



O BROTHER MAN

The *first* time we hear grown up church people call each other “Brother” and “Sister,” we sometimes snicker at how old-fashioned it sounds.

However, after studying the teachings of Jesus, we learn that because we are all children of one Father — God — we are meant to live as brothers and sisters with one another. Jesus didn’t mean *fighting* brothers and sisters, either, because the New Testament is full of scriptures explaining about a relationship of love. Take turns looking up and reading Matthew 23:8-12; Matthew 25:40; Gen. 13:8; Psalm 133:1; Mal. 2:10; John 13:34; Romans 12:10; Gal. 6:2; and 1 John 3:23 to see how God wants us to live.

The Quaker poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, described “brotherly love” as the deepest expression of worship in three stanzas of a much longer poem which we sing today as the hymn, *O Brother Man*. Close your eyes to think about the meaning of Whittier’s words

The worship service of which Whittier writes is held not just on Sundays but *whenever* and *wherever* people show love toward their fellow man

Hymns are sung whenever persons smile in genuine friendliness at others

Prayers are heard by God through each deed of kindness

Walls of a church building cannot contain such worship, but the “whole earth becomes our Father’s temple”

And — with love filling the earth — wars would cease.

Poetry can be a very powerful way of combining *intellectual thoughts* with *emotional images*. Read the text once again, noticing particularly the words which most stir your imagination: “. . . fold . . . pity . . . peace . . . love . . . shackles . . . clangor . . . wild war music . . . fire of anger . . . ashes . . . tree of peace.”

Strong convictions in a text need to be matched by an equally strong tune setting. Listen closely to the tune *Intercessor* to see if you think it is appropriate. See if you can find other tune settings to study.

Which tune seems to you to be most suitable? _____

Notice that *Intercessor* is in the key of A minor with a “Picardian Tierce” on the final cadence to end in A Major. Study the melody to see if any two lines are identical. If the intervals are difficult to you, circle the 3rds and 4ths and practice them in relationship to the A tonic pitch. When you know the tune well, add the harmony with the accompanying instrument, being careful not to let it over-power the melody and the text.

And say — the next time *you* hear church folks call each other, “Brother” and “Sister” — don’t laugh! Whittier’s idea of “Worship” — if they had been put into practice *four wars* ago when the words were first written — just might have changed our world from “anger” to “Peace.”