true Christ life.

May God lead every reader into the secret of His presence, and “show him His Covenant.”

WELLINGTON, SOUTH AFRICA,

1st November 1898. ANDREW MURRAY.