

A Genuine Heart Experience

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jeremiah 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

Jeremiah 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The great task of prophecy was the transformation of the religion of Israel. To this task it gave itself with unselfish and unremitting zeal and achieved a large measure of success.

The glory of the prophets is that they knew where to place the emphasis in religion. They sought to substitute for rites and ceremonies, splendid and sincere as they were, still more splendid ideals and purposes.

They would make religion a genuine heart experience, changing and controlling all the currents of life. A passion for justice, truth, and mercy must be far more highly prized than any degree of zeal for sacrifices and institutions.

True religion is a right attitude of mind and heart toward God and man. Prophecy moves not in the sphere of the external and mechanical, but in that of the inner and vital. The best formulation of the religious ideal of prophecy is that furnished by the description of the "new covenant" in Jer., chap. 31.

(Biblical Ideas of Atonement: Their History and Significance by Ernest DeWitt Burton, John Merlin Powis Smith, and Gerald Birney Smith, Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1909, 25, e-book, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)