

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A HIGH PRIEST ABLE TO SUCCOUR.

*2.18. For verily not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham.*

*17. Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be (Become) a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

*18. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

**I**N the first chapter we saw the writer quoting text after text from the Old Testament, in order that he might bring us to the full apprehension of the truth and the meaning of our Lord's divinity. In this chapter we see him in the same way, time after time, reiterate the fact of our Lord's humanity, lest we should not fully realise all that it means. So it is here. He had just said, **Since the children were sharers of flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same.** It is as if He feels the insufficiency of the words, and therefore once again repeats and confirms his statement: **For verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham.** Man may have been made lower than the angels, but this honour have they not, that He took hold of them—**He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham.**

And how doth He take hold? There is no way in which God can take hold of a creature other than by entering into

him with His life and spirit, so imparting His own goodness and power, and bringing him into union with Himself. So did Jesus take hold of man. He entered into humanity and became one with it. And so he takes hold of individual souls by entering with each into personal union and fellowship.

**Wherefore**, being thus minded to take hold of man, **it behoved Him**, it was divinely right and proper, and, in the nature of things, an absolute necessity, as a consequence of His purpose, **it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren**. The laying hold implied His identifying Himself with them, and this again was impossible without being made like them in all things. So only could He save them. It was indeed needful, **that so He might become a merciful and a faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people**.

Here we have, for the first time, the word High Priest—a word which is used in no other book of the New Testament of our Lord Jesus, but in this Epistle is its central thought. We shall see later (chap. 5) how inseparably His divine sonship and His priesthood are linked. Here we are taught that His real humanity is just as much essential to it. It is one of the remarkable things in the Epistle that it unfolds so wonderfully the value of the personal development in our Lord's life. It ever connects the person and the work as inseparable.

See it here. The work He had to do was—**to make propitiation for the sins of the people**. Sin had incurred the wrath of God, and His love could not flow forth towards men till the sin had been covered up, atoned for, taken away. In fulfilment of all that had been taught us in the Old Testament sacrifices, Christ came to do this. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and obtained everlasting redemption. Of this the

Epistle will speak later on. What it here seeks to press, is that Christ became Man, not merely to die and atone, but that in doing this, He might be a faithful and merciful High Priest. His relation to us was to be a personal one. He must Himself minister to us the salvation He worked out. Everything would depend upon His winning our confidence, getting possession of our heart and love, and as a living Leader guiding us into the path to God. It is this which makes His human life on earth so precious to us. It proved Him faithful: we dare fully trust Him. It found Him merciful: we need not fear coming to Him. He was made in all things like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest.

**For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.** The work of our High Priest does not only consist in His atonement, nor even in the advocacy and intercession which is the fruit of that atonement. But above all, as the result of all these, in that personal charge of our spiritual life which He takes, in that never-ceasing succour which He is able to give in every temptation. This is the greatest and most blessed part of His work in bringing us to God, that, as the Leader in the path of suffering and perfection, He inspires us with His own dispositions, and, by the mighty operation of His Spirit within us, gives us His help in every time of need. The one thing we need is, to know and trust Him fully. To know Him as High Priest who not only has opened a way to God for us to walk in, and not only in heaven prays for us, but who undertakes to keep us so in fellowship with Himself, and under the covering of His power, and in the experience of His full redemption, that temptation can never conquer us. His divinity secures to us His unfailling and never-ceasing presence. His humanity assures us of His sympathy

and compassion. More ever-present and more mighty than the temptation, His unfailling love is always near to give the victory. He can and will do it. Our High Priest is a living, faithful helper: let us trust Him. Salvation is not a thing He gives us apart from Himself. Full salvation is nothing but Jesus Himself, most compassionately and most faithfully watching over us in daily life, most really and fully giving and living His life in us. The abiding, indwelling presence of Jesus, able to succour, is the true secret of the Christian life. Faith will lead us into the experience that Jesus is and does all that is said of Him.

*1. What a chapter Jesus crowned with glory and honour. Our Leader, our Sanctifier, our Brother, made like to us, our merciful and faithful High Priest, tempted as we are, our helper in temptation. What a Saviour!*

*2. No member of my body can be hurt without my feeling it and seeking to guard it. No temptation can touch me without Jesus feeling it at once, and giving succour. Is not the one thing we need to know Him better, in faith to realise His ever-present nearness, and to count on His help?*

*3. The knowledge of Jesus that sufficed for conversion will not suffice for sanctification. For the growth of the spiritual life it is essential that we enter more deeply into the knowledge of all that Jesus is. Jesus is the bread of heaven, the food of our spiritual life; knowing Him better is the only way to feed upon Him.*

*4. Learn to regard every temptation as the blessed opportunity for trusting and realising the succour of your ever-present High Priest.*