

Covenants
AND
BLESSINGS

Covenants
AND
BLESSINGS

Andrew Murray



WHITAKER
HOUSE

Publisher's note:

This new edition from Whitaker House has been edited for the modern reader. Words, expressions, and sentence structure have been updated for clarity and readability.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

COVENANTS AND BLESSINGS

Previously titled *God's Promises, Our Benefits*

Originally titled *The Two Covenants and the Second Blessing*

ISBN-13: 978-0-88368-748-2 • ISBN-10: 0-88368-748-8

Printed in the United States of America

© 1984 by Whitaker House

Whitaker House
1030 Hunt Valley Circle
New Kensington, PA 15068
www.whitakerhouse.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Murray, Andrew, 1828–1917.

Covenants and blessings / Andrew Murray.

p. cm.

Originally published: ©1984.

ISBN 0-88368-748-8 (pbk.)

1. Covenants—Religious aspects—Christianity.
2. Christian life—Reformed authors. I. Title.

BT155 .M799 2002

231.7'6—dc21

2001008397

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical—including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system—without permission in writing from the publisher. Please direct your inquiries to permissionseditor@whitakerhouse.com.

CONTENTS

Introduction	7
1. A Covenant God	11
2. The Two Covenants	17
3. The First Covenant	23
4. The New Covenant	31
5. The Covenants in Christian Experience.....	39
6. The Everlasting Covenant	47
7. A Ministration of the Spirit	55
8. The Transition.....	61
9. The Blood of the Covenant	69
10. Jesus, Mediator of the New Covenant.....	77
11. Jesus, Surety of the Better Covenant	85
12. The Book of the Covenant	93
13. New Covenant Obedience	99
14. A Covenant of Grace	107
15. An Everlasting Priesthood	113
16. The Ministry of the New Covenant.....	119
17. His Holy Covenant	127
18. Entering the Covenant with All the Heart.....	135
Note A The Second Blessing.....	143
Note B The Law Written in the Heart.....	149
Note C George Müller's Second Conversion	155
Note D Canon Battersby	161
Note E Nothing of Myself	165
Note F The Whole Heart	171

INTRODUCTION

It is often said that the great aim of the preacher should be to translate scriptural truth from its Jewish form into the language and thought of the current century. He should make it intelligible and acceptable to ordinary Christians. It is feared that the experiment will do more harm than good. In the course of the translation, the power of the original message is lost. The scholar who trusts translations will never become a master of the language he wants to learn. A race of Christians will arise who will be strangers to the language of God's Word and the God who spoke it. In the wording of some Scripture translations, much of scriptural truth will be lost. For the true Christian life, nothing is as healthy and invigorating as having each man come and study for himself the very words the Holy Spirit has spoken.

One of the words of Scripture that is almost obsolete is the word *Covenant*. There was a time when it was the keynote of theology and the basis for the Christian life of strong, holy men. We know how in Scotland it entered deep into the national life and thought. It made mighty men. It made men to whom God and His promise and power were wonderfully real. It still brings strength and purpose to those who take the trouble to bring all their life under the control of the inspiring assurance that they are living in

COVENANTS AND BLESSINGS

covenant with God. He has faithfully sworn to fulfill in them every promise He has given.

This book is a humble attempt to show exactly which blessings God has covenanted to us. It gives His assurance that the Covenant must, can, and will be fulfilled. It also shows how we can approach God and explains the conditions for receiving the full, continual experience of the covenant blessings. I am confident that if I can lead anyone to listen to what God has to say about His Covenant, and to deal with Him as a covenant God, it will bring him strength and joy.

Not long ago I received a letter from one of my correspondents 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 to have introduced in your next book on intercession. God has been giving me some direct teaching this winter about the place the New Covenant is to have in intercessory prayer.

"I know you believe in the Covenant and the covenant rights we have because 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, cleansing, knowledge, and power promised in the three great Covenant promises?

"If you take the Covenant and speak about it as God enables you to speak, I think that would be the quickest way for the Lord to make His church wake up to the power He has put in our hands in giving us a Covenant. I would be so glad if you told God's people that they have a Covenant."

INTRODUCTION

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 relationship to prayer, I, too, am persuaded that nothing will help us more in our work of intercession than the entrance into what it means to have a covenant God.

My one great desire has been to ask Christians whether they are really seeking to find out exactly what God wants them to be and is willing to make them. It is only then that their faith can ever truly see, accept, or enjoy what God calls "His salvation." As long as we expect God to do for us only what we ask or think, we limit Him. When we believe that His thoughts are as high above our thoughts as the heavens are above the earth, and wait on Him as God to do to us according to His Word, we will 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.

—*Andrew Murray*

CHAPTER 1

A COVENANT GOD

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments.

—Deuteronomy 7:9

Men know the advantages of making covenants. A covenant has often been of unspeakable value as an end to hatred or uncertainty, as an agreement of services rendered, as an assurance of good quality and honesty, and as a basis for confidence and friendship.

GOD'S COVENANT

In His infinite descent to our human weakness and need, God's pledge of faithfulness goes beyond the ways of men. He gives us perfect confidence in Him and the full assurance of all that He, in His infinite riches and power, has promised to do. He has consented to bind Himself by Covenant, as if He could not be trusted. Blessed is the man who truly knows God as his covenant God and knows what the Covenant promises him. What unwavering confidence of expectation it secures. All its terms will be fulfilled. What a claim and hold it gives him on the covenant-keeping God Himself.

COVENANTS AND BLESSINGS

To the many who have never thought much about the Covenant, it would mean the transformation of their whole lives to have a true, living faith. The full knowledge of what God wants to do, the assurance that it will be done, and the being drawn to God Himself in personal surrender makes the Covenant the very gate of heaven. May the Holy Spirit give us some vision of its glory.

When God created man in His image and likeness, it was so that he would have a life as similar to God's as possible. This occurred by God Himself living and working in man. For this, man was to yield himself in loving dependence to the wonderful glory of being the recipient, bearer, and manifestation of a divine life. The one secret of man's happiness was a trustful surrender of his whole being to the willing and the working of God. When sin entered, this relationship with God was destroyed. When man disobeyed, he feared God and fled from Him. He no longer knew, loved, or trusted God.

GETTING MAN TO BELIEVE

Man could not save himself from the power of sin. If his redemption was to be effected, God had to do it all. If God was to do it in harmony with the law of man's nature, man must be brought to desire it, yield to it, and entrust himself to God. All God wanted man to do was believe in Him. What a man believes moves and rules his whole being. It enters into him and becomes part of his very life. Salvation could only be by faith. God restored the life man had lost. Man in faith yielded himself to God's work and will.

The first great work of God was to get man to believe. This work cost God more care, time, and

A COVENANT GOD

patience than we can conceive. All the dealings with individual men and with the people of Israel had this one objective—to teach men to trust Him. Where He found faith, He could do anything. Nothing dishonored and grieved Him so much as unbelief. Unbelief was the root of disobedience and every sin. It made it impossible for God to do His work. The one thing God sought to waken in men, by promise, mercy, and judgment, was faith.

The main way God's patient grace awakened and strengthened faith was the Covenant. In more than one way God sought to effect this by His Covenant. First of all, His Covenant was always a revelation of His purposes. It showed, in definite promise, that God was willing to work in those with whom the Covenant was made. It was a divine pattern of the work God intended to do on their behalf so that they might know what to desire and expect. It was a pattern so their faith could nourish itself with the very things, though as yet unseen, that it was working out.

Then, the Covenant was meant to be a security and guarantee. It was to be as simple, plain, and humanlike as the divine glory could make it. The very things that God had promised would be brought to pass and worked out in those with whom He had entered into covenant. Amid all delay, disappointment, and apparent failure of the divine promises, the Covenant was to be the anchor of the soul, pledging the divine truthfulness, faithfulness, and unchangeableness for the certain performance of what had been promised. So the Covenant was, above all, to give man a hold upon God, as the covenant-keeping God. It was to link him to God in expectation and hope. It was to cause him to make God alone the portion and the strength of his soul.

COVENANTS AND BLESSINGS

UNBELIEF HOLDS US BACK

If only we knew how much God wants us to trust Him and how surely His every promise will be fulfilled for those who do so! If only we knew that it is our unbelief that prevents us from entering into the possession of God's promises! Because we do not, God cannot do His mighty works in us, for us, and through us! One of the surest remedies for our unbelief—the divinely chosen cure for it—is the Covenant into which God has entered with us! The whole dispensation of the Spirit, the whole economy of grace in Christ Jesus, the whole of our spiritual lives, and the whole of the health, growth, and strength of the church has been laid down, provided for, and secured in the New Covenant. It is a great shame that the Covenant and its wonderful promises are so little thought of. Its plea for an abounding, unhesitating confidence in God is so little understood. Its claim to the faithfulness of the omnipotent God is rarely tested. No wonder the Christian life misses the joy, holiness, and heavenly quality that God meant and so clearly promises that it should have.

TAKE GOD'S PROMISES

Let us listen to God's Word, which calls us to know, worship, and trust our covenant-keeping God. Maybe we will find what we have been looking for: the deep, full experience of all that God's grace can do in us. In the text Moses said, "*Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him.*" Notice what God says in Isaiah.

The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from

A COVENANT GOD

thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.
(Isaiah 54:10)

The fulfillment of every covenant promise is surer than any mountain. In Jeremiah God speaks of the New Covenant,

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. (Jeremiah 32:40)

The Covenant secures that God will not turn from us nor will we depart from Him. He undertakes both for Himself and us.

Let us earnestly ask whether the lack in our Christian life, especially in our faith, is due to neglect of the Covenant. We have not worshipped nor trusted the covenant-keeping God. Our souls have not done what God called us to—to take hold of His Covenant; to remember the Covenant. No wonder our faith has failed and comes short of the blessing. God could not fulfill His promises in us.

If we begin to examine the terms of the Covenant as the deed of our inheritance and the riches we are to possess even here on earth, we will be different. If we will think of the certainty of their fulfillment and turn to the God who has promised to do it all for us, our lives will be different from what they have been. They can and will be all that God desires to make them.

WE NEED MORE OF GOD

The greatest lack of our faith is that we need more of God. We accept salvation as His gift, but often do

COVENANTS AND BLESSINGS

not know that the main blessing of salvation is to prepare us for and bring us back to that close fellowship with God for which we were created. All that God has ever done for His people in making a Covenant was to bring them to Himself and to teach them to trust in Him, delight in Him, and be one with Him. It cannot be otherwise.

If God is the very fountain of goodness and glory, beauty and blessedness, the more we can have of His presence, conform to His will, engage in His service, and have Him ruling and working in us, the happier we will be. Only a true, good Christian life, which brings us nearer to God every day, makes us give up everything to have more of Him. No obedience can be too strict, no dependence too absolute, no submission too complete, no confidence too implicit to a person who is learning to count God his highest good and exceeding joy.

In entering into covenant with us, God's one objective is to draw us to Himself. He wants to make us entirely dependent upon Him, to bring us into the right position and attitude so He can fill us with Himself, His love, and His blessedness. Let us study the New Covenant. God is at this moment living and walking with us. Let us go to God with the honest purpose and surrender to know what He wants to be in us, and to have us be to Him. The New Covenant will become one of the windows of heaven through which we see into the face and very heart of God.