

CHAPTER XI.

**JESUS, THE SURETY
OF A BETTER COVENANT**

“And inasmuch as it is not without the taking of an oath: by so much also hath Jesus become the Surety of a better covenant. Wherefore also He is able to save completely them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Heb 7. 20, 22, 25.

A SURETY is one who stands good for another, that a certain engagement will be faithfully performed. Jesus is the Surety of the New Covenant. He stands surety with us for God— that God’s part in the Covenant will faithfully be performed. And He stands surety with God for us, that our part will be faithfully performed too. If we are to live in covenant with God, everything depends upon our knowing aright what Jesus secures to us. The more we know and trust Him, the more assured will our faith be that its every promise and every demand will be fulfilled, that a life of faithful keeping of God’s Covenant is indeed possible, because Jesus is the Surety of the Covenant. He makes God’s faithfulness and ours equally sure.

We read that it was because His priesthood was confirmed

by the oath of God, that He became the Surety of a so much better Covenant. The oath of God gives us the security that His suretyship will secure all the better promises. The meaning and infinite value of God's oath had been explained in the previous chapter. "In every dispute the oath is final for confirmation. Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, interposed with an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement." We thus have not only a Covenant, with certain definite promises; we have not only Jesus, the Surety of the Covenant; but at the back of that again, we have the living God, with a view to our having perfect confidence in the unchangeableness of His counsel and promise, coming in between with an oath. Do we not begin to see that the one thing God aims at in this Covenant, and asks with regard to it, is an absolute confidence that He is going to do all He has promised, however difficult or wonderful it may appear? His oath is an end of all fear or doubt. Let no one think of understanding the Covenant, of judging or saying what may be expected from it, much less of experiencing its blessings, until he meets God with an Abraham like faith, that gives Him the glory, and is fully assured that what He has promised He is able to perform. The Covenant is a sealed mystery, except to the soul who is going without reserve to trust God, and abandon itself to His word and work.

Of the work of Christ, as the Surety of the better Covenant, our passage tells us that, because of this priesthood confirmed by oath, He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him. And this, because "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." As Surety of the Covenant, He is ceaselessly engaged in watching their needs, and presenting them to the Father,

in receiving His answer, and imparting its blessing. It is because of this never-ceasing mediation, receiving and transmitting from God to us the gifts and powers of the heavenly world, that He is able to save completely—to work and maintain in us a salvation as complete as God is willing it should be, as complete as the Better Covenant has assured us it shall be, in the better promises upon which it was established. These promises are expounded (Heb. 8. 7-13) as being none other than those of the New Covenant of Jeremiah, with the law written in the heart by the Spirit of God as our experience of the power of that salvation.

Jesus, the Surety of a better Covenant, Jesus is to be our assurance that everything connected with the Covenant is unchangeably and eternally sure. In Jesus the keynote is given of all our intercourse with God, of all our prayers and desires, of all our life and walk, that with full assurance of faith and hope we may look for every word of the Covenant to be made fully true to us by God's own power. Let us look at some of these things of which we are to be fully assured, if we are to breathe the spirit of children of the New Covenant.

There is the love of God. The very thought of a Covenant is an alliance of friendship. And it is as a means of assuring us of His love, of drawing us close to His heart of love, of getting our hearts under the power of His love, and filled with it—it is because God loves us with an infinite love, and wants us to know it, and to give it complete liberty to bestow itself on us, and bless us, that the New Covenant has been made, and God's own Son been made its Surety. This love of God is an infinite Divine energy, doing its utmost to fill the soul with itself and its blessedness. Of this love God's Son is the Messenger; of the Covenant in which God reveals it to us He is the Surety; let us learn that the chief need

in studying the Covenant and keeping it, in seeking and claiming its blessings, is the exercise of a strong and confident assurance in God's love.

Then there is the assurance of the sufficiency of Christ's finished redemption. All that was needed to put away sin, to free us entirely and for ever from its power, has been accomplished by Christ. His blood and death, His resurrection and ascension, have taken us out of the power of the world and transplanted us into a new life in the power of the heavenly world. All this is Divine reality; Christ is Surety that the Divine righteousness, and the Divine acceptance, that all sufficient Divine grace and strength, are ever ours. He is Surety that all these can and will be communicated to us in unbroken continuance.

It is even so with the assurance of what is needed on our part to enter into this life in the New Covenant. We shrink back, either from the surrender of all, because we know not whether we have the power to let it go, or from the faith for all, because we fear ours will never be so strong or so bold as to take all that is offered us in this wonderful Covenant. Jesus is Surety of a better Covenant. The better consists just in this very thing, that it undertakes to provide the children of the Covenant with the very dispositions they need, to accept and enjoy it. We have seen how the heart is just the central object of the Covenant promise. A heart circumcised to love God with all the heart, a heart into which God's law and fear have been put, so that it will not depart from Him—it is of all this Jesus is the Surety under the oath of God. Let us say it once more: Surely the one thing God asks of us, and has given the Covenant and its Surety to secure—the confident trust that all will be done in us that is needed— is what we dare not withhold.

I think some of us are beginning to see what has been our great mistake. We have thought and spoken great things of what Christ did on the Cross, and does on the Throne, as Covenant Surety. And we have stopped there. But we have not expected Him to do great things in our hearts. And yet it is there, in our heart, that the consummation takes place of the work on the Cross and the Throne; in the heart the New Covenant has its full triumph; the Surety is to be known not by what the mind can think of Him in heaven, but by what he does to make Himself known in the heart. There is the place where His love triumphs and is enthroned. Let us with the heart believe and receive Him as the Covenant Surety. Let us, with every desire we entertain in connection with it, with every duty it calls us to, with every promise it holds out, look to Jesus, under God's oath the Surety of the Covenant. Let us believe that by the Holy Spirit the heart is His home and His throne. Let us, if we have not done it yet, in a definite act of faith, throw ourselves utterly on Him, for the whole of the New Covenant life and walk. No surety was ever so faithful to his undertaking as Jesus will be to His on our behalf, in our hearts.

And now, notwithstanding the strong confidence and consolation the oath of God and the Surety of the Covenant gives, there are some still looking wistfully at this blessed life, and yet afraid to trust themselves to this wondrous grace. They have a conception of faith as something great and mighty, and they know and feel that theirs is not such. And so their feebleness remains an insuperable barrier to their inheriting the promise. Let me try and say once again: Brother, the act of faith, by which you accept and enter this life in the New Covenant, is not commonly an act of power, but often of weakness and fear and much trembling. And even in the midst of all this feebleness, it is not an act in your strength, but in a secret and perhaps unfelt strength, which Jesus the Surety of

the Covenant gives you. God has made Him Surety, with the very object of inspiring us with courage and confidence. He longs, He delights to bring you into the Covenant. Why not bow before Him, and say meekly: He does hear prayer; He brings into the Covenant; He enables a soul to believe; I may trust Him confidently. And just begin quietly to believe that there is an Almighty Lord, given by the Father, to do everything needed to make all Covenant grace wholly true in you. Bow low, and look up out of your low estate to your glorified Lord, and maintain your confidence that a soul, that in its nothingness trusts in Him, will receive more than it can ask or think.

Dear believer, come and be a believer. Believe that God is showing you how entirely the Lord Jesus wants to have you and your life for Himself; how entirely He is willing to take charge of you and work all in you; how entirely you may even now commit your trust, and your surrender, and your faithfulness to the Covenant, with all you are and are to be, to Him, your Blessed Surety. If thou believest, thou shalt see the glory of God. What Christ has undertaken, you may confidently count upon His performing.

In a sense, and measure, and power that passeth knowledge, Jesus Christ is Himself all that God can either ask or give, all that God wants to see in us. “He that believeth in me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water.”