

# What About MISSING THE KINGDOM?

by R. E. Neighbour

## ***AN EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS III AND IV***

The message of the Epistle to the Hebrews is peculiarly a message of the Kingdom.

We believe that Christ, as our Great High Priest, holds a conspicuous place in the epistle, and yet *even* the major message of His priesthood is not after the Aaronic, but the Melchisedec pattern. This Melchisedec was a king-priest and a type of Christ as King-Priest when He reigns on David's throne.

We believe again that Hebrews carries a vital message on Christ's superiority to angels, and to Moses; however, in each case His superiority relates to His coming earth heirship and ministry.

Once more we grant that Hebrews carries a definite message about the blood of Christ, as God's great and covenant sacrifice. Yet, in relation to this hallowed offering once and for all, and in relation to His present entrance into heaven itself, where He appears before God for us, is given this definite statement:

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrew 9:28).

We believe that Hebrews is pre-eminently an epistle on the Kingdom, and on the Kingdom from a distinct and unique standpoint.

Hebrews, in its Kingdom-testimony presents and enlarges upon one tremendous *warning*, and one great *plea*. The *warning* is lest we fall by the way, and fail to enter into our kingdom-heirship. The *plea* is for us to go with Christ outside the camp, so that we may enter with him into His reign.

We ask our readers to follow with us, keeping an open *mind*, as we enlarge upon this theme so vital to the Christian's present day living and to his future rewards.

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I  
***A NEW VISION OF HEBREWS***

We sat, one day, asking God for a testimony that we might deliver to our people. Our mind was running over the matchless message of Hebrews eleven.

As we sat in our study we slowly read the first verse.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

As we paused and considered—suddenly a new light dawned upon us. Quickly we said—this definition of “faith” is not that of the faith which looks back to Calvary, the faith whereby we are justified, but it is that of the faith which looks on to the things unseen.

Then we inwardly wondered if the heroes of the faith mentioned by name in this marvelous chapter were each, in turn, an example of this definition of faith? That is, did Abel, and Enoch and Noah, and Abraham, and the rest, each have a faith, which gave substance to things, hoped for, and evidence of things not seen?

The result of our search was a demonstration that God's star-cluster of heroes in Hebrews eleven, did, undoubtedly, outline the whole of prophetic story.

A poem we wrote at that time will reveal to the reader the conclusions of our discovery.

Faith looks afar and substance gives  
To things hoped for: it always lives  
With strong convictions; firmly clings;  
Gives evidence to unseen things:  
The faith of Abel saw the Blood,  
Far down the years a crimson flood;  
*And* Abel's sacrifice replete  
Came up to God, an odor sweet.

The faith of Enoch saw the hour  
When Christ would come in mighty power,  
Translating all who know the Lord,  
Who walk with Him, obey His word:  
Thus, God translated Enoch, too,  
A type, a picture ever true,  
Of those caught up to Christ on high.  
Of living saints who never die.

The faith of Noah saw the flood  
Foretold by God's unerring Word:  
An ark faith built, a shelter sure  
That would his household keep secure;  
But, Noah's faith saw down the years  
Another day, a time of tears,  
When God shall set the world afire  
With famine, sword, and judgments dire.

The faith of Abraham portrayed  
A far-flung vision. He obeyed,  
And left his fatherland, to view  
Another country, for he knew  
That in the distant years, his seed  
From bondage and from Gentile freed.  
Forgiven and restored, would stand,  
Inheriting the promised land.

The faith of Sara saw a seed  
Born unto one as good as dead;  
Her faith gave strength to her to bear,  
And bring to birth this seed, this heir  
Of promises foretold. In him  
She saw a multitude of men,  
In numbers as the stars of sky,  
And as the sands of seashore, nigh.

The faith of Abraham did see  
His son raised up, from death set free.  
This man of faith looked down the years  
And saw death robbed of all its fears,  
Saw Christ raised up; believers, too,  
All raised, translated, made anew  
With bodies changed and glorified,  
With Christ forever to abide.

The faith of Abram's sons saw well  
How Israel would one time dwell  
In her own land, forever blest,  
Their sufferings and wrongs redressed;  
How Israel would shout and sing  
And dwell together with one King;  
How she would rest for aye, secure  
As long as sun and moon endure.

The faith of Moses gladly shared  
The poverty of saints, nor cared  
For Egypt's riches; he debarred  
Faith's pleasures for the blest reward  
Which he foresaw the Lord would bring  
When He came back to earth as King;  
Thus Moses heard the Spirit's call.  
And faith chose Christ as all-in-all.

The faith of many saints looked down  
Through many ages, saw their crown;  
They knew that Christ would come again,  
That they with Him would live and reign;  
In faith they lived, in faith they died,  
The promises, not verified,  
Disturbed them not, because faith knew  
The Word was sure, and God was true.

The faith of all the saints, who live  
Today upon the earth, should give  
To God a faith as strong, as true  
As saints of old were used to do;  
God's galaxy of heroes still  
Is open unto all who will,  
By deeds of faith write in their name,  
And thus attain a lasting fame.

As we sat that day, alone, with our open Bible, once again, and quite as suddenly, a second query came to our mind. It was this: Does the whole book of Hebrews center in the "things to come?" We began anew the perusal of Hebrews—a perusal from a different angle. The result of that study (a study which still goes on) is the message of this booklet.

## II

### ***SOME DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES IN HEBREWS***

During the early years of our ministry the warnings of Hebrews III, and IV, were a source of great concern. Then, again, Hebrews 6:1-12 (especially 4-6), staggered us.

We had been brought tip in the lap of Calvinism. We believed tenaciously in the security of the believer. We were established in this—a saved soul can not be lost.

What then, meant these strange and startling warnings from the pen of God, found in the epistle to the Hebrews?

We soon learned how to *explain them away* to the satisfaction of the majority. We used the “professor and possessor” method, a method still commonly employed.

Relative to that oft disputed scripture Hebrews 6:4-6, we taught that the words referred to an unbeliever who was almost, but not wholly saved. We taught that the unbeliever in question, was enlightened, but yet loved darkness rather than light; that he had tasted the heavenly gift, but did not swallow; that he was led along by the holy Ghost, but balked by the way, etc.

No matter how we helped others, we ourselves were not *fully* satisfied.

Our interpretation had by no means conquered us; it had us still “guessing.” The great scripture bulwarks on “security” were too strong to permit us to believe that the saved could be lost, and yet, what did these scriptures in Hebrews 6:4-6 mean?

As the new vision of God’s message in Hebrews dawned upon us; in a flash all of these difficult passages in our Epistle fell into their God-sent message, and our heart rejoiced.

We saw that we could not lose eternal life, but we could lose a place in the kingdom. All of this will be made plain as we proceed.

### III **KEY VERSES**

God places the “key” which unlocks His books in a handy place. There are two keys—a major and a minor—to the book of Hebrews. With these keys placed in their locks, the Epistle opens readily, and the contents of the book lie before us in full display.

**Key No. 1** is found in the first chapter, verse two. Here it is:

*“His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things.”*

Christ is heir of all things. In Colossians 1:16-17 we read:

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

Into Christ's "all things" an enemy entered and laid claim. The result is scripturally set forth: "The whole world lieth in wickedness" (the wicked one). (1 John 5:19).

On the mountain, Satan showed to Christ "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," and said unto him: "All these things will *I give thee*, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Christ did not deny Satan's claims; He did emphatically refuse his request.

God says to the Son, "*Ask of me*, and I shall give thee the heathen, for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psalms 2:8). When will this be accomplished? Even when God sets his king upon the holy hill of Zion.

Hebrews 1:6 tells us when Christ will enter into His heirship, and be worshipped of angels.

"And again, when he bringeth In the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Hebrews 1:6).

When the time draws near for Christ to enter upon His heirship, Satan will be chained and cast into the pit of the abyss.

Even now we can catch the echoes of heaven's magnificat:

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ" (Revelation 11:15).

The promise through Isaiah must shortly come to pass.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6).

The promise of Gabriel to Mary is sure and certain.

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:31-33.)

This is the heirship of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Arise, O Lord, the night is far o'erspent,  
The harvest of the earth is ripe in sin;  
The wicked hold the reigns; the woes begin;  
The world on evil sets its heart intent.  
The nations gather, and the night grows on:  
They set themselves together, Christ to rout;  
They cast his cords away, break loose and shout  
Against the Lord, and His anointed One:  
The Jews now languish, as they plead for Thee,  
Their hearts grow weary; hark, how deep their sigh:  
"Come down, O Lord, our foes against us cry;  
Come down to reign—the throne belongs to Thee,  
Burst forth and shine, O Sun of righteousness,  
Come down Thy chosen people to redress."

**Key No. 2** is found safely hidden away in Hebrews 1:14. The key verse reads:

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14).

In Key No. 1—*Christ is heir*.

In Key No. 2—*Saints are heirs*.

We wonder if this is a *joint-heirship*. In Romans 8:17, we read: "And *joint-heirs* with Christ; *if so be* that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified *together*."

Let us then examine our Key No. 2, with concern. Christ is an heir to the kingdoms of this world. Saints are heirs of salvation. If the heirship, therefore, of Hebrews 1:2 (Key No. 1), and of Hebrews 1:14 (Key No. 2) is a joint heirship, then the salvation of Hebrews 1:14 must have to do with our reigning with Christ in His Kingdom. This brings us to our next consideration.

## IV **SALVATION IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS**

In the popular conception, the word "salvation" refers to something that came to us when we were saved. It carries with it our redemption from sin, and our justification by faith through the blood of Christ. It is therefore a conception of something that happened and was concluded when we first came to Christ.

Salvation, however, *at the cross*, had but its *beginning* so far as its deeper and fuller fruition is concerned.

## I. BEFORE WE LOOK AT “SALVATION,” AS HEBREWS PRESENTS IT; LET US READ A FEW OTHER SCRIPTURES TO PREPARE THE WAY.

1. *There is a statement in 2 Timothy 2:10 that will help,*

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory?”

We see in this scripture a salvation in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. We further see that it is yet to be obtained by the elect. Finally we see that Paul endured all things for the elect, that is the saved, that they might obtain this future salvation.

Perhaps verse twelve will elucidate verse ten:

“If we suffer, we shall also reign ‘with him: if we deny him, **he also will deny us.**”

In other words salvation, in verse ten is synonymous with “reigning” with Christ, in verse twelve.

2. There is a statement found in Romans 13 :11:

“And that, knowing the time, that now is it high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

When we are saved from sin at the cross, then we start our march toward a further and future salvation. *That salvation daily draws nearer.* The context shows that it points to Christ’s return, because verse twelve says:

“The *night* is far spent, and: the day is at hand.”

This present evil age is “*night.*” Christ’s Second Coming is “*day.*”

3. There is a third scripture: you will find it in Peter’s first epistle, chapter one, verse five.

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Verse four, of the same chapter, tells of our inheritance reserved in heaven for us. Verse five, calls the inheritance of verse 4, “salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” Verses 6 and 7 tell how the coining salvation is a source of joy—“wherein ye greatly rejoice,” and that speaks of the “appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Thus in three scriptures (2 Tim. 2:10, Rom. 13:11, and 1 Pet. 1:5) we have found particulars of a coming salvation.

## II. WE ARE NOW READY TO RETURN TO HEBREWS, AND CATCH THE DEEPER MEANING OF HEBREWS 1:14, WHERE SAINTS ARE CALLED “HEIRS OF SALVATION.”

1. Let us take the verses of Hebrews 2:1-3 which develop the word begun in Hebrew 1:14. The second chapter opens with “Therefore,” and is, accordingly, linked to what precedes in the last verse of the first chapter.

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let (them) slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How **shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation**; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.” (Heb. 2:1-3).

May we tabulate some things found in these three verses?

- We are invoked to give heed—earnest heed— the more earnest heed to “the things we have heard.”
- We are urged not to “let slip” (the word “them” is not in the original).
- We, not the unsaved, are warned that we shall not escape “if we neglect so great salvation.”

The “great salvation” of Hebrews 2:3, is undoubtedly, the same “salvation” as that of Hebrews 1:14, to which we are “heirs.”

The Spirit explains to what He refers by the “salvation” of which we are heirs; and the salvation which we *must not neglect*, when He tells us in Hebrews 2:5 that He is speaking of “the habitable world to come.” That world is the age that is now about to dawn, even the age when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.

2. Let us weigh deeply a verse found in Heb. 9:28.

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

This passage gives God’s own definition of “salvation” as used in the book of Hebrews. It tells us that Christ shall appear the second time apart from sin unto salvation.”

Let us now sum up what we have said:

1. The three scriptures from other epistles:

- (1) "That they (the elect) may obtain salvation." 2 Tim. 2:10.
- (2) "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Rom. 13:11.
- (3) "Kept by the power of God . . . unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:5.

2. The three scriptures from Hebrews:

- (1) "Heirs of salvation." Heb. 1:14.
- (2) "So great a salvation." "The habitable world to come," "whereof we speak." Heb. 2:3, 5.
- (3) "He . . . shall appear the second time unto salvation." Heb. 9:28.

**III. IN LINE WITH "SALVATION" AS USED IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST'S COMING AND OUR REIGNING WITH HIM. LET US STUDY CHRIST'S MESSAGE ON SAVING AND LOSING ONE'S LIFE.**

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: and then he shall reward every man according to his work." (Matthew 16:25-27).

In considering this scripture, we do not think of salvation from hell, but of the saving of the life, by the obtainment of the rewards which Christ will bring with Him at His coming.

The "life" is that period of time, with its opportunities of fidelity to Christ in doctrine, in walk, and in service, which lies between our regeneration (when the life in Christ is begotten) and our departure from this earth, by death or rapture.

If we *lose our life now*, in suffering and service, we will save it in the day of Christ's coming: if we save it now, that is, spare ourselves from suffering and service, we will lose it at His coming, being "saved so as by fire." All of this is indissolubly linked to the "salvation at his coming and our heirship."

Lord help me so to live,  
My life to others give,  
That it may yet LIVE ON, When I am gone.

May I redeem my time,  
My life make so sublime,  
That it may yet LIVE ON,  
When earth is done.

May all I say and do,  
Count for that life, anew,  
The life that yet LIVES ON,  
Beyond the sun.

## V ***THE REST THAT REMAINETH***

We are now ready to ponder a vital part of our study. It is this:

1. *The REST of Hebrews IV is built around the Old Testament Story of Israel and their Canaan REST.* In Joshua 21:22 we read:

“AND THE LORD GAVE THEM REST.”

In Deuteronomy 12:9, the REST was still future and was a promised inheritance. “For ye are not as yet come to the *rest* and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you.” In Deuteronomy 12:10, the REST is said to lie over Jordan in a certain land—Canaan.

“But when ye go over Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety.”

In Joshua 22:4, the REST was realized, and God’s promise fulfilled.

“And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you into your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side Jordan.”

2. *The REST of Hebrews IV, is our Millennial, kingdom rest.*

In Hebrews 4:1, we are given a promise of REST.

“A promise being left us of entering into his REST.” In Hebrews 4:9, we are told of a REST that remaineth. “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” What do we have before us?

*There were a people of old, journeying toward a promised rest, who failed to enter into their rest, then there is a present-hour people journeying toward a rest.*

Israel's REST is used, therefore, by the Spirit to suggest to us our REST which is to come. The former anticipates the latter. The former is a type of the latter.

WHAT THEN IS OUR REST? OUR CANAAN? IT IS NOT HEAVEN.

*It cannot be heaven, because heaven is not now possessed by seven nations whose iniquity is full.*

*It cannot be heaven, because heaven holds no giants, the sons of the Anakims.*

*It cannot be heaven, because heaven is not *straitly shut up* against our entering.*

*It cannot be heaven because heaven has no walled cities and closed gates that must be surrounded and fall by faith.*

### **OUR REST IS THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.**

1. Because the earth is now possessed by Satan and his adherents, and they shall soon be cast out.
2. Because the harvest of the earth is ripe, as Canaan's harvest was ripe, and God will soon thrust in His sickle and reap.
3. Because the earth is filled with mighty men who defy the living Son of God. Spirits of demons fill the land. They shall soon be overthrown.
4. Because the earth is straitly shut up against Christ, while its rulers will soon say, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us"; these Christ will overwhelm at His coming.
5. Because in Christ's coming judgment, the cities of the nations shall crumble, as His saints come marching in.

If the Canaan Rest typically stands for *heaven*, then those who preach eternal security must take down their ban-tiers Inasmuch as the majority of the fathers who came out of Egypt by the blood, felt in the wilderness ere they reached Canaan.

Why do saints think of heaven, as they sing?

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,  
And cast a wistful eye  
To Canaan's fair and happy land,  
Where my possessions lie."

Are saints singing of heaven when they swell the chorus?

"I am bound for the promised land,  
I am bound for the promised land"

O who will come and go with rife?  
I am bound for the promised land.”

No, our Canaan is not heaven. Our Canaan is our rest, and our rest is Christ's Millennial Kingdom because:

- In His Kingdom we shall have rest from all our enemies.
- In His Kingdom sin and unrighteousness will succumb, while truth and righteousness kiss one another.
- In His Kingdom the physical earth will be filled with His glory, as the pomegranates, the grapes of Eschol, the milk and the honey, the wine and the oil, abound.

Watching I turn my eyes  
Unto the east,  
God's great sunrise;  
A grand new era dawns, I see  
The thousand years of Jubilee:  
Spread is the feast!

Behold earth's shadow flee,  
No bitter wail  
Comes now to me;  
Instead, a blooming Paradise,  
Doth now, o'er all the earth arise,  
To thee all hail?

## VI ***THE SOLEMN WARNING***

Hebrews, chapter three and four, are filled with solemnizing and startling warnings to the people of God. These are such that we dare not side step them, nor cast them lightly away.

Let us enter and search into their warnings by a short preparatory study of 1 Corinthians 10:1-11. Ponder every sentence of these remarkable verses of scripture.

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now

these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up .to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

The Holy Spirit in First Corinthians, nine, had just concluded a statement of Paul's ambition to run a successful Christian race, and to fight a victorious fight, "lest," said he, "that by any means, when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a castaway."

Immediately, the Spirit relates to us; as seen in the verses just quoted, how the "fathers," who had been saved out of Egypt by the blood of the slain and typical lambs, "were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea." Their deliverance had been miraculous and all-effective.

Then the Spirit next reminds us that they "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The Spirit still continues: and they "did all drink the same Spiritual drink: for they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

The typology is perfect thus far, setting forth our own salvation by blood, our baptism, and our partaking of the bread and wine at the Lord's table.

*Next, however, the Spirit gives His warning:* "But with many (the greater part) of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

*Does the typology cease? By no means.* The Spirit Himself forcefully says: "*Now these things were our examples.*" The Greek is "τύπος," "types."

The Spirit even gives the divine objective in recording these types: "To the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they lusted. Neither be idolaters as were some of them neither . . . commit fornication as some of them committed; . . . Neither . . . tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted; neither murmur, as some of them murmured."

The Spirit also tells us of how there "fell in one day three and twenty thousand"; of how they were "destroyed of serpents," of how they were "destroyed of the destroyer." Then the Spirit, having told us of all these things, yet once more urges: "*Now all these things happened unto them for types, and they are written for our admonition*"

*upon whom the ends of the world (ages) are come.”*

With what startling forcefulness does the holy Spirit add this significant warning:

*“Therefore Let Him That Thinketh He Standeth, Take Heed Lest He Fall.”*

It is this same warning to saints, upon which the Spirit enlarges in Hebrews three and four, to which we now give our thought.

## VII **THE WARNINGS OP HEBREWS THREE AND FOUR ELUCIDATED**

As we study, may God “stir us till by way of remembrance,” and may past events in Israel’s history, warn us to watch our steps aright.

FIRST: *Moses and his house contrasted to Christ and His house—“Whose house are we.”*

- Moses was faithful as God’s household servant.
- Christ was faithful as God’s household Son.
- Christ as a Son over His house is greater than Moses as a servant, over his house.
- Christ who built the house was greater than Moses who served it.
- Moses and his house carry “a testimony” relative to “those things which should be spoken be after” concerning Christ and His house. Mark with all concern these words:

And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, **for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after**; But Christ as a Son over his own **house**; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm **unto the end**. (Hebrews 3:5-6).

The two verses above carry the key to everything that follows in chapters two and three, and too much that follows later in the epistle.

The words, “a testimony to those things to be spoken after” is sufficient proof that Moses and his house speak with a definite testimony concerning the future house or kingdom of our Lord.

Now read again the words in verse six, upon which the whole *warning* of the epistle is built.

“BUT CHRIST, AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE; WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE, IF WE HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE AND THE REJOICING OF THE HOPE FIRM UNTO THE END.” (Hebrews 3:6.)

"IF."

“IF WE HOLD FAST.”

“IF WE HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE OF THE HOPE.”

“IF WE HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE, AND THE REJOICING OF THE HOPE.”

“IF WE HOLD FAST... FIRM UNTO THE END.”

### *THEN WE ARE HIS HOUSE*

If we do not hold (I fast the confidence (that is, the boldness), and the rejoicing of the HOPE firm unto the end— *THEN, WE ARE NOT HIS HOUSE.*

It is useless to argue back at God. His Word is true. However, we may well stop and consider the meaning of the words—HIS HOUSE.

His house is not the church—that is His body.

His house is not heaven—that is HIS FATHER'S house. (John 14:1,2, 3).

### *THE HOUSE IS HIS KINGDOM*

It is *His* house, because He is its Master. It is written: “When once the *Master-of-the-House* is risen up and shut to the door.”

*His house is His Millennial Kingdom.*

All of this will take certain shape as we proceed.

Let us now read some statements spoken expressly by the Holy Spirit:

“Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice). Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of provocation, in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest” (Hebrews 3:7-11).

There are in this scripture, several (definite things to consider. Having told us that we are Christ's house IF we “hold fast,” etc., the Spirit continues with a *wherefore*,” and quotes in full the very words He spoke as recorded in Psalm 95:7-11.

The same call and plea that the spirit made through David to the Israel of that day, He now makes to us. *Their warning is ours.* The “fathers” of Israel, in Moses’ day, hardened their hearts and erred, until the Spirit said: “They shall not enter into my rest.”

We all know the story of those sad days. Of some 600,000 men (the fathers) who left Egypt by Moses, only two, Caleb and Joshua, entered into the promise land. The bones of the rest were left, strewn in the wilderness.

Hear what the Spirit says to us concerning this:

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, lint exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:12-13).

Nothing could be plainer.

We, the brethren should beware LEST we fall after the same example of unbelief. We, the brethren, the saints of these last days, who are told in Hebrews 10:25 to exhort one another as they see the day (His coming) approaching; are in this scripture told to “*exhort one another daily,*” lest we be *hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

After this was spoken the Spirit gave us the fuller meaning of His *warning.*

“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For so, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.” (Hebrews 3:14-16).

Does the Spirit mean we will have *Eternal LIFE IF?* Never! “He that believeth on the Son *HATH* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.”

The Spirit does mean: We are *members of Christ’s HOUSE IF.*

The Spirit does mean we will be *partakers of Christ in his Kingdom reign, IF.*

Observe that in Hebrews 3:6, we are members of His house IF WE *hold* fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the HOPE firm unto the end; while in 1-Hebrews 3:14, we are partakers of Christ IF we hold the BEGINNING of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

The HOPE of Hebrews 3 is the same as that *Blessed HOPE* of Titus 2:13:

“Looking for that *blessed hope* and *the glorious appearing* of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

The HOPE of Hebrews 3 is the same as the HOPE of the gospel in Colossians 1:23 from which we are exhorted to be *not moved away*.

The HOPE of Hebrews 3 is the same as the HOPE of 1 Peter 1:13, where we are told to “*hope to the end* for the grace that is to be brought unto you as the *revelation of Jesus Christ*.”

The Spirit now makes His warning even more definite, as He speaks of that which saints may lose. Follow His words:

“But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Hebrews 3:17-19, 4:1).

As we see the carcasses of the “fathers” falling in the wilderness; as we see the ones who might have entered Canaan, failing to enter in, we are warned lest we also fail of entering into the Canaan rest which is set before us.

Thus with Israel’s failure plainly before us we read:

LET US, THEREFORE, FEAR.  
LET US.... FEAR, *LEST*.

How the words burn their way into our very consciousness. We marvel that so few saints ever experience this FEAR. We marvel that so few preachers ever preach to saints and exhort them to FEAR “lest a promise being left us of entering into HIS REST, any of you *should* seem to come short of it.”

## VII **WHAT IS HIS REST?**

His *rest* is certainly HIS HOUSE in Hebrews 3:6. His *rest* is certainly being made “partaker of Christ” in Hebrews 3:14. His *rest* is our HOPE, which we are to hold firm to the end. The *Rest*, which the “fathers” missed, was Canaan. Our *Rest*, is that which Canaan scripturally typifies.

Now let us hasten through the fourth of Hebrews and we will discover, to a certainty, what *their* “rest” was, and what *our* “rest” is.

- In Hebrews, 3:19 “They could not enter in” to their REST.
- In Hebrews 4:3, “We which have believed do enter into REST.”

- In Hebrews 4:4, “God did REST on the seventh day.” In Hebrews 4:5, “If they shall enter into My REST.”
- In Hebrews 4:8, “If Jesus (Old Testament, Joshua) had given them REST, he would not afterward have spoken of another day.”
- In Hebrews 4:9, “There remaineth therefore a REST (a keeping of the sabbath) to the people of God.”
- In Hebrews 4:10 a comparison is given between God's seventh day REST, and our REST.
- In HEBREWS 4:11, the renewed warning is stressed “LET US labour (give diligence) to enter into that REST, *lest we fall after the same example of unbelief.*”

Let us sum up our conclusions:

- a. Canaan rest cannot mean heaven—(This is proved earlier in this treatise).
- b. Heaven does not fit in with this Canaan type. Heaven is all of grace, and cannot be lost; we are warned lest we miss this rest.
- c. Canaan cannot mean the deeper Christian life, although the deeper Christian life does give a Rest of Faith, which may anticipate the climactic *Rest* that remaineth, and is our blessed Goal—God's “another day.”

Canaan can and does represent, and in perfect type does forecast the *Millennial Kingdom and the Reign* of saints with Christ.

God's seventh day rest in creation, forecasts another Sabbatical rest, of one thousand years, the seventh thousand, following after the six thousand years which have now almost passed.

## VIII ***SAINTS MAY FAIL TO REIGN WITH CHRIST***

Let us discover if other scriptures than those in Hebrews 3 and 4 corroborate the fact of the possible failure of saints to reign with Christ.

Romans 8:17 says, “*And joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together.*” 2 Timothy 2:12 says, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.”

Why does Peter in 2 Peter 1:6, 9-15, in his philippic on the Lord's return urge the saints to *give all diligence* to add to their faith, virtue, etc.; and to *give all diligence to make their calling and election sure*, if all saints shall enter into the Kingdom reign?

Why does Paul speak of being a possible *castaway at the Bema*, and of pressing on to attain the out—resurrection group, and the *prize of the up-calling*, if all saints will reign with Christ?

Why did Christ so frequently and constantly refer to those who would be *shut out of the Kingdom*, if all are to enter in?

What is “the recompense of the inheritance” in Colossians 3:24?

What is “the recompense of the reward” in Hebrews 11:26?

What is “the incorruptible prize” of 1 Corinthians 9:24?

When and where will the first be last, and the last be first, as in Mark 10:43.

When and where will the saints enter upon the rewards which the Lord brings with Him in Revelation 22:12?

When and where will the Lord reckon with His servants, as in Matthew 25:19?

What did Paul mean when he said, “Yea, and I wish that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you”? (See 1 Corinthians 4:8).

What did Christ mean by “Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just”? (See Luke 14:4).

Why did Paul say, “We are ambitious (R.V.) to be well pleasing unto him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ”? (See 2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

Why should saints “buffet their bodies”, “lay aside every weight”, “So run”, “So light”, “Mortify their members”, “Hold fast that they have?”

Deny the possibility of *losing crowns* and then explain 2 Timothy 2:5, “He is NOT CROWNED except he strive lawfully.”

Of whom and of what did Christ speak when He said, “He that saveth his life shall lose it”?

The parables of Christ plainly teach that the “unprofitable” and “wicked” and “slothful” servant, shall have no place in the Kingdom.

Our faithful “serving,” our undimmed “watching,” and our holy “living,” will decide our Kingdom rewards.

“He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, TO HIM will I give authority *over the nations*, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” (Revelation 2:26-27).

Thus it is that the realm of rewards, of crowns, and of recompense, must meet their complement in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT THEN? If Kingdom honors are rewards to those who win them—“LET US FEAR LEST.”

“We see that they could not enter in.” (Hebrews 3:19). “Lest . . . any of you should seem to have come short of it.” (Hebrews 4:1).

Remember Christ said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 7:21).

In Revelation 20:6, it was those who “worshipped not the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands” who LIVED *and REIGNED with Christ* a thousand years.

I saw a Christian as the day broke gray,  
He took his burden, starting on his way,  
He never faltered till a west'ring sun  
Proclaimed the message that his day was done;  
I saw him enter heaven's wide-flung door,  
I saw him crowned with glory evermore,  
Both tried and true, he now shone forth as gold;  
A great reward was his, an hundredfold.

I saw another start at break of day,  
But soon he tired, and fainted by the way;  
He joined aside to spend a pleasant hour,  
And basked beneath the world's entrancing bower;  
I saw him later stand before the throne,  
Saved by God's grace, and yet without a crown;  
His face was sad, he held no harp, no lyre,  
His works were burned, and he was saved “by fire.”

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## IX **THE GREAT “IF” OF HEBREWS SIX**

There has been much of controversy centering on Hebrews 6:4-6. For our part we are sure that the foregoing paragraphs of this treatise, should make all of Hebrews 6:1-11, easily understood. In fact this passage of scripture is the climactic conclusion of the Spirit's warning of the possible

### **MISSING THE PROMISED REST—THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST**

Let us consider these scriptures somewhat analytically.

1. *In Hebrews 5:12-13*, the Spirit speaks of Christians who are in need of milk and not of strong meat. They are but babes, although by reason of time they should have been full-grown.

2. *In Hebrews 6:1-2*, the Spirit gives the call to these baby saints to lay aside “the word of the beginning” and press on to “full growth.”

3. *In Hebrews 6:3*, the saints are saying, “And this (going on to full growth) we will do if God permit.” The fact is therefore, that there are some whom God will not permit to go on.

4. *In Hebrews 6:4-6*, the Spirit declares why some saints cannot “go on.” We quote the words in full.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

5. *In Hebrews 6:7-8* these saints, who could not go on, are described as those whose works are of the wood, hay and stubble class, under the figure of the earth bringing forth thorns and thistles. Here is the scripture:

“For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is high unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”

6. *In Hebrews 6:9-10* the Spirit speaks of another class of saints filled with a work and labor of love, of whom He expects “better things, even the things that *accompany salvation*.” In this connection read once more our words, herein,

concerning, "Salvation in the book of Hebrews."

"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

7. In Hebrews 6:11, the Spirit warns the saints described in Hebrews 6:9-10, that they must show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope, "*firm* unto the end." Then He warns them lest they fall by the way (as those in 6:4-6 fell), by becoming slothful. Here is the reading of this scripture.

"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end."

Let us now offer a few deductions on the whole matter.

1. The "those," and the "they" and the "them" of Hebrews 6:4-6, and the "you," and the "ye" of Hebrews 6:9-10, are two distinctive groups of believers; and not the almost saved unbelievers, in contrast to the fully saved, believers.
2. There are abundant scriptures which teach that the saved who have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, etc., may fall away and lose their place in the Kingdom, and its rewards; there is no scripture that teaches that unbelievers (the unregenerate) can crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.
3. Saints who harvest wood, hay, and stubble, will suffer loss, by the fire which shall try every man's work; while other saints will receive a full reward because their works were gold, silver, and precious stones which cannot be burned.
4. Those who teach that Hebrews 6:4-6 speaks merely of the unregenerate, who were almost saved, fail to explain the significance of the following statements that are to be found in the divinely written context.
  - (a). The significance of babes, in 5:12-13. They are not the "you" and the "ye" of Heb. 6:9-10; then who are they?
  - (b). The significance of going on to full growth, *if God will permit* in 6:3 (They do not explain why God will not permit this "going on," although 6:4-6 explains why).
  - (c). The significance of the warning to the victorious saints of Heb. 6:9-10, to press on to the full assurance of hope to the end—this they invariably omit. (This full assurance of hope is in harmony with Hebrews 3:6; 3:14; and 10:35-39).

5. They utterly fail to grasp the Kingdom warnings which pervade the whole book of Hebrews and therefore snatch away the text, Hebrews 6:4-6; from the context, Hebrews 6:1-13, 24.

As we close, we earnestly ask our readers who may be tempted to cast aside what is written herein, to answer with all sincerity the following questions:

Ques. 1. What is meant in Hebrews 10:30-31, when the Spirit says, "The Lord shall *judge his people*," and, "It is *a fearful thing* to fall into the hands of the living God"? (Compare with 2 Corinthians 5:11).

Ques. 2. What is meant in Hebrews 10:35-39, by the "Saving of the soul?" In the same verse, who are those who draw back to perdition? And what did they lose? (If you answer, "the saving of the soul stands for eternal life," then we ask what does Hebrew 10:35-36 mean when it says?)

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

Ques. 3. To whom does the Spirit in Hebrews 12:16-17 refer, when He uses Esau as a solemn warning? And why?

Ques. 4. Why the great call of Hebrews 13:13—"Let us, therefore, go out unto him, without the camp"?

Surely, not "eternal life" which is the *gift of God*, is discussed in any of these scriptures. The child of God is saved eternally, and is eternally safe.

**It must be "MISSING THE KINGDOM."**

## **X IN CONCLUSION**

Permit us, finally, to sound one loud call to believers everywhere to set themselves to lay hold upon those things, by which they have been laid hold upon by Christ.

Let us live *looking for that blessed hope*.  
Let us learn to *love His appearing*.  
Let us henceforth *watch and wait and long for Him to come*.  
Let us beware lest we say, "*Our Lord delayeth His coming*."

Let us beware lest, like Esau, we sell our inheritance for a mess of pottage.  
Let us beware lest a promise being life us of entering into His rest, we should seem to come short of it.

We must be robed and ready, with lamps trimmed and burning until He comes.  
We must be occupying.  
We must be keeping the faith, fighting the good fight, and stretching forth to the prize that lies before us.  
We must go outside the camp with him, bearing His reproach.

Remember that when David came into his kingdom he gave places of honor and authority to the men who had suffered with him in the days of his rejection by Saul—even so will Christ do at His coming.

### For

All our toil for the Master will not be in vain,  
We will meet all our labor in heaven again;  
That is  
If our service is his;  
If we toll for the lucre that men hold as dear,  
**If we labor for honor that comes to us here,**  
Ah, then,  
Not again  
Shall we have His reward in the joy of His reign.

In the Lord we must labor, if praise we would win,  
Let us then, at this moment, true service begin;  
'Tis thus  
His blessing He'll grant unto us;  
If we do and we dare in the things He commands,  
If we go and we come whensoever He demands,  
'Tis then.  
That again  
We shall have His rewards for a work genuine.



### GOD'S GREAT "IF."

**We are adding to the address on *Missing the Kingdom*, some excerpts from a stenographically reported sermon preached by Dr. Neighbour. This will give added emphasis to the preceding message.**

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## **AN EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS 6:1-6.**

Hebrews 6:4-6 contains a message that is greatly needed among saints. The more illumined we are the more the message is needed, for to whom much is given, much is required. Let us read together the 6th chapter of Hebrews, beginning at verse 1:

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

### **And this will we do, if God permit.**

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.”

### **ARE SAINTS OR SINNERS IN VIEW?**

The question which you wish answered first of all, and scripturally answered, is this: Do these verses in Hebrews 6 refer to a believer or to an unbeliever; to the saved, or to the lost; to the saint or to the sinner?

We believe in the security of the believer; we believe if you are born again, you can never be unborn; we believe that none of God's children will be found in the lake of fire; that none of them will be ultimately lost; we believe that the children of God have eternal life; that when they believed, they were sealed by the Holy Ghost unto the day of the redemption of their bodies, unto the day of their entrance into eternal life; we believe that God's sheep can never perish.

However, the eternal security of a believer does not secure his rewards. Salvation is by grace, apart from works; that is, salvation is altogether an unmerited favor. Salvation is the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He saves you because of what Christ did, and not because of what you do. Salvation is, therefore, of grace, to the exclusion of works. You can do nothing to become a Christian. You cannot even lift a finger to help yourself. All a sinner can do is to receive a finished and a completed work. When he receives Christ, God gives unto him eternal life and he can never be lost.

There has been, however, on the part of many who so believe a grave error. They have turned away from many solemn warnings, which are plainly and positively written in the Word of God.

### **THE TEXT AND THE CONTEXT**

We are coming to a very solemn passage this afternoon. It is easily understood, I think, when we have the whole concept of the Book of Hebrews in our mind. The reason we have not caught God's warning in Hebrews 6:4-6, is because we have isolated it, picked it up out of the chapter, carried it off and examined it apart from its environment. When we look at this scripture, out of its setting, we are staggered. When we remember that "the sum of thy word is truth," and that it is altogether wrong to use any scripture outside of its context, and contrary to its setting, we will be greatly blessed. The Book of Hebrews begins with the anticipation of the heirship of Jesus Christ; the Book of Hebrews concludes with the vision of Jesus Christ's Second Coming and His throne, in the 12th chapter. Chapter 13 is a final word of advice and wisdom. The 12th chapter tells of the removing of everything that can be shaken, while the things which cannot be shaken, remain. The conclusion is: "Wherefore receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let *us worship God with fear.*" The Book of Hebrews, thus, beginning with the heirship of Christ, and closing with the kingdom that cannot be moved has, lying between those statements, a continuously presented call to saints to lay hold of that heirship, and to enter into that reign.

In discussing Hebrews 6, we will, of necessity, refer to some passages in Hebrews that we have developed in other recent sermons.

### **WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE IF WE HOLD FAST**

First of all, in the 3rd chapter of Hebrews it speaks of the fact that Moses was faithful as the *servant* of his house; then it says that Jesus Christ, who is greater than Moses, was faithful as the *son* of His own house. Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt and led them toward a land that they were afterwards to inherit. Moses, of course, was set aside and Joshua took his place. Joshua led them on into their Canaan rest. Jesus Christ is our Princely-Leader. He is leading us into His Millennial Rest. Jesus Christ is the son over His house, "whose house we are IF." Had we only stopped and mastered the meaning of this first great "IF" in the 3rd chapter of the Book of Hebrews, we never would have stumbled so sadly over that other great "IF" in the 6th chapter. Christ is the son over His own house, whose house we are—*IF we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of our hope steadfast unto the end.*"

These words are in accord with those in Hebrews 2:1-3 "How shall we escape *IF* we neglect so great salvation?" "If we had not always used that 2nd chapter and verses 2 and 3, as an evangelistic text, to be applied to sinners, we would not have had trouble when we came into the 6th chapter of Hebrews, "I-low shall we escape if we neglect so

great salvation?" The WE of this scripture refers definitely, distinctively, and incontrovertibly *to the believer*. "How shall WE escape if WE neglect so great salvation The salvation of this verse and the salvation in Hebrews 6:9 are the same salvation.

Let us return to chapter 3: "Christ as a son of his own house, whose house we are, IF." In chapters 3 and 4, you find the story of how the Children of Israel were saved out of Egypt. They came through the wilderness to Kadesh Barnea. Because of their unbelief God commanded them to go back into the wilderness. For thirty-eight years they continued to wander in the wilderness until most of the men who came out of Egypt by Moses, died. Only two lived to enter into the land of Canaan. Across the wilderness, were strewn the bodies of those who believed not. Their bones bleached in the sun.

Hebrews uses all of this as a warning to saints who start out, putting their hands to the plough, and then fall after the same example of unbelief. Time and again the words ring out: "Take heed lest ye also fall after the same example of unbelief." God asks us to remember the days of the provocation in the wilderness, when Israel tempted God and was overthrown.

The sins of the Children of Israel, as they journeyed through the wilderness, are summed up for us in the 10th chapter of I Corinthians, under a six-fold statement: They lusted after evil things; they were idolaters; they committed fornication; they tempted Christ; they turned back, and they murmured. Therefore, they failed to enter Canaan. God recorded these things as *types*, and they are written for our admonition, lest we should fall as they also fell.

### **CANAAN A TYPE OF THE MILLENNIUM**

In our former sermon we emphasized that the land of Canaan was typical of the thousand-year-reign of Christ, the millennial kingdom of our Lord. Of this heirship, the Book of Hebrews is constantly speaking. The Israelites were overthrown in the wilderness, and missed their heirship. Herein God has summed up the most solemn message in the Bible for saints upon whom the end of the age has come. Now, let us turn to Hebrews 6.

### **GOD'S GREAT IF**

'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened.'

We do not believe, for one moment, that THOSE of this scripture can possibly refer to an unbeliever. Let us now mark carefully the reading: "It is impossible for those who," firstly, "were once enlightened;" secondly, who "have tasted of the heavenly gift;" thirdly, who "were made partakers of (were led along by) the Holy Ghost;" fourthly, who "have tasted the good word of God," and, fifthly, who "have tasted the powers of the

world to come.” Can these words refer to the unsaved (Israelite or Gentile)? No. They refer to believers, even to advanced believers—to believers who were enlightened; to believers who have tasted of the Heavenly Gift; to believers who have tasted of the *good Word of God* and of the *powers of the age to come*.

How were they enlightened? By the Holy Spirit of God. Of what gift did they partake? Of the gift of eternal life? Yes. But, to my mind, more particularly of the gift of the Spirit. What is the greatest gift that God ever gave to saints? “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, and ye shall receive the *gift of the Holy Ghost*, for the promise is unto you and your children.” How did the Spirit lead them along? He instructed them, and guided them into the things of Christ. How had they TASTED of the good Word of God? You know I like that word, “tasted.” David said, “Thy word is sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb.” It is good to the taste. Have you ever tasted it, tasted the good things that are written in the Word? There hath not failed one GOOD THING that was spoken. The “good word of God” in Hebrews, is the message of Christ’s heirship—the good things to come. How had they tasted of the powers (the word is miracles), of the age to come? They had known the Gospel of the Kingdom; they had entered into the marvels of the millennium. They had tasted all of these things. Now, what does God say of these favored believers? “It is impossible for them *IF THEY shall fail away* to renew them again unto repentance, seeing that they crucify unto themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame.”

### ***CRUCIFYING THE SON OF GOD AFRESH***

Before we examine the words, “If they shall fall away,” let us consider the words “seeing that they crucify unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Christians sing:

“In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time,  
All the light of sacred story,  
Gathers round its head sublime.”

We love to sing, “At the Cross, at the Cross, Where I first saw the light.” What is the Cross to a believer? It is the emblem of his redemption. “Just as I am, without one plea, but that Thy Blood was shed for me.” What else does the Cross of Christ mean to the Christian? In Galatians 1:4 it says, He died that He might save us from this present evil age. What is the message of the Cross? Let us go back to the story of the Children of Israel. The blood was sprinkled on the two side posts, and on the upper doorposts. God said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” After the angel had passed over at midnight, and the first-born in the homes of the Egyptians had been slain, then God said to Moses, “Up, get you out.” Why this hurry? Because that blood *stands for separation*.

I love that other passage in Galatians: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the which *I am crucified unto the world and the world unto me.*” Oh, beloved, if the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ means anything to you, it means separation. It means that you are a purchased people, bought with the precious Blood of Christ. Listen! Have you been enlightened? Have you received the heavenly Gift? Has the Holy Spirit led you along? Have you tasted of the powers of the age to come? Then, have you fallen away? If so, you have crucified afresh to yourselves the Son of God, and you have put him to an open shame. *Ah*, Thou Son of God, how many saints there are today who are crucifying Thee afresh. They make Thy Cross of no avail, they spoil its deeper meaning. They trample its call beneath their feet; they spurn its message. Saints should glory in the Cross where they die, not alone in the Cross where He died.

### ***IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY***

Now, we are ready to discuss the words: “If they fall away”—and also the words, “It is impossible to renew them again to repentance.”

Shall we leave the *first principles, the beginnings* of the doctrine of Christ? And press on to full growth? Yes, “this we will do *if God permit.*” God will not always permit, for with some it is impossible to press on. Let us find the 1st chapter of Deuteronomy. There we will discover the meaning of Hebrews 6:4-6.

### ***HOW ISRAEL FELL AWAY***

“There are eleven days’ journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea.” (verse 2.)

“The Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount.” (verse 6.)

God is talking to many Christians in this audience saying, “You have been living where you are living, long enough. Whereas you ought to be teachers, you have need that someone teach you again the beginnings of Christ. You have dwelt in this mount long enough.”

“Behold, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land.” (verse 8.)

“The Lord, your God, hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. (The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and Mess you, as he hath promised)” (verse 10.)

“*And* when we departed from Horeb, we went through all *that* great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea.” (verse 19.)

“I said unto you, Ye are conic unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go

up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send them before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up.” (verses 20-22.)

“And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Esheol and searched.”

“And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, “It is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us.”

“Notwithstanding YE WOULD NOT GO UP, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God; and ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the Lord hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt.” (verses 24-27.)

“Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land.” (verses 30 -35.)

I am using this experience of the Children of Israel as an illustration of Hebrews 6:4-6. Israel, under Moses was enlightened; and tasted of the good Word of God, and of the powers of that marvelous Canaan. The Holy Ghost, in a pillar of fire led them along by night and in a cloud by day. They knew God’s promise, but they fell away, they turned back. What was the result? It was impossible for God to renew them to repentance.

### **ISRAEL COULD NOT ENTER IN**

“And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware saying, Surely *there* shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, save Caleb the son of Jephunnei; Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. But Joshua, the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit It. Moreover your little ones, which ye said should he a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it. But as for you, turn you,” (Oh, Christians, hear it) “Turn you and take your journey into the wilderness. Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the Lord, we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill. And the Lord said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and went presumptuously up into the hill. And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah. And ye returned and

wept before the Lord; but the Lord would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you. So ye abode in Kadesh many days.” (verses 34-46.)

### **BACK INTO THE WILDERNESS**

“*Then we turned and took our journey into the wilderness.*” (Deut. 2:1.) Oh, men and women, God has brought you up to your Kadesh-Barnea. He has shown you the vision of the Heavenly things; the blessings of rewards; the joys of the millennial kingdom. Have you tasted the good Word of God concerning the inheritance, which is your birth-right? Have you turned back? God said to Israel, “You can never enter into that land.” Will He refuse you any part in the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ? If this were the only passage in the Bible that had to do with a Christian losing anything, I would hesitate: but there are scriptures upon scriptures, passages upon passages that teach the same thing.

### **THE EARTH THAT BEARS THORNS AND BRIERS**

Now, let us go a little deeper into Hebrews 6: “It is impossible if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

The Holy Spirit goes on to give us an illustration of His holy dealings and just judgments: here are His words:

“For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”

It is the same earth, bearing two kinds of things: 1. herbs; 2. thorns.

What a picture! It is the 15th chapter of John over again: “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” If a man abide not in the vine, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”

Go back, if you will, to the 5th chapter of Isaiah; to the 80th Psalm; go to the song that He sang about His vineyard. He brought a vine out of Egypt and planted it in a goodly ground. He built a wall around it, He -put a tower in the midst of it, he made a winepress, to press out the juice from His grapes; then He looked for grapes, and behold wild grapes. He says: I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take My vineyard, I will pull down its walls, I will cast down its tower, I will turn it over to the men of the world and they will trample it under their feet, and burn it. That is what will happen to My vineyard. The next verse says, “For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house

of Israel.”

### **ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF CHRIST AS KING**

Listen again: John the Baptist came preaching, and he said, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” In Matthew 4:17 we read, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” It was not very long until, (see the 19th of Luke), they put Christ on an ass and He rode into the city of Jerusalem. Some of His disciples began to cry, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.” The rulers rebuked them saying: “You are not our king.” As Christ came near to the city He wept over it and said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.” Their opportunity came and they lost it. Christ then took the possibility of their entering the Kingdom away from them.

This did not mean that the children that should yet be born Unto them, should not enter into the Kingdom, any more than the rejection of the fathers at Kadesh-Barnea under Moses, meant that their children, tinder Joshua, could not enter into Canaan.

All of this is in striking analogy to the words of Hebrews 6:4-6:

“For It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have partaken of the heavenly gift, and have been led along by the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.”

It is impossible. Even now I can hear those doleful words: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” “You shall not see me henceforth, TILL.” You can not enter in, but your children can and will. “Instead of the fathers will be tile children.” As the children of Israel turned back into the wilderness at Kadesh-Barnea, so at Calvary’s Cross the Israel of that day, turned back, and for twenty centuries they have been wandering among all nations. Why have we said all of this? In order that you, oh children of God, will never refuse Him that calleth, and, after the same example of unbelief, turn back into the world.

The Apostle Paul used to go back over his trips, visiting the Churches where he had been that he might encourage the saints to continue in the “confidence of the HOPE, firm unto the end.” Paul was not afraid that the saved would he lost, but He wanted to present them full-grown in the Day of Christ.

### **ENCOURAGEMENT FOR SAINTS**

Let us continue in Hebrews 6, reading verse 9 and on.

“But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.”

Here is why the Spirit expected better things:

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire, (now listen) that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience Inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, He swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs’ of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed It by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which It was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge TO LAY HOLD UPON THE HOPE set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

The Holy Spirit penned these words for the encouragement of saints. None need fall by the way. In I Corinthians 10, is a similar assurance, an assurance given after a similar warning:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation prepare a way to escape it, that ye may be able to bear It.”

If any man fall away, it is his own fault. God has made every provision to carry everyone of us through in victory, into His promised land, and, blessed be God, I am set for it.

### **IF WE SIN WILFULLY**

Now, I close, by reading from the 10th chapter, verse 23. These words include each of us.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith.” (This should read, “the confession of

our hope.”) “Without wavering; for he is faithful that promise: and let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For IF WE sin willfully after that we have received (this is similar to Hebrews 6) the knowledge of the truth, (that is, after we have once been enlightened) there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”

You say, “That is awful.” Yes, it is a solemn, but faithful warning. In the Old Testament offerings there was absolutely no sacrifice offered for rebellion. For sins of ignorance, for trespasses, they had blood to offer, but there was no blood for willful sinning. When a child of God today comes up to the light, and he willfully turns his face against it, there is no more sacrifice for sins. “It is impossible to renew them again to repentance.” You say, “Then such an one is going to hell.” Oh, not at all. What does happen? There is

“A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who bath trodden under foot the Son of God, and bath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and bath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.”

Listen to the next verse: “For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me.” I would like to turn over to the 34th chapter of Deuteronomy and read these very words:

“To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense,” saith the Lord.”

And again, (continuing Heb. 10),

**“The Lord shall judge His people.”**

Thus, He is not talking of sinners, but of saints. “The Lord shall judge *his people*.” It is a fearful thing to fall in to the hands of the living God. What is the urgent conclusion?

Verse 35:

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which bath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done (he will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

(Turn back and read Heb. 3:6, 14.)

### **ESAU'S REJECTION**

Now, last of all, listen to Hebrews most solemn warning: Chapter 12:15-16-17:

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing tip trouble you and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, (this is God’s own illustration) as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, line was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

These words are analogous to Hebrew 6:4-6— “For It Is impossible for those who were once enlightened, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

Esau sold to his brother, Jacob, his birthright. That birthright included the very thing of which I am now preaching, the coming Seed, the inheritance of the land, and all. Esau sold it for a mess of pottage, and when he wanted to reconsider, he found no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears. Men and women, I plead with you in the name of a Risen Christ. He has placed before you marvelous rewards for service; He has placed before you His Coming and His Reign. Perhaps you have come now to your Kadesh-Barnea. I plead with you, refuse not to go on in the firm confidence of your hope. Let not scoffers, or persecution, turn you back. Let us go out together unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach. Do you know what God will do with you, if you turn back? He will do exactly what He did for that million and a half, who came out of Egypt. Yes, He will take you home to Heaven, He will save you unto eternal life, but you will never enter into that Canaan rest, that millennial reign which remains for the children of God.

[Note: We are well aware that Hebrews 6:1-6 and Hebrews 10:26-31 have a special message to Hebrew saints. However, we must not forget that we are told in Hebrews 10:22-25 that these admonitions are particularly applicable as we see the day approaching and that we are commanded as saints living in these last days to exhort one another relative to these very things. To isolate the message of this book to the Jews of a former age is altogether faulty—R. E. N.]

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