

Centenary  
1909 – 2009

# Scripture Truth



## *Inside:*

Our Money?

Half of Hebrews

Christ everything

Alpha people: Chenaniah

The creditor and the children

Grace and judgment after the Flood

October – December 2009

# SCRIPTURE TRUTH

Editor: Theo Balderston

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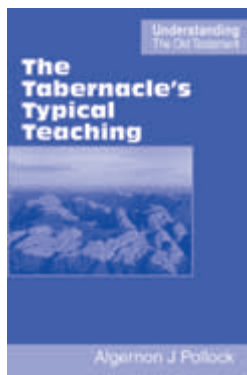
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See inside the back cover for a full list of the contents.

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# The creditor and the children

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“The creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves” (2 Kings 4:1, NKJV). The widow’s cry resonates with the fears of many Christian parents about their children’s salvation in a world where the devil seems to have arranged almost everything as an attack on faith. How intensely difficult, in particular, for a believing mother trying to bring up two boys on her own! As Christian parents observe worrying traits in their children, and worrying influences on them, how they reproach themselves for past failures, how they fear the coming of a “payback time,” when the devil will be able to turn these past failures into a claim on their children!

But this widow’s husband had feared the LORD (v.1). The fact that she mentions this to Elisha shows that she, too, “feared the LORD.” So Elisha can calmly ask her, “What do you have in the house?” She had only one jar of oil, but she did have that jar. It is hardly a great interpretative step to see this oil as a figure of the Holy Spirit. And that little jar could serve as the basis for her children’s deliverance. If she gathered as many empty vessels as she could, she would be able to fill them all with oil (vv.3-4).

She performed this task behind closed doors (v.5). Bringing children to saving faith in the Lord needs privacy, a space that shuts out everyone except the children, their parents, and the Lord – even great prophets and Christian friends! And how many miracles occur in the bringing up of children, in answer to mothers’ imploring prayers, and by the work of the Holy Spirit – and yet no-one outside the family ever hears of them!

The vessels are filled, the children were delivered (v.7), and mother and sons lived on the rest (v.7). May we, with a slight stretch of the story, see these two boys as among the “emptied vessels”, now also filled with oil who, in due course, also took their place as “sons of the prophets”? I am sure there is a great promise here to praying, Spirit-filled mothers – and fathers!

*Theo Balderston*

# Christ everything

J.T.Mawson

*F.B. Hole published this article in 1960 with the following introduction. "There has come into my hands this simple confession of faith and experience, written years ago by a brother in Christ whom I loved and esteemed – the founder and former editor of Scripture Truth. It has not, I believe, hitherto appeared in print. It has a voice to all of us, and particularly to those recently converted, and who are therefore at the beginning of their Christian experience. The writer passed to the presence of his Lord in July 1943, but by this little paper it may yet be true that, 'he being dead yet speaketh.' May his message prove of profit to all who may read it."*

*It seems fitting to reprint it in the final issue of the magazine's centenary year.*

In thinking over the Scripture, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye *in Him*; rooted and built up *in Him*, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2: 6, 7, KJV), I was carried back in thought to my own real start with the Lord. I had from my earliest knowledge of anything known the Gospel, but the time came when I definitely received Him — "You'll trust Him?" was the question put to me, and I said, "Yes." I remember the following day that the name Jesus was continually before me. I printed it in large letters and set it where I could see it continually. It was just *Himself* — not the blessing that I had received, but *Himself*.

I could not have explained it all then, but now I see that the Spirit of God had led me to *Him*; it was not belief in a text of Scripture, but the reception of a Person about whom the Scriptures speak, and He was very real to me. I realised a personal link between myself and the Lord and longed to remember Him in His death, but I was afraid to make my desire known. After much faltering, I awoke to the fact that I was losing time and slipping back, for I was not keeping His word. I had not advanced in this desire beyond what was individual; it was simply the Lord's love to me and my response to His love, but so far it was very real — and it was *Himself* and my desire to keep His commandments.

Then followed the desire to serve Him. I felt that to serve Him who had done so much for me would be a great honour, and I have no doubt that He then gave me a definite call to preach the gospel. The opportunity came for me to preach, and I spent some days in careful preparation of a sermon on the wisdom of building on the rock and the folly of building on the sand. As I walked to the preaching room, three miles away, there rang insistently in my ears, "Behold the Lamb of God," and all my sermon slipped out of my memory. I passed through an agony of exercise, and the more so because on arriving at the meeting I could not find the passage of Scripture that I had studied so carefully. And still the voice continued within me, "Behold the Lamb of God."

It was time to begin, and I was reminded of this by a brother sitting near to me. I picked up my hymn book and the first hymn that my eyes alighted upon was, "Behold the Lamb, 'tis He who bore my burden on the tree." I was greatly comforted and felt that I could trust the Lord to give me words to speak upon the text, "Behold the Lamb of God" [John 1:29, 36]. While I spoke, an old man of seventy-four, who had been long anxious, believed the Word, and passed from darkness to light. I was greatly cheered and

began to see the way of the Lord. It was as though He said by the exercise I had passed through, "If you are to serve Me you must speak about Me, you must begin with Me. *I must be your theme.*" It was *Himself* again.

Zeal for the gospel laid hold of me, and day and night my thoughts were filled with the gospel and my service in it. On reading C. H. Spurgeon's very helpful and delightful *Lectures to my Students*, I longed to get the help I felt he could give, that I might be more efficient in the preaching. But just then the Lord came in and led me one step further. A servant of God visited our town, and in the first address that he gave he spoke on Matthew 18:20, pressing the reality of the Lord's presence in the midst of His assembly. It was a revelation to me. It was not the brethren, whether nice or otherwise who made the meeting what it was, it was Himself; He gave character to the place. If I went, it was to meet Him in His own circle, where He gathered His own about Him according to His own divine right.

I shall never forget the light that this was to my soul. I had to get away from everybody to dwell upon it with the Lord. From that time I have been unable to understand brethren saying, "I will not go to the meeting, if such and such a

Christian is permitted there,” or threatening to withdraw, if what they think right is not done. To me, everything lies in the Lord being there, and if He is there, I must be.<sup>1</sup>

This was a great joy, but it soon involved me in further exercise, for, I had to face the fact of failure. I discovered that confusion and division had wrought much havoc in that which appeared to me so blessed and which I had considered to be above the failure of men. Moreover I discovered that even those who I believed held on to the truth had sadly failed in the way they had done it, and the spirit that had been displayed. That party spirit could have entered that sacred enclosure with such disastrous results was to me a heart-breaking surprise. I was greatly shaken and I wondered whether it would not be better to devote myself exclusively to the

gospel, and let all else go as being impossible to carry out.

But I could not do this. I had tasted the joy of Christ and His assembly; to that I felt I must cling, and I went a step further and learned that everything was established and secured in Him. I learnt this from 2 Timothy, and I found from that epistle that I could hold fast that which I had learnt and that it would be as a light and guide to me in the perilous times. I had got the clue to the maze. It meant that I must turn my eyes from the confusion and “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” remembering Him, raised from the dead according to Paul’s Gospel [2 Timothy 2:1,8], and test things henceforth by His word and authority. It was *Himself* again, as meeting the exercise arising from our great failure in the truth.

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps if Mawson had intended this paper for publication, he would have spelt out his meaning more? I doubt that he would have believed the Lord to be “in the midst” where denial of His virgin birth, true Manhood, true Sonship, or His sinlessness (see 2 John 9-11) were deliberately allowed, the divine authority and inerrancy of Scripture belittled, or “the social gospel” preached. He wrote elsewhere, “Oh, that this truth [i.e., that of the one body] may lay hold upon heart and conscience in these days of cliques, and sects, and divisions, and that all of us who love the Lord might have grace to depart from iniquity, and endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (J.T.Mawson, “The Holy Ghost,” p. 22, bound in a volume entitled *Foundation Truths*). He would always have acted with Christ Himself, and love for his people, as his motive, not system or party. This comment is not designed to weaken the very sad truth of his next paragraph.[Ed.]

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I can see how falteringly I have followed these things so clearly shewn to me. Known only to the Lord and myself has been the continual failure in walk according to that which I see and know to be the way of truth. But to these things in His great grace He has held me, and how patient He has been! I realize that, in every recovery of soul that I have known, He has brought me back to the joy of these things. They abode, and will so as long as the Spirit of Truth abides on earth.

It is plain to me that everything depends upon *Christ personally* having His place. We are to receive *Him*, walk in *Him*, be rooted and built up in *Him* [Colossians 2:6,7]; every advance is in *Him*. We may have doctrine and fight for “principles”, and maintain a legal separation from what is wrong, but if that is all, we shall become withered ourselves and a menace to the peace of our brethren. We shall abound in thanksgiving as together we continue *in Him*.

There have been many crises in my life, too intimate, too sacred, to commit to writing, but I have found that if He has drawn near to me in them I have gained in spiritual substance, no matter what else I have

*There have been many crises in my life, too intimate, too sacred, to commit to writing, but I have found that if He has drawn near to me in them I have gained in spiritual substance, no matter what else I have lost.*

lost,<sup>2</sup> and I have feebly learnt that, for my own blessing as for His glory, He must be all and in all. He is the Alpha and Omega, the First and Last, the Beginning and the End [Revelation 22:13]. He is this for God, and He must be this for every creature that is to be finally and eternally blest. This is the lesson that the Spirit of God is teaching us today. Happy will all those be who learn it.

From *Scripture Truth*, 1960, p.184.

<sup>2</sup> Among other losses unknown to me, this will certainly include the loss, in the First World War, of his son Charlie, a keen young Christian. [Ed.]

# The true ark: Jesus the Son of God

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C.H.Mackintosh

... But, it may be asked, has anything been entrusted to the care and keeping of the church, answering to the ark [of the covenant]? Yes; the Person of the Son of God answers to the ark of old. His divine and human [natures answer] to the gold and shittim wood of the ark [Exodus 25:10-17]. The *materials* of the ark typified His *Person* as the God-man; while the purposes of the ark and mercy-seat typified His work, whether in life or in death. The ark enclosed the tables of testimony, and the Son of God could say, in connection with the body prepared of God for Him, “Thy law is within my heart” (Psalms 40:8, KJV). Again, the mercy-seat spoke of peace and pardon, of mercy rejoicing against judgment, to the poor sinner; and the apostle says, “He is a mercy-seat for our sins” [1 John 2:2, author’s trans.]. And again, “Whom God has set forth to be a mercy-seat” [Romans 3:25: cp. Darby Trans.]. The word used in Romans 3 is precisely the same as that used in [the ancient Greek version of] Exodus 25: 17, etc. for “mercy seat.”

Thus we perceive what a marked type the ark of the covenant was of Him who magnified the law and made it honourable [cp. Isaiah 42:21] – even Jesus, the Son of God, whose glorious Person should be the special object of the saints’ reverend and affectionate guardianship. And, just as Israel’s moral power was ever connected with the right acknowledgment and preservation of the ark amongst them, so the church’s power will be found connected with her due maintenance of the doctrine – the great and all-important doctrine of the Son. It is in vain that we exult in the work of our hands and boast ourselves in our knowledge, our testimony, our assemblies, our gifts, our ministry, our anything. If we are not maintaining the honour of the Son, we are really worthless – we are merely walking in the sparks of our own kindling [cp. Isaiah 50:11] – sparks which shall speedily be extinguished, when the Lord is obliged, in very faithfulness, to come in and make a breach upon us...

From *The Life of Faith Exemplified. Being Thoughts on the Principal Scenes of the Life and Times of David, King of Israel.* (3rd edn., 1862, reprinted in vol. 4 of *Miscellaneous Writings of C.H.M.*). The quotation is from pp.122-4, slightly revised, and with some references added.



# Our money?

**Jonathan Hughes**

*An article for the anniversary of the credit-crunch! It originated as a talk some time ago on the Truth for Today radio programme ([www.truthfortoday.org.uk](http://www.truthfortoday.org.uk)). Look out for the section which asks what we would do if the prime minister announced that soon, but without prior notice, sterling would be abolished and the euro introduced!*

“Nothing, I am sure, has the tendency to quench the fire of religion as the possession of money.” (J.C. Ryle)

“If a person gets his attitude toward money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area in his life.” (Billy Graham)

There are few more powerful ways of speaking to this world than by how we use our money – how we



spend it, save it, and give it away. And few more difficult. Before taking a practical look at this, however, it is important to understand rightly what money is, and especially what the Bible has to say about it. Only then can we sensibly make decisions that mark us out as those who belong to Jesus. The difference will be great in our affluent society.

The Lord Jesus said a lot about money. To start off our thinking, let us consider His remarks about it in Luke 16:9-13.

## “Unrighteous mammon”

What He says in this passage contains, at first sight, a contradiction. On the one hand, we are to make friends by means of “mammon” (v.9). On the other, we are warned not to serve it, but rather serve God (v.13). As we resolve this, then we shall correctly understand the Christian view of money.

During Old Testament times, prosperity was promised to Israel as the blessing for faithfulness to God’s

covenant (e.g. Deuteronomy 28:1-9), and Jews consequently assumed that personal wealth was an evidence of personal righteousness. No wonder, then, that the disciples were astounded when Jesus said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven! (Luke 18:24-26) However, there was also a system of tithing, Sabbaths, seventh years, and years of Jubilee, which reminded them that “the earth is the LORD’s, and all its fulness” (Psalm 24:1, NKJV). Everything that the Israelites possessed, they did so as stewards of what belonged to God (Leviticus 25:23).

God also said to the Gentile, Job, “Who has preceded me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is mine” (Job 41:11). God has not rented out the world since then or relinquished His rights, though we may have forgotten this in our affluent western society. The difference between ownership and stewardship is quite clear. Whenever my parents go on holiday, they ask me to keep an eye on their house for them. It would be quite wrong to sell some of their possessions in their absence. Similarly, we are to view all that we have as belonging to the Lord. If He gives us more, then that should not be a cause for guilt.

If He takes away, then that should not be a cause for sorrow.

New-Testament teaching for the church age, however, lays out no economic system corresponding to the tithing, Jubilees, etc., of Israel. God has not given us ten rules for responsible personal finance. What He has given us, though, is of far greater worth – the indwelling Holy Spirit, who will guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

And the first “truth” to notice in Jesus’ words in Luke 16: 9 – “Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon” – is that He viewed money as *unrighteous*. Many people view it as a neutral commodity, and that it is simply what we do with it that can either be good or bad. I feel, however, that this is a dangerously naïve view. When Paul spoke about our warfare being “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age” (Ephesians 6:12), I think that these are the powers that lie behind money. It has a power far beyond its face value. Behind the coins in our pocket lies a power that wants the mastery and rule over us and our lives.

However, Jesus Himself did not shun all money – Judas kept a common fund (John 12:6). Jesus’ followers are not called to avoid money, as we would avoid swearing,

for example. But we *do* need to keep in our minds the very real power it longs to exert over us. This is a battle that we need to win at the beginning of our Christian lives, and to keep on fighting for the rest of our lives. As soon as we take our guard down, the soul-deadening charm of mammon will regain the ascendancy in our lives.

So Jesus told His disciples “to make friends by unrighteous mammon.” He drew this as the lesson from the parable He had just told – concerning the “unjust steward” (Luke 16:1-8). The steward was clearly a rogue. Jesus was not commending him; nor would He condone such actions in one of *His* stewards. What Jesus was commending was the steward using money for non-economic purposes. He used his master’s money to make friends, so that they would look after him when the need arose. It was the steward’s *vision* that was commended, not his *actions*.

Jesus’ instruction to His disciples is similarly to use money to buy that which has no monetary price. The world will determinedly use money to buy all sorts of things without monetary price – love, power, a title. And we are not to dither half-heartedly in using money for non-monetary, *eternal* ends. To dither would be to show that the

*“You can’t take it with you, can you?” Or can you? In a very real sense, we ought to view our money as something we do take with us. It’s just a case of having the right currency!*

children of darkness are wiser than the sons of light (16:8). No, we are to take money, recognise its inherent danger, and use it for heavenly purposes. It belongs to God. He is the owner. We are to hold it for Him, and use it as He directs for eternal good.

### The exchange rate with eternity

But can we truly view money as being of eternal value? After all, “You can’t take it with you, can you?” Or can you? Too often when that is said, it is used as an excuse to fritter money away on some temporary pleasure. But, in a very real sense, we ought to view our money as something we do take with us. It’s just a case of having the right currency!

Imagine if the British prime minister were to announce tomorrow that very shortly he was going to take



Britain into the eurozone. He was not going to give an exact date, but after that date, sterling would be worthless – it couldn't be exchanged at the bank. Well, assuming that we actually believed him, then the financially sensible thing would be to exchange as much of our money into euros immediately, leaving us just enough to live on until the big day! This is exactly the situation we are in! One day we are to be translated to heaven. Not one of us knows the date of that exchange. Surely, the only prudent course of action must be to exchange as much of our pounds and pence into Spirit-filled good works, and in so doing we shall “not lay up for [ourselves] treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for [ourselves] treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where [our] treasure is, there [our] heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21). The exchange rate is highly favourable, and will not improve. Just imagine using our money here and now to

inherit what will last for eternity. To pass up on that kind of offer, one would have to be truly foolish.

And yet the evil influence of money would blind us to this reality and cripple us with fear. How will I be secure if I use my money for God rather than myself? What if I lose my job, or my health?

These fears are real, and we need individually to address them before God. Perhaps each of us needs to make a “common sense” list of all the reasons why I need my money, as well as of the reasons for the fear that would stop me from giving more to Him. Having done that, we ought then to pray about each one, asking that He would show us the right course of action in all these cases, and give us His peace about each one. Let us experience the truth of the promise that “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). Where we struggle, let us realise that, “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Having done that, then let us remind ourselves that all that we have belongs to Him anyway.

### The Christian view of spending and saving

However, there are things to think about – necessary everyday expenditures. And there is a need for saving.

On a day by day basis, it is often difficult to get the balance just right. However, so long as we keep our view of money right, we will not go too far wrong. In 1 Timothy 5: 8, Paul writes, “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Part of my spiritual responsibility, then, is to spend sufficient upon myself and my family. What is sufficient for me may not be so for you. We are all answerable to our own Master, not to one another! It is important that I teach my children the true value of money, and how to budget; that if they want something they ought to save for it, rather than go into debt to have it now. If I truly believe that the Lord may come at any moment, then I will not take out a larger mortgage than the bank can expect to get back from the sale of the house, or on my credit card than is in my bank account.

I have some friends who own quite a big house, but every week it is full of young people learning about Jesus. Those big mortgage payments have wisely been converted into a heavenly currency. Since I do not need so much space for that kind of ministry, it would be quite wrong for me to buy the same sort of house.

You see, again and again, we come back to evaluating continuously how much we are using unrighteous mammon to spiritual benefit. No wonder the New Testament does not give us a list of do’s and don’t’s; it could never hope to cover every circumstance! But I do have the Holy Spirit within me when I go to the supermarket, or the car showroom!

### The Christian view of giving

Christians are not expected to tithe, that is, to give one tenth of their income, as in Old-Testament times. Under Christianity, “you are not your own, for you were bought at a price” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We believe in a God who has set the example of giving everything: “He who did not spare His own Son” (Romans 8:32). Our giving is a response to *that*. The money in my bank account belongs to Jesus. All my time belongs to Him, etc. We often speak of “the widow’s mite.” Actually, she gave *both* of her *two* mites, believing that with a God



who would provide all that she needed, she had no need of surplus cash (Mark 12:42). Mary was criticised for pouring the whole jar of ointment over Jesus, and breaking the jar so that there could be no going back. The ointment could have been sold for more than a year's wages, and may have been her dowry, her future security (Mark 14:3-6). But Mary gave it away, earning the eternal commendation, "She has done what she could." No higher praise could be given!

So it is beside the point to tie ourselves in legalistic knots over questions such as, "Should we tithe pre- or post-tax income?" or "Is tax money used for helping the poor a form of giving?" Let us realise that all we have belongs to Him. We have already mentioned the need to pray over a "common sense list" of expenditures, and over our natural, but often spiritually crippling, fears about the future. If we bring "everything to God in prayer," He will show us what is "common sense" in these respects, and we should have minds to be subject to His mind on this. But this does not dilute the truth that all we have belongs to Him, and that our tendency is to spend too much money on ourselves, our homes, our recreations, not too little!

We need to be ready to give in three ways. Firstly, the regular giving that sustains the work of the Lord. How else would the electricity bill be paid for the church? Secondly, we should be ready to give in response to need. Perhaps as a result of natural disaster, or of major building work, there are times when an unusually large amount of money is required. We live in a grossly inequitable world, so full of needs. Thirdly, we need visionary giving. George Müller used to give Hudson Taylor money to put towards serving God, long before the China Inland Mission was born. Who knows what a gifted brother or sister might achieve if they were freed from the necessity of paid employment? Sometimes we need to get on our knees, open our cheque book, and pray that God will show us where His money is needed to advance the Lord's work. In all our giving, let us be ready to give like the churches in Macedonia who, in the words of Paul, out of "their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift" (2 Corinthians 8:2-4).

# Half of Hebrews

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Donald Hill

*The more human knowledge expands and travel opportunities proliferate (Daniel:12:4!), the more exhilarating career-possibilities become, the more the digitalization and communications revolutions enable us instantly to access every entertainment everywhere, and the more affluence inflates discretionary spending power – the more this world totally engrosses the natural man’s mind. And so the more the Christians needs to be stimulated to pursue the path of faith. This is why Hebrews is such a vital book for today. This article gives a clear outline of its first six chapters.*

## Why was it written?

The aim of the Letter to the Hebrews is to detach the believer from an earthly religion to that which is heavenly, spiritual, and now accessible *to faith*. It was addressed to Jewish believers to establish them in the truths of Christianity. Judaism appeals to sight and sense, whereas Christianity requires faith in a crucified, but now ascended, exalted, *and unseen* Saviour. However, since “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable” (2 Timothy 3:16), this Letter can establish Gentile believers in the same truths.

In the Old-Testament revelation in which Jewish believers were brought up, man had no place in heaven: earth was the place assigned him (Psalm 115:16). Jews were descendants of Abraham by natural birth,

and were given a covenant, which, if they had kept it, would have fitted them for life in “the land of promise” (cp. Hebrews 11:9; Genesis 12:7). It concerned their earthly relationships with God and with their fellow men, and blessing on earth followed obedience (Deuteronomy 5:33; 6:3, 18). Central to this “old covenant” was a magnificent temple built by Solomon with an earthly priesthood, elaborate ceremonies, and animal sacrifices. It was a system which appealed to sight – to the eye.

But the nation of Israel failed under this system of things, and, as a consequence, captivity by the Assyrians and Babylonians followed. Then the Book of Malachi records for us the failure of those who returned from captivity. Finally, the nation refused their Messiah. Then God brought

in something totally new – Christianity.

But the temple, along with its earthly priesthood and sacrifices, continued for almost forty years after the Lord's death and resurrection, and after the "birth of Christianity" on the day of Pentecost. Hebrew believers were therefore in danger of turning back, or of mixing Judaism with Christianity, which in God's sight are not to be mixed together (Hebrews 13:11-14; cp. Galatians 5:3-6) – hence the need for this letter indited by the Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, the old system, the "old covenant" based on the law, did serve another purpose: it was "the shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1, KJV). When we come to the Lord Jesus, He is the substance. A shadow can only appear when there is an object in between the sun and the ground!

And He is also the best! I remember an English teacher drawing our attention to the three words, "good, better, best." "Good," he said, is the positive, "better," the comparative, but "best," the *superlative*. When we come to Christianity – to Christ – we come to the very best, the superlative! The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is *better* than angels (Hebrews 1:4); and *better* than Moses (3: 4-6). His is a *better* priest-

hood than the priesthood of Aaron and his descendants (chapter 7); and His is a *better* sacrifice, in which He offered Himself at Calvary, than the many sacrifices offered under the Law which it sets aside (9:13,14; 10:1-18). He brings in a *better* covenant under which sins are remembered no more (7:22; 8:6, 12); and a "*better* hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God" (7:19, KJV) – in contrast to the Law, with its veil in the temple keeping the people at a distance. When the Lord Jesus died, the veil was rent so that believers can now "draw near" into the presence of God.

As already said, Christianity requires faith in a crucified, but now ascended, exalted, and unseen Saviour! The Lord Jesus said to Thomas the doubter, "Blessed are those who have *not* seen and yet have believed." The object of the Letter is to *detach* from earthly religion that we may be *attached* to Christ. He should be central. Notice that the writer's name is nowhere mentioned in the Letter. This omission only enhances the opening statement in the first chapter, that God "*has spoken in Son*". This reminds us of the message to the three disciples on the mountain of transfiguration, "Hear ye HIM" (Matthew 17:5).



And now for short summaries of the first six chapters of the Letter.

## Chapter 1

God has spoken finally in the person of His eternal Son (verses 1-3). Jesus said, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).

The first three verses of the chapter bring seven glories of the Son to our notice. He is:

- Heir of all things – the day will dawn when He will take up the inheritance and reign supreme (v.2).
- Creator of the universe – “all things were made by Him” (v.2; cp. John 1:3).
- The shining forth of the glory of God (v.3). John the Apostle said, “We beheld His glory” (John 1:14).
- The “express image of His person,” and thus the One who has set forth the invisible God (v.3).
- The Upholder of the universe (v.3). Planets move in their orbits. The sun shines by day and the moon reflects the light of the sun. Tides roll in and out. The seasons come and go. All this He ceaselessly upholds.
- The Maker of purification for sins (v.3), and so the Redeemer of a fallen creation.

- The exalted Occupant of the place at the right hand of God (vv.3; cp. v13).

The rest of the chapter proves that the Son is superior to angels – they are servants, but He is the Son whom angels worship. Angels are “ministering spirits... for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (1:14). Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Son abides and is eternal (v.12).

## Chapter 2

The importance of the *word of the Son* is stressed in verses 1-4 of chapter two (cp. 1:2). This word was confirmed by the apostles and supported by signs and miracles, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. To profess to believe the word of the Son, and then to turn back to Judaism, or away to another religion, is apostasy; and to apostates the Bible offers no hope. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” (v.3)

The rest of the chapter tells us something about the glories of the Lord Jesus as Son of Man. When in this world He was *very God*. His word, “Peace be still” (Mark 4:39), demonstrated this, in displaying His power over nature. But He was also *very Man*, as is shown by His being “wearied with His journey” (John 4:6).

*In the future*, “the world to come” (that is, the millennial kingdom) will be in subjection to the Son of Man, when His glory will be publicly manifested (vv.5-8). Psalm 8 is quoted in order to fill out this glory. But faith *now* beholds Jesus, the Son of Man, “crowned with glory and honour” (Hebrews 2:9).

The remainder of the chapter teaches us things concerning “the many sons” who are being brought home to glory (v.10):

- By His suffering death, the Lord Jesus has become their Saviour (v.10).
- His followers are identified as “His brethren” (v.11).
- He is the leader of their praises to God the Father (v.12).
- They are the Father’s love-gift to His Son (v.13).
- He has conquered death and defeated Satan, and thus delivers them from the bondage of fear of death (vv.14-15).
- Having been in this world a “man amongst men,” and having suffered the trials of the way, now, as High Priest “who has passed through the heavens,” He is able to support and sustain them in their passage through this world (vv.16-18).

- His priesthood for them is marked not only by mercy, but also by *faithfulness* (v.17).

### Chapter 3

In the first verse of this chapter, believers are addressed as “holy brethren” – as people set apart for God. Heaven is where the Lord Jesus is, and to heaven they are called (2:10). We are to “consider... Christ Jesus” (3:1, KJV), who is both the Apostle and the High Priest of our confession. As the Apostle, He is the One who came into the world to make known to mankind the heart of God (chapter 1). As the High Priest, He has returned to heaven to serve believers in a priestly capacity (chapter 2). The chapter divides into:

- *Verses 1-6.* The area, or sphere, in which He serves – the House of God. Believers to-day form the house, or dwelling-place, of God. Moses in his day served as a servant, but the Lord Jesus is the Son.
- *Verses 7-19.* This section shows the reason why we need the service of the Lord Jesus as our High Priest. We are in danger of falling by the way, and need His priestly service to keep us on the journey homewards to the Father’s House.

## Chapter 4

In this chapter, the idea of “rest” is central. The prospect of “rest,” in the sense of dwelling in Canaan, had been held out to Israel (cp. Deuteronomy 12:9), but, because of unbelief, only two of the original company which left Egypt entered Canaan – namely, Joshua and Caleb. The remainder died during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, and so it was a new generation born in the wilderness that entered Canaan (Hebrews 4:2; cp. Deuteronomy 1:34-39).

God had His own “rest” after the work of creation. He had six *days of labour* followed by the Sabbath of Rest. However, God’s rest was broken by the entrance of sin into the world, and for six thousand years He has been working for the recovery of all that sin has introduced (cp. John 5:16-17). The day will arrive when everything will be according to the mind of a holy God, and it will all have been secured by the work of His Son the Lord Jesus, who came to bear away the sin of the world (John 1:29). God will then enter into His “rest,” and believers who run the race and finish the course will likewise enjoy the “rest” of God eternally.

But the writer of the Letter warns his readers of the danger of unbelief (disobedience) and of falling short

of God’s “rest.” In order to help us on the way, we have:

- The Word of God which, if obeyed, will keep us on the right path (verses 12-13).
- The High Priestly service of the Lord Jesus who, having been in this world, knows the pitfalls of the journey and is able to sustain all those who ask for His help (verses 14-16).

## Chapter 5

This chapter contrasts the high-priestly service of Aaron, who served Israel during their wilderness journey, with that of the Lord Jesus, who serves the church, the body of believers to-day, in their journey through this world towards heaven:

- Aaron was appointed from among men and needed to offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as the sins of others. The Lord Jesus was very man but also very God. He is the eternal Son and was without sin in His life here. His Priesthood, then, is superior to that of Aaron and those who followed him.
- In fact the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus is after another order to that of Aaron, namely, that of Melchisedec, who was a King/Priest (Genesis 14:18; Psalm 110:1,4). Though introduced here, this subject is not devel-

oped until chapter 7 (verses 6-11).

The closing section (verses 11-14) rebukes the readers for their lack of spiritual growth. They, like babies, are needing to be fed with milk when they ought to be enjoying the “strong meat” of God’s Word.

## Chapter 6

*Verses 1-3* show what the hindrances were to spiritual growth: the “Hebrews” were hanging on to their old religion, instead of enjoying the full light of Christianity.

*Verses 4-8* point out the dangers of apostasy – in other words, of giving up the truths of Christianity and returning to Judaism. Those who did this would be lost! Such people are not “born-again believers,” although they have “tasted” Christianity, and have come under the teaching of the Holy Spirit (vv.4,5). Rain is beneficial to the growth of both plants and weeds, but the plants are useful, whereas weeds will be destroyed (vv. 7,8).

*Verses 9-20* address those who are truly saved. This is evident from the fact of their “work and labour of love,” which they have shown in the Name of the Lord Jesus, as well as of their faith and hope (vv.10,11). Continuing to the end (v.11) is proof that we are real in our faith. The faith of Abraham is mentioned

– faith which was centred in the Word of God and which was confirmed by an oath. Just as in Old-Testament times men who had committed manslaughter fled to a city of refuge (see Numbers 35), the true believer has taken refuge in the person of the Lord Jesus who has entered into heaven. Christ’s acceptance there is the proof of the believer’s acceptance. The Word of God confirms this. Just as an anchor secures a ship, so our hope in Christ is sure and steadfast.

The chapter ends with “Whither our forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus...” His presence there is the guarantee of our following Him to the heavenly glory to which the “Captain of our salvation” is bringing the “many sons” (2:10). His own capacity to do this as “a priest for ever”, who “ever liveth to make intercession for us”, and the perfection of His one sacrifice for all time in fitting us for heaven are the powerful subjects of chapters 7-10. Chapter 11 encourages us in the active response of faith in His finished work, and in Himself as the “Author and Finisher of faith”, now at the right hand of God; for faith is what will bring us to that promised heavenly “rest.” Chapter 12 exhorts believers not to give up on this response. These will be subjects of future articles, God willing.

# Alpha people

## Chenaniah

**George Stevens**

*“The service of song.” How important it is! This is a character study of someone known only for his part in it.*

Who?

“And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skilful” (1 Chronicles 15:22, KJV).

Chenaniah was the Chief Musician when David brought the ark of the covenant up to “the city of David” in Jerusalem from the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite, (1 Chronicles 15: 22, 25, 27, 29). He was the overseer, the music conductor, the Master of the song, the choir leader. The existence of this office explains why the directions for many psalms were addressed “To the chief musician.”

These directions at the heads of many psalms are ancient, divinely inspired, and instructive. For example, the heading of Psalm 54 reads, “To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?” From this we learn that:

- Firstly, the psalm is addressed to the chief musician. He is responsible for its performance.
- Secondly, it was to be “on Neginoth”. This gives the type of music or singing to be used. The word “Neginoth” means “to strike a chord,” as in the use of stringed instruments.

In 1 Chronicles 15:19-21 we learn that “cymbals of brass”, “psalteries on Alamoth,” and “harps on the Sheminith” were parts of the orchestra. “On Alamoth” suggests soprano voices, as the word means “a damsel” or “virgin.” “On Sheminith” suggests either male bass voices or an eight-stringed lyre.

- Thirdly, the psalm is a “Maschil.” This word characterises the psalm as one of instruction or teaching.

- Fourthly, David is stated to be the author of the psalm.
- Finally, some historical background is given about the time or reason for its being written. In this case it was the Ziphims' (or Ziphites' – see other translations) betrayal of the whereabouts of David to Saul. See 1 Samuel 23:19 and 26:1.

The responsibility for organising and conducting the singing in Old Testament days was a busy task for the chief musician. It was generally to be expressive of joy. “And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, *by lifting up the voice with joy.*” (1 Chronicles 15:16).

We too have a “Chief Musician” who leads the singing. He is the Lord Jesus. Hebrews 2:12 identifies Him as the One who says, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” The original location of these words, in Psalm 22: 22, teaches us that it is when He has come out of death that He leads the singing, in resurrection.

Our singing should have the following qualities:

- “...In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with *grace in your hearts* to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16).
- “...In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, *singing and making melody in your heart* to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19).

*We too have a “Chief Musician”  
who leads the singing.  
He is the Lord Jesus.*

And we, too, have our “maschils”, etc! What is the difference between “psalms,” “hymns,” and “spiritual songs”?

A “hymn” is usually directed in a personal way to a divine Person. For example, we may address the “Father” in a hymn. It may include worship, praise or thanksgiving. Very few hymns are pure worship throughout, that is to say, expressing only the worth of the One being addressed. However, the anonymous hymn commencing “Eternal Word, eternal Son”<sup>1</sup> is to be commended in this respect. At the same time, it should be remarked that much of the singing addressing God or Christ is actually prayer. For example, “O teach us more of Thy blest ways, thou holy Lamb of God.”<sup>2</sup>

A “psalm” is a sacred song that may or may not address God directly. It may include praise based upon the acts or ways of God in particular circumstances; but often includes much in the way of the singer’s experiences in life. “To psalm” originally meant “to pluck” or “to play [a musical instrument]”, but by New Testament times it meant “to sing songs of praise with or without instrumental accompaniment.”

A “spiritual song” is a song that contains teaching from the Spirit of God. It expresses the truth of the Scriptures. It may begin with a line addressing the saints rather than a divine Person. An example of this is Thomas Kelly’s song: “Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious.”<sup>3</sup>

However, it must be said that much of what we sing contains more than one aspect of the above, and to define the songs under single headings is often impossible.

Finally, what can we learn from Chenaniah himself? All we know is his name, which means “Jah planted.” It reminds us of the Lord Jesus, the I AM who gave Himself up to die on Calvary’s cross. He has sown most bountifully in the giving of Himself. Therefore, He must reap bountifully in accordance to God’s word.

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<sup>1</sup> No. 410 in the collection, *Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, available from the publishers of *Scripture Truth*.

<sup>2</sup> No 172 in the same collection

<sup>3</sup> No 371 in the same collection.

# Grace and judgment after the Flood

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**Theo Balderston**

*The so-called “dispensation of government” was the counterpart of God’s covenant never again to judge the world by a Flood. But has man glorified God in it? Sadly not.*

## **A perplexing pronouncement**

When God restarted human history after the Flood, He made a surprising statement. “The LORD said in his heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth’” (8:21, ESV).<sup>1</sup> He said that the people who repopulated the earth after the Flood were no better than those on whose account He had just judged it. Recollect that God had judged it because “...every intent of the thoughts of [man’s] heart was only evil continually” (6:5 NKJV).

Shortly afterwards, Noah himself supplied the sad proof of the unchanged condition of man. He grew grapes, fermented them, and got drunk. Then, “he...became uncovered inside his tent” (9:21), and was reduced to the pitiable condition of Adam and Eve upon eating the forbidden fruit (3:7). Noah was certainly “saved by grace” (Hebrews 11:7), and not someone who normally turned “the grace of

God into licentiousness” (Jude 4). Alcohol, that relaxes the normal inhibitions, was necessary to make him do it. Quite how drunk Noah was, and how far his act was deliberate, is unclear; but God allowed it, so that man’s condition after the flood could be verified in the person who was the head, so to speak, of the restarted human race. And Noah’s act incited a more deliberate indecency in his son, Ham (9:22).

## **A surprising promise**

Therefore, if God had continued to apply the principles of 6:5-7, there would have been no point in reconstituting the earth after the Flood. Why re-run the dispensation of “conscience alone” to uncover the same truth about the heart of man, intervene with the same judgment, and restart for a third time the history of a race whose deepest thoughts were only evil? Therefore God’s restarting of mankind through Noah and family had to be on the basis of not again intervening with a general, Floodlike judgment, as long as the earth lasted.

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<sup>1</sup> Where no book of the Bible is specified, Genesis is intended.



But how could a holy God bind Himself not to judge a mankind whose heart is evil from his youth? Only on the basis that “the LORD smelled a sweet savour” from Noah’s burnt offerings (8:20-21, KJV). “Sweet savour” is said to mean “odour of pacification” (Delitzsch), or “savour of rest” (Wigram’s *Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance*). The “sweet savour” of Noah’s offerings made atonement for the defiling effect on the renewed earth of the inherently sinful humans who had been given dominion over it. This was the basis of God’s continuance with creation and with fallen man.

But the real basis was that the “sweet savour” prefigured something greater. It says of the Lord Jesus in Hebrews 2:9 (Darby Trans.), that “He tasted death for everything.” This “everything” answers to the “all things” of the quotation in Hebrews 2:8, whereas the translation “everyone” would not. The death of the Lord Jesus was such a “sweet savour” to God that when the “world to come” is “put under *Him*,” it will be redeemed though its association with Himself (Hebrews 2:5-8). Happy thought! In the millennium, creation will be delivered from “the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21, NKJV; cp. Isaiah

11:6-9). This widest effect of the death of Christ is perhaps prefigured in Noah’s offering of *every* clean animal, not just the domesticated ones prescribed for sacrificial purposes in Leviticus.

Because the true “sweet savour” was foreshadowed in Noah’s sacrifice, God’s favour has rested upon this world to this day, even though “the intention of man’s heart is [still] evil from his youth.” The survival of mankind over the millennia has depended upon this favour. All the technologies which raise living standards would do nothing without the supply of food from the soil. This was how Paul preached to the people of Lystra. Referring to the “Noahic covenant,” he told them that God “did not leave himself without a witness, in that he did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17). But did this “goodness” lead humanity in the mass to repentance? (Romans 2:4) On the contrary, they “despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance and longsuffering,” and invoke the Name of God only to blaspheme it when famines occur. They make human goodness a *datum* and call the goodness of God into question, asserting that, if there is a God, innate human goodness entitles

humanity to freedom from famine. Whereas, on the contrary, the succession of seedtime and harvest is only an undeserved bonus from His treasuries of grace, towards a mankind whose lease on the earth should already have ended at the Flood by any just reckoning. (Today, *man* causes the suffering from famine: the purchasing power of rich countries offloads it on to the poor.)

The death of the Lord Jesus was the supreme expression of man's contempt for the goodness of God. And yet that death is the basis of its continuance! What grace!

#### The delegation of judgment

But did God recommence human history, albeit on the basis of sacrifice, just in order to let sin abound? Reapplying Paul, we may say "Far be the thought!" (Romans 6:1-2, Darby Trans.). In the anarchic dispensation between the Fall and the Flood conscience had been the only control on human behaviour and had proved useless. But God had not condoned the sin of that era; He had judged it in the Flood. However, after the Flood God undertook not again to destroy every living thing (8:21): did that mean that He was instituting a covenant of grace with no judgment of sin? Not so: God instituted another means of not compromis-

ing His own holiness. He instituted a dispensation in which He committed to man the responsibility of bearing witness to His creatorial rights, and to the fact that sin must be judged.

He gave mankind two rules to observe.

One of these regulated man's relationship with the animal creation. After the Flood mankind was permitted, for the first time (contrast 1:29), to eat meat. But it was prohibited from eating their blood (9:4). Evidently at this time many animals also became carnivores

*God instituted another means of not compromising His own holiness.*

*He instituted a dispensation in which He committed to man the responsibility of bearing witness to His creatorial rights, and to the fact that sin must be judged.*

(contrast 1:30); and so, for man's safety, God now put the dread of man upon them (9:2). So now animals were more completely given into man's hand than they had been in Eden (1:28; 2:19-20). But, lest humans regard themselves as in effect gods to the animals, they were prohibited from eating their blood, because the blood epitomised the animal's life. This life came from God, and the prohibition reminded mankind that the animals under their dominion were *God's* creation, and were not *their* creatures.

When James, the Lord's brother, instructed Gentile believers not to eat blood, this shows that the Noahic prohibition was disregarded amongst pagans (Acts 15:20, 29). It is still generally disregarded, as also, quite widely, are its implications for human use of animals.

The second rule concerned relations between human beings. Whereas God had *protected* Cain from vengeance after he murdered Abel (Genesis 4:14-15), He now gave mankind the duty of judging murder. The last sentence of 9:5 possibly legitimised blood vengeance by relatives (though some linguistically able commentators deny this meaning). Be that as it may, 9:6 places the obligation to punish murder on *man* as such, not just on the victim's relatives. To this

extent, God delegated His divine prerogative of judgment to man. Man had been proved to be an incorrigible sinner in the dispensation between the Fall and the Flood – and he still was. That could not be gainsaid, but was man, as God's representative, capable of rightly judging sin?

The phrase, "in the image of God" (9:6) no doubt applies to the victim and explains why murder is so serious. But it can equally explain why the dread responsibility of taking life is committed to man, namely, because man is "in the image of God" in the sense of representing Him in this world. Therefore, if the earth is still "filled with violence" (cp. 6:11), and yet God has now pledged Himself not to intervene in judgment, *man* is now required represent God's holiness to his sinning fellow-men, by exercising the divine prerogative of judgment. Psalm 82:1, 6 calls judges "gods" (cp. Exodus 21:6). Their verdicts and sentences ought to be those of God Himself, in the sense of reflecting His holy character (cp. John 10:35).

Supremely, the Lord Himself confirmed this grant of judicial authority to man. When Pilate asserted his authority to crucify Him, the Lord replied, "You could have no authority over me at all unless it had been given to you from

above” (John 19:10,11, ESV). Paul also referred to it when he called Gentile authorities “God’s ministers” (Romans 13:4, 6). (Indeed, since Romans 13 is not specifically about murder, it tells us, as also does Psalm 82, that the delegation of judicial authority in Genesis 9, covers other sorts of wrongdoing too.)

Only *after* prescribing the two rules of Genesis 9:4-7, did God turn His promise of 8:21-22 into a covenant (9:8-17). The covenant was not (though see below) made conditional on the right carrying out of these rules, but the covenant and the duty of judging were “two sides of the same coin.”

### The failure of the dispensation

So did mankind carry out what was required of them?

There are two sides to the authority given man to dispense justice. On the one side, God upholds it so that, to a large extent, evil is punished and right maintained (Romans 13:4; 1 Peter 2:14). “By me kings reign,” says the divine Wisdom in Proverbs 8:15. The survival of human society to date depends on this, and we should pray for its continuance (1 Timothy 2:2). However, in the end the only effect of human moral standards as upheld by God will be to prove what God said concerning man in Genesis 8:21. Man

has been authorised to judge, but every judge, whether one publicly in the law court, or privately in the recesses of his own heart, will be condemned by his own judgments. So Paul says in Romans 2:1-16; and the Lord Himself in Matthew 7:1-2.

The other side is human responsibility. Even in the best human judicial systems justice is disregarded when it clashes with expediency. This is the message of Acts (see: 12:1-3; 24:27; 25:9). Through twelve centuries of Christendom (c.500 - 1700) divine standards were bent to expediency. Psalm 82 is a general indictment of judicial corruption. They “show partiality to the wicked... They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are unstable... I said, ‘You are gods... But you shall die like men.’” (vv.2,5,6 NKJV). In some form corruption has marred all judicial systems in all of history. Psalm 94:20 goes further, and describes a “throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law.” This is what western judicial systems now do, however they preen themselves on their incorruptibility.

The conclusive evidence of how man judges when God ceases to uphold his judgment occurred in what the Lord termed “your hour, and the power of darkness” (Luke 23:52). Expediency caused the chief

priests to condemn Him (John 11:50). And immediately after the Lord Himself told Pilate the divine basis of his judicial authority, Pilate used it to release a murderer and execute the “Holy One and the Just” (Acts 3:14). The Man who was uniquely “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15) was murdered with the sanction of a human court (Acts 7:52). Here the bankruptcy of man was proved through his terrible exercise of his divinely granted authority to judge.

And because man has failed in his responsibility to reflect God in his administration of justice, Psalms 82:8 and 94:2-3 both call, not for a better judiciary, but for God to arise and judge the earth. This is implicitly a call for the end of the Noahic covenant.

### God’s answer – Christ alone

Man has failed. But David foresaw a King who would rule justly over men, ruling in the fear of God. Though even David himself failed as a judge in the matters of Amnon and Absalom, and his royal house also failed, yet God’s everlasting covenant with him would bring this perfect King out of his descent (2 Samuel 23:2-5). For one thousand years the Lord Jesus will judge perfectly: God will “give the king [His] judgments” (Psalm 72:1; cp. Isaiah 11:3-5). Yet even the millen-

nium will end in rebellion against His righteous rule (Revelation 20:7-9). Then God will finally “judge world in righteousness,” but He will do it “by the *man* whom he has ordained” (Acts 17:31). The Victim of the greatest ever miscarriage of justice will Himself be the Judge of all. The Father has committed “all judgment” to own eternal, co-equal Son, “that all should honour the Son, just as they honour the Father.” But He will execute this judgment “*because he is the Son of man*” (John 5:22,23, 27). God has designed that there should be a *human* answer to man’s failure to maintain His holiness through the judicial authority granted in the time of Noah – but in Christ *alone*.

However “the secret things belong to God” (Deuteronomy 29:29). The Lord Jesus did not come first to judge, but to save (John 12:47; cp. Luke 12:14). He surprised the scribes with His authority on earth – but not to *judge* sins; rather, to *forgive* them (Mark 2:10). And His blood, spilt on the ground, did not bring immediate divine judgment on this outrage against God Himself – but the “day of grace”! The Noahic covenant began in grace, and continues in greater grace, so that the shed blood of Calvary can be followed by the preaching of the cross.

# Silence under Provocation

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## The fact

“And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, ‘Do you answer nothing? What is it these men testify against you?’ But he kept silent and answered nothing... And the chief priests accused him of many things but he answered nothing. Then Pilate asked him again, saying, ‘Do you answer nothing? See how many things they testify against you!’ But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marvelled.” (Mark 14:60-61; 15:3-5, NKJV)

## Man’s evaluation

A famous eighteenth-century moral philosopher wrote concerning people who submit to insults, “A person becomes contemptible who tamely sits still and submits to insults, without attempting either to repel or to revenge them. We cannot enter into his indifference and

insensibility; we call his behaviour mean-spiritedness, and are as really provoked by it as by the insolence of his adversary. Even the mob are enraged to see any man submit patiently to affronts and ill usage...”

## God’s evaluation

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, Yet he opened not his mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So he opened not his mouth... Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; He has put him to grief. When you make his soul an offering for sin, He shall see his seed, He shall prolong his days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.” (Isaiah 53:7, 10)

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

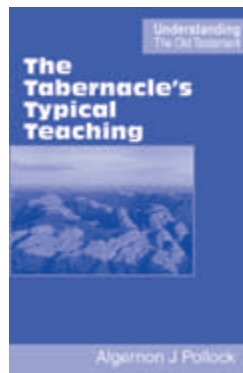
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# The Tabernacle's Typical Teaching

by Algernon James Pollock

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# The publican

*Luke 18:9-14*

Two men went to the temple to pray —  
one a publican,  
the other a proud Pharisee —  
and thus they prayed, each one:

The Pharisee in self-belief  
lifted his head up high,  
“Not adulterer or thief,  
not as others — *I*.

Tithes of all I get, I pay,  
twice a week I fast.”  
But the sinner, far away,  
smote upon his breast,

“God be merciful,” he cried,  
head bowed in his bother.  
*This* man went down justified,  
rather than the other.