

6:1-2 - "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 faith toward God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of the laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

The author extends an invitation to his readers to move on from the elementary teachings of the gospel message and on to maturity. The readers inability to meet the challenges of outsiders to their fundamental beliefs was their lack of growth in the foundational truths (Heb. 5:12-14). Teaching again the basics of these truths would be of no value. To successfully meet the challenges they faced they must advance in knowledge and application. 'Leaving these principles' in no way means forsaking them, but building upon them, and using them as a springboard to maturity.

For the most part, these were believers. They knew and believed the basic truths but could not successfully prove them when challenged. They could not discern the sometimes subtle differences between truth and heresy. Their faith was constantly being shaken.

Confident that the readers would heed his exhortations, the author implies that he will attempt to instruct them in the so-called meat of the gospel message. ('let us go ' or 'follow me unto maturity')

The author lists the fundamental doctrines on which the readers were probably being challenged. The aim of the outsiders was probably to get the Christian to doubt his security, convincing him something else was needed in addition to Jesus Christ. The most fundamental truth but the one most challenged, attacked, and misunderstood by the outsider is salvation by grace through faith.

*"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."*

I Cor. 1:18

The outward Christian ordinances here mentioned also had their Jewish counterparts. Within Judaism there were ceremonial washings and baptisms. Laying hands upon a sacrifice to identify with it was also a Jewish practice. The old testament does not deal with the resurrection from the dead or eternal judgment in any detail. Therefore many opinions existed within Judaism on these subjects.

*"For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both."*  
Acts 23:8

We are not told of the specific challenges to these doctrines with which the Christians struggled. We do know that the Judaizers incorporated the doctrines of Christ into a works system. Within a works system one can readily fall into and out of salvation. If the doctrines of the Judaizers were being considered the believers assurance of their security in Christ was being shaken.

**6:3 - "And this will we do, if God permit."**

The author states that he will lead them to maturity, teaching them the supporting truths behind their faith and beliefs. The author recognizes God is necessary in this undertaking. God will only permit it if the readers exercise their responsibilities, having a willing heart. (Heb. 11:6)

**6:4-5 - "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."**

An in depth definition of a Christian is presented for a two-fold purpose. The author's aim is to refute any type of works system, but he also gives the readers a model to compare themselves with to see whether they are in the faith. To be enlightened is to see and understand the truth of God. In many places it is synonymous with the conversion experience. (Heb. 10:32)

*"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*  
II Cor. 4:4

The heavenly gift is Jesus Christ. Those who being enlightened have accepted him and so are made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

*"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."*  
Psalms 34:8

*"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink,; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."*  
John 4:10

*"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the redemption of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*

*Acts 2:38*

The Christian has experienced the word of God, understanding it and being changed by it. This change has made him a citizen of heaven, giving him a glimpse of his destiny in Jesus Christ.

*"But it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

*I Cor. 2:9-14*

*"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."*

*Phil. 3:20*

So the Christian has come to view things in a different light. He has recognized Christ, accepted Him, and has been made a partaker of Christ through the Holy Ghost. He has come to love the word of God, recognizing its power, and has already experienced what will be his destiny in eternity.

**6:6 - "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 author uses a hypothetical statement to refute the ideas of a system based on works. When one comes to Christ he is identified with his death, burial, and resurrection. The finished work of Christ is applied to the believers account. The believer is a partaker of the righteousness of Christ. It is impossible for one to forfeit this position, for he is sealed with the Holy Spirit.

*"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."*

*II Cor. 1:22*

*"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."*

Eph. 1:13

*"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."*

Eph. 4:30

Being confronted by a works system, these Christians wavered in the area of eternal security. In response, the author examines the fallacy of a works system by supposing eternal security does not exist. Hypothetically, if a Christian could forfeit this standing as it is taught in a works system, it would be impossible for that man to be renewed unto salvation. In such a situation Christ would be crucified again on that individuals behalf. The sufficiency of the cross of Christ is denied. Christ's death would be in vain. The power of God to keep those that are his would be denied.

*"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."*

Gal. 2:21

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

I Peter 1:5

*"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."*

John 1:27-29

*"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Rom. 8:38-39

As further proof Christ cannot be put to shame, he offered his sacrifice once for all and is now glorified above measure, nothing being able to put him to shame.

*"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth:"*

Phil. 2:9-10

Any system based on works to any degree is successfully refuted. A man

cannot step into and out of salvation. It is impossible. If your good works ever outweighed your bad and you were in a 'saved' situation, if the scale ever went the other way you would be condemned forever.

**6:7-8 - "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."**

Based on the above logic, the question is not can I lose my salvation, but am I saved? To accompany the definition of a Christian already provided earlier, the author offers an illustration to provoke the readers to examine themselves. The true Christian takes in all the privileges of his Christianity. He grows in knowledge and grace. Just like good ground, making use of the rain and nutrients of the soil, he produces a good crop. There are some who profess to be Christians. The rain falls upon them, the nutrients are available, but only thorns and briers are produced. They hear the message, speak the same language, but are not renewed.

*"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour."* II Tim. 2:20

*"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* Matt. 7:15-23

**6:9 - "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though be thus speak."**

After giving them a stern warning in the previous verses to examine themselves as to whether they are believers, the author offers words of encouragement based upon his own observation of the readers. Calling them beloved (a term always used to refer to believers) the author states that he is convinced of their salvation. He believes, for the most part, they drink in the

rain and produce a good crop in accordance with the illustration given in verse 7.

**6:10 - "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."**

Continuing in his encouragement, the author points out what he believes are specific manifestations of their salvation. A true motive of love was exhibited in their dealings with each other. They acted in unselfishness, not expecting to be repaid, but strictly because of their love for Christ. (Heb. 10:32-34) If the author had observed these things, surely God will not forget. Even if they may sometimes doubt their salvation, God knows who are his and their works are blessed by him.

*"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."*

II Tim. 2:19

As further evidence of their salvation, they were continuing to minister to each other in the name of Christ, despite the challenges to their faith and the resulting doubts generated.

**6:11 - "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:"**

It is the author's desire that every individual in the church would display the same persistence in endeavoring to live a holy life characterized by good works. Full assurance is not given to us by God upon conversion, but is a result of continuing growth in knowledge and grace.

*"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."*

II Peter 1:10

Only by diligently pursuing the demands of their Christianity till the end of their lives would they attain the prize of full assurance, not having any doubts, but being fully established in their sure hope of heaven. Paul spoke directly to the Lord, he had visions, and was even caught up to the third heaven, but when his life was at an end, his assurance was a result of his persistent commitment to Christ.

*"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have*

*fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."*

II Tim. 4:6-8

No one can be living in sin and have assurance of salvation. This is a false assurance and not of God. The assurance of a believer is proportional to the consistency of his walk with Christ. The author simply states that if you want assurance, then grow in knowledge and grace, applying it to your life through a holy lifestyle, and greater assurance of salvation will be the result.

**6:12 - "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."**

The opposite of diligence is laziness, of which the author now warns them. Christianity is not for the lazy. All of the benefits of the Christian faith, of entering into rest, of true assurance, depend upon growth in the faith. (Heb. 4:11)

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

II Tim. 2:15

*"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."*

Phil. 2:12

These Christians were experiencing the doubt brought on by the challenges to their faith. They were learning first hand that a Christian cannot rest in simply the principles of the faith, but must grow in them to meet the challenges and experience the benefits. The readers are exhorted to be imitators of those who are patiently living and growing in the faith. These may have been individuals within their own fellowship or the great examples of the old testament given in chapter 11.

*"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."*

I Tim. 4:12

**6:13-15 - "For when God made promises to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear 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."**

Until you experience something, it is only a hope. How can one be absolutely sure of something he has never experienced, or be absolutely sure of something that is yet a hope?. The answer is faith. Hope can be sure through faith, and through patience hope becomes a reality. (Heb 11:1) The promises of God are sure for he cannot lie.

*"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."*

Titus 1:2

When men make a promise, they appeal to a greater being who will enforce the oath. God's promise is based upon his own character for there is not a greater being than God. His promises are secured by the very attributes and perfection of his nature.

Abraham is used as an example. In his life he demonstrated great faith and patience, thus obtaining the promise. Abraham was called by God to be the father of a great nation (Gen. 12:1-3). Even though he tried many times to force the hand of God, he still remained faithful. Against all human reasoning Isaac was born. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac he obeyed, believing God would still somehow fulfill the promise. Because of Abraham's faith, patience, and obedience, He was given full assurance that the promise would be fulfilled through the line of Isaac.

*"And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."*

Gen. 22:16-18

**6:16-18 - "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 shew 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:"**

God swore an oath not only for Abraham's benefit, but for all who would inherit the promises through faith. The readers, as well as we today, have witnessed over the centuries, the fulfilling of the promise made to Abraham.

We know that Jesus Christ is the vehicle through which all nations are blessed, and all who believe are the true descendants of Abraham who inherit the promises.

*"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."*  
Gal. 3:6-9

Men usually swore by God, thereby bringing upon themselves divine retribution if they do not follow through. This is a sign among men by which agreements are made. The argument is that if man appeals to God to establish the truth, how much more trustworthy is the oath of God himself. God's word is in itself truth. To further assure the heirs of the promise, God according to the custom of men, swore an oath to back up his word.

*"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."*  
John 17:17

The hope of the Christian is sure. The unchangeable promise is confirmed by the unchangeable oath. Not only unchangeable but true, for God cannot lie. Our assurance resets in the very nature of God.

*"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he not spoken, and shall he not make it good?"*  
Num. 23:19

*"And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent."*  
I Sam. 15:29

The Christian flees the false hope achieved by his own efforts, and grabs hold of the sure hope secured by the very promises and nature of God.

**6:19-20 - "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."**

After having rebuked the readers for their lack of growth, and proving to them the security which the gospel offers, the author comes back to the

subject of Christ as high priest. Christ entered into the presence of God and secured the promises for his brothers. (Heb 2:9-11)

Jesus Christ is the promise. Jesus Christ is our hope. He is the vehicle through which all nations of the earth are blessed. He sits at the right hand of the Father, sure and immovable for all eternity. He is our mediator and high priest. The sure hope of our salvation is an anchor to the believer in this world of trial and doubt.