

*Are You Stone Deaf to the Spirit or Rediscovering God.* By R. T. Kendall. Scotland, U.K.: Christian Focus Publications, 1994. 255 pp. Paper,

For nearly 2,000 years, Hebrews 6:4-6 has been a theological battleground. The reason being, this passage presents grave difficulties for evangelicalism's two most prominent theological systems: Calvinism and Arminianism. Calvinists teach that saved people cannot fall away from grace and will always persevere in their faith. However, Hebrews 6:6 says otherwise. Arminians teach that saved people can fall away from grace but can be restored once again to salvation. Yet, Hebrews 6:6 says otherwise. Obviously, this is one of those passages where most interpreters find themselves in a bit of an exegetical "pickle."

In the course of his book, *Are You Stone Deaf to the Spirit or Rediscovering God*, Kendall suggests another way to understand Hebrews 6:4-6. His view is a hybrid interpretation, which combines the strengths of both Calvinism and Arminianism. Although Reformed in his theology, Kendall does not carry Reformed thought to its final conclusion (pp. 145-146). On the contrary, he acknowledges the reality that some saints will not persevere and "many converted people today will suffer loss and be saved by fire at the judgment seat of Christ" (p. 24).

There are several strengths that should also be mentioned. First, this is an in-depth, user-friendly commentary on Hebrews 5:11-6:20. It is quite possibly the finest treatment on this section of Hebrews in print. Although the focus of this book is Hebrews 5:11-6:20, it is the labor of a ten-year exposition of Hebrews at a Friday evening Bible Study at Westminster Chapel.

Second, Kendall motivates the reader to seek a more intimate walk with Christ. Although this book is first and foremost doctrinal and exegetical, it is also spiritual. While Kendall is a gifted intellect (Ph.D. Oxford), what makes him extraordinary is his unique ability to write devotionally and expositionally. This is illustrated when he writes, "What I want this book to do for you is to give you a hunger for more of God than you have ever had—with the hope your life will be transformed afresh" (p. 6).

Third, Kendall is very much grace-oriented. He poignantly writes, “To believe that you are saved by the death of Christ alone, there are not many people who really believe that. They say they do, and then insist that you need to have works to show it” (p. 64). He also makes a clear distinction between salvation and reward: “Salvation is by faith plus nothing; inheriting the promise is by faith plus patience” (p. 187).

Fourth, Kendall expresses great concern for believers who lack assurance. He writes: “I have been convinced for many years that it is the devil’s wish that Christians would always be bothered by the problem of whether they are saved, so that they will stay in that condition, and never be of any use to God. As long as people are still wondering whether they are saved, they are not going to do anything” (p. 111).

Finally, Kendall articulates his view of salvific repentance effectively. He suggests that repentance is “agreeing with God; it is saying, I was wrong; it is simply changing the way you were thinking, which leads to changing the way you were living” (p. 62). He adds, “repentance is renouncement. A renunciation of all that I thought would save me” (p. 63).

Although this book is exceptional, there are two doctrines that this reviewer would take exception to. For example, while discussing the “instructions about baptism” in Hebrews 6:2a, Kendall writes: “As for the time the baptism of the Spirit takes place, I think you can make the case that in some cases it takes place at conversion; and in many cases, probably most, it takes place after conversion” (p. 75). It would seem more likely that the accounts in the books of Acts are transitional in nature.

Throughout his entire work, Kendall remains true to the text and resolves difficulties that past interpreters have wrestled with. This book is one of the most spiritually challenging and exegetically insightful works that this reviewer has read.