

## The Great Salvation.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"--[HEB. 2:3](#).

This question is addressed to Christians, and not to the unconverted, as is often supposed. This the context proves. Paul, or whoever wrote this epistle, addressed it to the church. It seems peculiarly adapted to converted Jews, who were familiar with the writings of the Old Testament. We have in this epistle some of the most earnest exhortations to be faithful to the Lord, and the very best reasons and motives given for our encouragement. The text and context are of this character. If we are Christians we will find much applicable to us. It is important that we should, in order to get the benefit of the exhortation, remember that it means us. "How shall *we* escape, if *we* neglect?" On account of certain facts referred to in the *first chapter, the second* opens with: "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*." This certainly must refer to Christians; and there is danger of *losing* what we have received, unless we do give heed.

The idea is suggested that *neglect* of the truths would cause them *gradually* to slip away from us. Backsliding is a gradual process, caused by neglect of truth and neglect of duty in obeying the truth. These are related to each other, and it seems that either may come as the cause of the other. The only safeguard against backsliding and consequent falling away if persisted in, is to advance. Standing still seems to be impossible. In the *sixth chapter* the apostle seems to make falling away the alternative of going on to perfection. The Lord has arranged our life as a current against which we must row if we would go up, and he has placed the reward, the Great Salvation, at the head of the stream. If we would gain the prize, we must "run," "strive," "fight," or "overcome." If we fold our arms, we shall *glide* downward. It is easy to go with the multitude, but it is difficult to stem the flood, and we may be sure, "This vile world is *not* a friend to grace; to help us on to God." What is worth having is worth striving for, and God has in both natural and spiritual things placed the valuable out of sight, or where it can be gained with difficulty. Our appreciation of the value of anything is shown by the earnestness with which we strive for it. We should be constantly seeking to know more of the truth of God for the purpose of *obeying* it. If we seek for truth merely as a theory to gratify our own curiosity, or for the purpose of showing our ability to cope with those who hold error, our intellect may be stuffed at the expense of our affections. Religion without *love* to both God and man, is as the body without the spirit--dead.

Charity or love is the *crowning* excellency of Christianity, and is necessary to fit for the Great Salvation. "Add to your faith; virtue, and to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, CHARITY." [2 Pet. 1:5-7](#). Love is last, and greatest. These additions secure the *abundant entrance* into the Kingdom of God. (*Ver. 11*.) Without the last all is vain. "Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels and have not love I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have (the gift of) *prophecy*, and understand *all mysteries*, and all *knowledge*; and though I have all *faith* so that I could remove mountains and have not *love*, I AM NOTHING." [1 Cor. 13:1,2](#). There is a kind of knowledge that cannot be gained from books, but comes by *experience* as a fruit of the indwelling of the spirit of God. "He that *loveth not* knoweth not God, for God is love."

Love is an experience, and includes in it an earnest desire for the well-being of the object loved. Until we have sympathy and love for mankind, such as would prompt us to do all in our power for their salvation, we cannot know God. To know him thus is to be in unison or fellowship with him, and hence is eternal life.

The apostle gives a contrast between the former dispensations and the gospel. In order to appreciate the question, "How shall we escape if we neglect?" it is necessary to see this contrast.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days (gospel dispensation) spoken unto us by His Son." [Heb. 1:1,2](#). God spoke then, and the same God speaks now, but there is a contrast in the *agencies*-- Then by the prophets, now by His Son. Moses the prophet and law giver of the old dispensation, and who was "faithful in all his house as a servant" (3:5) "received the law by the disposition of angels." [Acts 7:53](#). It was "ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator." (Moses, type of Christ.) [Gal. 3:19](#). But Christ, the Prophet and Law Giver of this dispensation, is higher than the angels, "as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." *Ver. 4*. His official position is "Lord of all," dead and living, Heavens and Earth, angels and men. He has been "appointed" by his Father, "heir of all things"--Creator, Upholder and Saviour. *Ver. 2,3*. He has the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person, and hence is in a peculiar and emphatic sense, God's power, [page 7] Wisdom, Love and Word, the embodiment of all the fullness of the Godhead. His superiority to the angels is well established and is the basis of the superiority of the gospel dispensation. While Moses was faithful as a servant over the house of servants, Christ was faithful as a Son over the house of sons. *Ch. 3:5,6*.

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son;...And again I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son;" And again he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him." *Ch. 1:5,6*.

Of the *angels* he saith; "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." "Are they not *all ministering* spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of Salvation?" *Ver. 7,14*. But unto the Son he saith, "Thy throne, Oh God is forever and ever." ...And "Thou Lord, *in the beginning* hast laid the foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest, &c." This certainly refers to the old creation, as it was "in the beginning" or first stage of its existence, and is to be *changed* also by his power and put on its beautiful garments of the perfect state. The work of Creation in *all* its parts is of God through Christ. "In the beginning was the Word" and by him God *spake* and it was done commanded and it stood fast.

The same Word was made flesh [Jno. 1](#) but was still "God--manifest in the flesh" and in the body prepared became a sacrifice for sin. And the same mysterious Name "which no man knoweth but he himself"--"The Word of God," goeth forth conquering and to conquer, when his army of assistants are with him, "Kings and Priests" to reign on the Earth." [Rev. 5:10](#) and [19:11-15](#).

The value of the Great Salvation which is offered in the gospel can be appreciated when we remember that all the Father gives his son, the Son will share with his Bride. And in view of the superiority of the Lord Jesus the question of the apostle can be appreciated; "If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we (under Christ) escape if we *neglect* so Great Salvation? J. H. P.