

MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN. NO. 2.

“In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God – to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” – Heb. 2:17.

In our previous paper (in July TOWER) under this caption we showed, we trust conclusively, that this passage of Scripture in no way signifies that our Lord was a sinner in any sense or in any degree, – neither the vilest of the vile, nor vile in the least degree, but that, as emphatically stated in Scriptures, he was holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate* from sinners. Now, we hope to show clearly in this paper what the above and kindred passages do teach.

Who are the "*brethren*" whom he was "like unto." Surely the Sodomites and antediluvians are not the "brethren" referred to; so he was not like unto them, and was not tempted like as they were. Nor are sinners of any age, of these "*brethren*" like unto whom our Lord was; nor was he tempted like unto any or all sinners. Our Lord himself tells us who are his brethren saying "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother." No sinner can measure up to this requirement; only the saints can fill the measure, and they, only by having their sins passed over, covered by Christ's meritorious sacrifice, and having their *motives* accepted now, through Christ, as instead of their actual works. Only these, in whom the righteousness of the law is reckoned as fulfilled through Christ – who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, fully consecrated to God, are the brethren of Christ, brethren, too, whom he declares he is not ashamed to own, – brethren of *holy desires*, justified and sanctified.

Like unto these our Lord was, and like unto these he was tempted *i.e.*, tested, tried, and proved obedient to his covenant of consecration.

He was not tempted with the depraved tastes and desires of a drunkard or dissolute person, nor with the besetments and frivolities of present day "society," nor with wealth, nor with the perplexing annoyances of a parent, nor in a thousand other ways that men and women are perplexed and annoyed; but he was tempted or tested in all points like as *we*, the consecrated, are tested. Thus: We as followers in his footsteps find three points from which our covenant of self-sacrifice is tested – the world, the flesh and the devil – and so did our Lord.

"The world" tests *us* by presenting opportunities for the use of our faculties and talents which are *good*, and right, sometimes benevolent and grand, and often more in sympathy with our human wisdom and tastes than God's plan which we have covenanted to follow. It is not only difficult to ignore and overcome the thousands of besetments from this source, but the greater the talents and the more nearly perfect the individual, the severer the test; because the clearer the head, the better and more benevolent the plans conceived of; and the greater the ability for executing those plans, the more difficult it will be to set them utterly aside and act merely as the tool of another – God's tool.

"The flesh," or earthly desires, here comes in – not in us "his brethren" desires to do evil of any sort (for none of "his brethren" have pleasure in sin,) [R964 : page 6] but desires to do good of an *earthly sort*, congenial to the laudable tastes and ambitions of *perfect* men and women, to use time and talent in such a way as would afford pleasure and comfort and worldly approval and praise, rather than in a way to cost sacrifice of worldly praise and ease and comfort, in being "crucified to the world," its aims and rewards.

"The devil" (we use this word devil to represent not only the being called Satan but evil influences started originally by his temptation in Eden,) takes advantage of the attractions of earthly things for our (consecrated) flesh and uses his influence against us powerfully. He operates through various agencies, and sometimes in opposite directions, to hinder the consecrated; and he is permitted to do so, to

test those running for the prize and to make manifest the "overcomers" – the body of Christ. He *rules* the world in general, but not the "brethren." These he recognizes as opponents, whom he would deceive, ensnare, and hinder in their race, and he will succeed in doing so with all except a little flock, the "brethren" who, like their Lord, and by his aid, will overcome.

To deceive the consecrated, he must counterfeit the true consecration, and get them to *feel satisfied* by some outward forms and ceremonies, united to benevolent worldliness, which will gratify the flesh instead of crucifying it. How skillfully the adversary has operated to carry out this plan, we all know. Great systems, each claiming to be the church – yet composed almost entirely of the unconsecrated, and in great part of unbelievers, full of the spirit – the plans, ideas and dispositions – of the world, full of pride and very unchristlike, have been organized to suit every shade and degree of spiritual derangement, each posing before the world as "the little flock" of overcomers, crucified with Christ. Those only who are free from these systems, standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, can see the hollowness and falsity of such claims. These can see that *not one* of these human systems is "the church of the first born ones whose names are written in heaven," though some of the members of that true church are bound in those systems. Such can see, too, the absurdity of supposing that all of these various "*bodies*", with their various heads, and various and contradictory faiths and baptisms, can be the *one body* whose only head or Lord is Christ, whose only faith is that *once* delivered to the saints – the Bible – whose baptism is into Christ and into his death.

But many are deceived by these immense sectarian systems which Satan, by operating in harmony with the spirit of the world and the flesh, has succeeded in getting many of the truly consecrated to organize and uphold. Such feel continually opposed to the methods of these systems, and realize that their spiritual natures are not fed and are not growing, and see that the descriptions of his church given by its

Head does not fit these systems, when he declared it would be a "little flock," despised and rejected by the world, reviled because of its faithfulness to his word. But they are overawed by the greatness of their systems, and by the influence of the world, and by their respect for the word of men, and by the honor they have one of another, so that they find it impossible to accept of God's Word only, and His approval only, and of a membership only in the church written in heaven, but ignored and despised on earth.

Such are the temptations, tests, or besetments of the "brethren;" and the Master was tempted or beset or tested by the same. If the world offers opportunity to us for doing good with our limited talents, energies and ambitions, and our known likelihood to miscalculate, etc., what must have been the temptation to the perfect "man Christ Jesus" with sound judgment as to what would be practicable and what he could accomplish in the way of moral, social and political reforms for the world. Thus his flesh (holy, harmless and undefiled) would powerfully draw him toward that course which would be in harmony with its judgment and plan of *well-doing*, and draw away *from* the total surrender of those plans, talents and powers, which the Father's Word mapped out. [Our Lord evidently was guided as to the Father's will concerning him and his work on earth by the prophetic Scriptures and the Mosaic types – just as we are, though seen by him with a clearer, a perfect mental vision, instead of which we, his "brethren," have his and the apostles words and examples to aid us.]

Our Lord also was tested and proved by religious systems – "like as *we* are." Judaism, with its various sects, Pharisees, Sadducees, etc., was in the very zenith of its glory as a religious system. Its laws had been made doubly strict, its votaries fasted two days in the week, made long prayers, and gave much alms to the poor. As a religious system it was very zealous, compassing sea and land in missionary efforts (Matt. 23:15.) and not without success, for the whole civilized world was beginning to respect it; and to its holy feasts came yearly devout men out of every nation (Acts 2:9) – Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers

in Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Lybia, Cyrene, Rome, Crete, and Arabia. It was gaining favor with men of influence in the world, who not infrequently built and donated synagogues for divine worship and even the ungodly king Herod had built them a Temple which in magnificence far surpassed that of Solomon. Here, then, stood a great temptation: none could see more clearly than our Lord how easily, with his perfect power, he could have associated himself with the great ones of that system, soon have made himself their leader, and then have spread the influence of that religious empire over the world, gradually bringing about social and political reforms and greatly blessing the world. How thorough a crucifixion of the flesh it implied when he deliberately set aside all these positive, grand opportunities of doing good, to accept of another, the Father's plan, the full out-working of which he evidently could not at first see. But our Lord knew that the way it was *written* in the Law and the prophets, was the way God had designed the work of blessing the world should be accomplished, and that if he would be acceptable with the Father as the one who was to do the blessing, he must follow the Father's plan, and fulfill **[R964 : page 7]** all that was written in the Law and the prophets concerning the Anointed. He knew that though it was written that Messiah should be great, and reign, and bless, it was also written, that first, he must be despised and rejected by those who could appreciate neither the Father's plan nor his obedience to that plan, and that he must die to redeem men before he could have the right to permanently bless them. (Isa. 53.) And he bowed to the plan of Jehovah; crucifying his own gracious plans he meekly obeyed, even unto death – even the death of the cross.

Here, then, we recognize the Lord's "brethren" – those who seek, love, and do the will of the Father in heaven, in preference to their own. Here we see how he was tested in all points like as *we* are, yet without yielding – without sin. Our Lord, holy, harmless, undefiled, was *like unto* these, his justified, sanctified "brethren," who in him and through him are also recognized by the Father as holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

That this is the correct understanding of the Apostle's words is proved by the verses preceding the text we are examining: (Heb. 2:11-13.) "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call THEM **brethren**: Saying [as it was prophetically written], "I will declare thy name unto my **brethren**; in the midst of the church [the "little flock"] will I sing praise unto thee." And again "I [the entire head and body – one] will put my trust in him." And again, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.

So, then, argues the apostle, our Lord's mission into the world was to save those whom God **foresaw would accept** of his favor, and become children of God. These were all under sentence of death, and therefore Christ became a man, partook of flesh and blood (human nature). But he partook not of its depravity and imperfections. To have done so would have frustrated the design of his coming; for the Apostle declares that he partook of our human nature **in order** that by his DEATH he might break the power (authority or control) of death and release these **foreseen** children of God and bring them into life, that through these, in turn, in the coming age, all might be blessed.

Yes, dear "brethren," our Head, our Lord, was perfect as a man and gave a perfect sacrifice, without spot or blemish, for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world; and as our blemishes were laid upon him and he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, so his perfections were imputed to us so that we bear his righteousness. He, the holy, the pure one, was made a sin offering on our behalf, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. 5:21, **Diaglott**.

For such an high priest, holy, harmless, separate from sinners, became us [suited us, was necessary for us]. He was tempted in all points **like as WE ARE**, and is able to sympathize with and assist us in our efforts to be dead to every worldly ambition, and alive only to the will of God. Wherefore, let us go to him in confidence and trust his

every direction as to every step of the way; for he will not suffer [permit] *us* to be tempted above that we are able to withstand, but will provide a way of escape. (1 Cor. 10:13.) Trust him, then, unflinchingly, confidently, and do your part as far as you *are able*, assured that you shall not be tried *further*.

"Wherefore, *holy brethren*, partakers [with Christ Jesus] of the heavenly calling, *consider* [think of, notice carefully] the Apostle and High Priest, of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful." [R965 : page 7] (Heb. 3:1-2.) Consider the necessity of his being tested before being so highly exalted, and you will not wonder that you as partakers of the same "high," "heavenly calling" should be severely tried to prove faithfulness to God's word and plan, that you may be worthy to share in his glory. Consider that though your Master was perfect before he became a man, and perfect as a man, yet before being so highly exalted as he now is, it was proper that he should be tested to perfection, to the last degree (Heb. 2:10); that when he shall command obedience of all to Jehovah, it will not be possible for him to demand more of any, than he would and did himself yield to the Father. Thus the already perfect, sinless, holy, "man Christ Jesus" was proved worthy of, or perfected for, the *divine nature* and great exaltation, upon which he entered fully at his resurrection.

Rejoice, "holy brethren:" our Lord's obedience and his aid provided us, insures our victory, if like Paul we "press along the line [marked out by our Head and Fore-runner] toward the prize of our high-calling which is *of God, through* Christ Jesus our Lord." He was tempted like as we are, and will succor us, and is not ashamed to call *us* "brethren."

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