

THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

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THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

One aspect of soteriology that has been a point of contention from nearly the beginning of the church is the aspect of the security of the believer. During the seminar offered by Bethany Divinity College and Seminary “Better Things By Faith II” the issue of eternal security (otherwise known as “Once Saved Always Saved”¹) was brought up during our study of the book of Hebrews. While most in attendance were of the same belief system the acknowledgement was made that there are some within the Church who believe that salvation can be lost and reclaimed, or simply lost out-right. It is true that there are some scriptures which seem to indicate the loss of salvation in the life of a truly born-again believer. However we also agree that there are certain passages of scripture which indicate that salvation, once gained by a sinful man by the grace of God, can not be lost and remains accounted to the once-sinner for the remainder of his earthly life and on through eternity. In his “Systematic Theology” Lewis Sperry Chafer relates the importance of this doctrine in the following way: “That the Scripture on this theme requires careful exposition to the end that it may not even seem to contradict itself is readily conceded, and this feature of this truth will not be overlooked. In such a consideration, a “verily, verily” should not be countermanded by an “if”. The words of certainty must stand as they appear on the Sacred Page.”² The scriptures must be presented as the final viewpoint and must serve as the final authority on our doctrines, faith, and practice. It is widely regarded that the difference in beliefs with regards to the effectiveness of salvation is actually a division between those who follow Calvinistic theology and those who follow Arminian theology. However this is not the case. There

¹ “Once Saved Always Saved” hereafter in this paper “OSAS”

² Systematic Theology Volume Three, “*Introduction To The Doctrine Of Security*”, Lewis Sperry Chafer (1948)

are many who, like myself, reject both Calvinism and Arminianism and see them as containing grievous errors in many regards. Therefore this paper will not tend to side with either of the theological divisions as they are commonly regarded. Rather we will appeal directly to the Scriptures to discover what the truth of this doctrine is, according to God's own inspired and living Word. The standard in determining the truth of this issue is that of applying a consistent hermeneutic. It is not in accordance with "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15) to simply explain away or ignore certain passages of scripture which seem at odds with our own dogma. Therefore it is necessary to not only show how a certain passage does not apply to a said principle, but to continue on with the seemingly contentious passage and show by careful and responsible exegesis what the passage, in truth, is speaking of. After all a text without a context is a pretext and almost all false teaching is based on a disregard of context, the use of isolated, so-called "proof texts" to support an unscriptural point of view.³ To this end we will deal with both sides of the argument and apply a consistent or responsible hermeneutic to passages which both support and seem to contradict the doctrine of OSAS. For the scope of this paper and in keeping with an acceptable length we will deal mainly with the verses cited in "Better Things by Faith II", namely Hebrews 6: 4-6.

³ Bible Explorer's Guide, "The Law of Context", John Phillips (1987)

Chapter One

Eternal Security Questioned

In discussions with those who believe that a Christian can lose his salvation we find that the arguments are supposedly based upon Scripture itself. Therefore it is necessary to present some of these scriptures to determine whether or not the doctrine is true. After all the mode of the Christian life is to live in the way in which Christ commanded, and for those of us who have been called to His service it is absolutely critical that we present only truth and not opinion. If we then strive for and are committed to the truth we must examine all relevant arguments to determine which are true and which are in error. Furthermore we must be ready to admit that the error belongs to us and thus change our position to rightly reflect the teaching of the Bible.

The verses that will be presented, which are often used to prove that salvation can be lost, are the verses which sparked this topic during the seminar "Better Things By Faith II". Hebrews 6:4-6 says, "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". These verses are interpreted to say that "those who were once enlightened" refers to the Christian, and that once this Christian has fallen away, it is impossible to bring him back or "renew them again unto repentance". If this is the case then surely we must understand that salvation is not absolutely secure; that in fact, there are some instances where a believer's salvation can be lost, or, better said, taken from him. In any contention over dogma the appeal to the Scriptures is that feature most worthy of candid consideration; for it will be admitted by

all who attempt to expound the Word of God that there are several passages which, when taken in what appears on the surface to be their meaning, do seem to imply that one once saved might be lost again.¹

Of the text in question there are five points found within verses 4 and 5 which are said to be a description of a saved person and therefore show that it is possible for a Christian to fall into a state of final apostasy. The five points are listed as follows:

1. “were once enlightened” v.4
2. “have tasted of the heavenly gift” v.4
3. “were made partakers of the Holy Ghost” v.4
4. “tasted the good word of God” v.5
5. “and [tasted or partook of] the powers of the world to come” v.5

The enlightenment here is said to refer to an enlightenment about Christ, the same enlightenment which those who are saved receive, and includes complete persuasion by the Holy Spirit that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. This enlightenment was not merely intellectual, but was embraced as such a Spirit-wrought view of Christ, His earthly Messiahship, and His resurrection that those faithful who received it and acted upon it continued in the doctrines of the Apostles. This is considered to be “the enlightenment” that produces salvation as a direct act of the Holy Ghost who reveals a Living Christ. The heavenly gift is called to be none other than salvation itself as found in Romans 6:23 “... the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” When we read that they were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, we understand that these people of whom the author speaks had the Holy Ghost within them. This portion is cross-referenced with passages such as Romans 8:9 “ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you...” There is no such thing as having a little of the Spirit. You either have Him or you do not, and those who have Him are

¹ Systematic Theology Volume III, “The Arminian View of Security”, Lewis Sperry Chafer (1948)

redeemed. To where some argue on the point of “tasting” against “having” to show that these were in fact not saved William Newell notes, “To insist that “tasting” was simply an intellectual experience, is absurd. If you are a guest at a table, and there is before you some article of food, of which you taste but do not eat, you do not say that your tasting was an intellectual process!”² So it follows that if these points are specifically presented to show that the selected audience are in fact true believers, salvation can be lost. Paul Enns relates this doctrine in the following way, “The doctrine of sin in Hebrews is fundamental to its theme of warning Hebrew Christians from lapsing into Judaism and thereby sinning against Christ. Thus in 6:4-6 a stern warning tells the Hebrew Christians that if they have once been enlightened and have become partakers of salvation and then fall away, it will be impossible for them to ever repent and be restored. God indicates He will confirm them in spiritual atrophy or babyhood if they return to Judaism; there will be no restoration for them.”³

² Hebrews Verse by Verse, William R. Newell (1947)

³ Moody Handbook of Theology, Theology of Hebrews, Paul Enns (1989)

Chapter Two

An Exegesis of Hebrews 6:4-6

The necessity of applying a consistent hermeneutic to Bible passages cannot be understated. Without consistent hermeneutic principles we can make the Bible say anything that we want it to say. If we take verses out of context we could even show that there is no God from the very pages of Scripture (see Psalm 14:1). It has long been the sad state of some religious cults to exist merely because someone began to interpret the Bible inconsistently or irresponsibly.¹

Another great tragedy of inconsistent hermeneutics is that we miss the truth as we search out proof texts which fit our dogma. Since all scripture is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16) it stands that when we misinterpret we miss the intended meaning and so begin to trace “rabbit trails” or lead ourselves to conclusions that are unscriptural and even possibly heretical. Therefore it is mandatory that we interpret scripture responsibly and consistently.

When approaching a portion of scripture, especially one such as Hebrews 6:4-6, it is important that we leave our dogma at the door. However, to say that we do not bring with us a framework as we sit down to study the Bible is in effect kidding ourselves. We are all subject to opinions as we come before the sacred Book. Culturally and doctrinally we consider the passages most often in light of what we believe rather than in a spirit of truth-seeking. We must learn to leave our dogma at the door and let the Word speak, regardless of what it might do to the shelter of our presuppositions. To truly gain from the Bible we must be at the very least willing to admit that we are wrong and be doubly willing to change our position or beliefs based upon what the Bible truly says. It is the

¹ John Phillips in his “Bible Explorer’s Guide” shows how the cult of Mormonism has formulated a doctrine of baptism for the dead based on a misinterpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:29. Pg. 108 “The Obscurity Rule”. There are several other such examples in most books that deal with cults or hermeneutics.

author's firm belief that if we strive to remain teachable we will reap great benefits from the Bible, much more so than when we strive only to prove our own doctrinal positions. So we must point out that the purpose in dealing with these passages in particular is not to prove our own doctrinal beliefs, or to disprove any others, but to apply a consistent hermeneutic to discover the truth. If this method should strengthen our position then it will have proven to be valuable, and if this method disproves our position it will have proven to be even more valuable.

What then does it mean to apply a consistent hermeneutic? We will refer to John Phillips' golden rule of Bible interpretation, "If the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense."² This alone is a good starting point for Biblical interpretation, however we must deal with passages that do not fit into the common sense rule. In the case where the common sense does not make sense we must move on to other means of understanding what has been written. In these next steps we will consult items such as ancient customs, cultures, the context of the passage, the audience to which or of whom it is written and so on. If we diligently apply these principles it becomes a consistent hermeneutic practice.

Our first consideration in dealing with this passage in the book of Hebrews should be what is called "the obscurity rule". This principle directs that obscure passages must give way to clear passages. We must not use obscure portions of scripture for the foundation of our doctrine. Everything essential to salvation or to Christian living is clearly revealed in the Bible. We have no need to resort to obscure passages to support a Biblical belief.³ This rule is a consideration for this passage in particular because it is definitely obscure. We term this obscure because it does not seem to fit the overall flow of the book and because it is such a debated passage. In research for this paper we have found at least three understandings of these verses. Even in reverting to the

² Bible Explorer's Guide, The Golden Rule, John Phillips (1987)

original languages there exists serious disagreement from a range of Biblical scholars.⁴ So in the very least we should not use this passage alone to prove a doctrinal position. Furthermore we can consider this passage as obscure due to the nature of the language. While some have presented conclusions as to whether or not these people of which the author speaks were saved, others have presented conclusions to the opposite. The language begs the question, Why so vague? If the author was truly speaking of the regenerate, why not simply state it as such. This passage is definitely a dire warning, so why, if it was directed to the redeemed, should it be written in such a manner as to require additional thought as to whom the described people are? This is a parenthetical passage and so does not necessarily have to fit the flow of the entire chapter or book, but if the author felt that such a warning needed to be inserted why use language that is apparently unclear (to even renowned scholars)?

Our second consideration in understanding this passage must come from the context in which it is found. There are essentially three levels of context which should be considered when interpreting the Bible. The immediate context takes into consideration the chapters and verses which immediately surround the passage. The context of the book itself (in which the passage is found) must also be examined. Finally the context of the entire Bible must be considered since truth has been revealed progressively. No one passage of scripture can be considered in isolation from other passages related to it.⁵ To understand these verses in their context we will first consider the context of the book itself. The book of Hebrews employs the theme of “better than” and seeks to present the new covenant and the new belief in Christ as better than that which came before. The audience to which the author speaks are Hebrews, and they are either believers, non-believers, or others who were in danger of slipping back into Judaism. So with this

³ Bible Explorer’s Guide, The Obscurity Rule, John Phillips (1987)

⁴ The Expositor’s Greek Testament, Volume Four, Editor – W. Robertson Nicoll (2002).

audience in mind the author employs contrasts and comparisons throughout the book. Moreover the author focuses on a series of contrasts between the good things of Judaism and the better things of Christ. Christ is “better” than angels, than Moses, than Joshua, than Aaron, and the New Covenant than the Mosaic Covenant.⁶ Since this portion of Scripture is parenthetical it is necessary to consider the text of the entire break, and the context of the passages before the parentheses and following the parentheses. The parentheses begin at verse eleven of chapter five, and should be considered as a preparation. In these verses the author explains that his audience have become “dull of hearing” (Hebrews 5:11), and although they “ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again” (Hebrews 5:12). Chapter six begins with an exhortation to move past the basics of the “doctrine of Christ” (Hebrews 6:1) in order to “go on unto perfection” (Hebrews 6:1). This refers to moving past a state of spiritual infancy and towards maturity. Directly following the warning verses (Hebrews 6:4-6) the author offers an allegory between those he has written of and the fruit of the land. The earth that brings forth herbs is blessed and the earth that produces thorns is cursed (Hebrews 6:7-8). The ninth verse is a key verse in understanding what is being said and who is being described. This verse begins with the phrase, “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you”. There are two keys to be seen here, the first being the word translated “but”. This word in the Greek is $\delta\epsilon$ (deh) and is a primary particle meaning “but”. This introduces a second side of the argument, a comparison or contrast. Even more interesting is the audience intended to receive this comparison. We find the next word is “beloved”, which indicates the saved. The word beloved is used in the New Testament only in reference to either Jesus (beloved Son, e.g. Mark 3:17), or to the saved (individually or corporately). The references to the beloved are too many to reproduce in this paper, but an example of this term is found in 1 Peter 4:12 “Beloved,

⁵ Bible Explorer’s Guide, The Rule of Context, John Phillips (1987)

think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you”.⁷ This shows a consistency with the theme and style of the entire book. The author has made a pronouncement about some and then contrasted it with the “better things” (Hebrews 6:9) for the genuinely saved. So where there has been a running contrast between certain aspects of the Old Covenant and then the New Covenant we now find a contrast between one group of people and a second group, namely the “beloved”. Therefore, the first group of whom is written the warning, cannot be the same as the “beloved” else there would be no contrast to be made. Since every saved child of God is “beloved”, these to whom the warning applies are not “beloved” and hence can not be counted as among the regenerate. This term of beloved also presents us a seeming lack of consistency in the letter, that is if we assume that those who fall away are believers. For why would the author not term those who fall away as the “beloved” since it is a term that he uses to identify the believers? It is not necessary to define who the beloved ones are; they are simply the beloved. They have entered into a state of sonship with God and have become His beloved. These others have not been termed the beloved and so the contrast is made.

The context of the book itself gives us an important indication as to who these people were and why the author felt the need to give this dire warning. From the title of the book it is plain to see that the audience was Hebrew people. The comparisons that run through the book are between Judaism and Christianity. Since this is the case we can understand that the audience is (at least partly) Hebrew people who are either still within Judaism or desiring to return thereto. So we must note that if the context of the book is towards Hebrew people who had a tendency to slip back into Judaism or at least a desire to, the conclusion that these who fall away are believers of all stripes is

⁶ The Original Scofield Reference Bible

⁷ For other uses of beloved see also (Acts 15:25; Romans 1:7; Romans 11:28; Romans 12:19; Romans 16:5; Romans 16:8; Romans 16:9; Romans 16:12; 1 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Corinthians 4:17) and more.

inconsistent. To insert a general warning for all saved believers, whether Jew or Greek, in this letter to the Hebrews does not fit the context nor does it make sense. While we understand that Scripture has a multitude of applications we must also admit that it contains only one interpretation or meaning. In this case the author is warning those who have heard the good word of the Gospel, had tasted of the good word and the heavenly gift etc., and have turned back again. Another distinction could be made here on the case of those who heard the good word of God. Truly there are many who have heard this good word and have rejected it outright. Therefore it is not consistent to assume that hearing is synonymous with believing. There are many cases within the Bible where some have heard yet walked away: such as Jesus' own disciples who, having heard His teaching on the bread of life, "... went back and walked with him no more" (John 6:66).

If we consider the last portion of verse six, "... seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" we can gather further evidence that shows these people were not the truly saved. The great damage which is done to the church by apostates is in exposing Christ to an open shame. These are the pictures of the seeds that fell amongst the rocks or the thorns in the parable of the sower (see Luke 8:5-15). These did spring up for a time but eventually were choked out because they had no foundation, no moisture. When we witness this practically it is clear how this kind of act puts Christ to an open shame. How many books have been written by those who "used to be Christians", how many times do we see mockers who "used to be" Christians? These, when they enter into the public dominion, which seems to be inevitable, always seek to put down Christianity or Christ. They cause a shame upon the church and are a stumbling block to those who would believe. We are often too eager to make decisions based upon the experiences of others. So if John Smith down the street used to go to church, but now spends his Sundays drinking on the front porch and calling out profanities to passersby, does this not show that Christianity does not "work"?

These apostates put Christ to shame, they demean His sacrifice by presenting, to those around them, the idea or the witness that Christ was insufficient to change a life. This causes a great shame upon the church. It is for this cause, and an innumerable count of other such experiences, that we stand firm on our faith and rely on the Bible alone as our test for truth in all matters of faith and practice. Experiences are deceiving and it is possible that some could attend Gospel meetings, could like what they hear and so attend church for a period of time but eventually fall away. During the time that they attended they would have partaken of the good word and seen the regenerated lives of true believers around them, yet for whatever reason they never came to that place themselves. This does not indicate that a true believer can lose salvation, it only shows that there are those amongst us who have never believed and should they turn back, their lives will put Christ to an open shame. The Bible itself teaches us that amongst the true believers there were always false prophets, 2 Peter tells us "...But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you" (2 Peter 2:1). And if there be false prophets how much more false believers, or at least people who dwell amongst us who have yet to come to the foot of the cross? Sadly, many. So the preceding illustration furnishes an application for this passage, but the fact is clear that the intended audience was Hebrews who slipped back into Judaism and had never had the life altering change that comes with Salvation. We find in many writings that the Jewish believers habitually tried to marry the Law and the New Covenant. In fact there was a severe disagreement between Peter and Paul on this very issue when Peter had separated himself from the Gentile believers (cf. Galatians 2:11). In another case Peter had to be shown directly in a vision from the Lord that God had made things new and there was no uncleanness any longer (cf. Acts 11). The council at Jerusalem was convened to solve the issue of whether or not Gentile believers must be circumcised. This on-going issue amongst the Hebrew Christians gave great cause towards the

writing of this book. It is not unreasonable to conclude from the historical context that the author needed to instruct those who were Hebrew Christians against returning to the Law. Further that those who were amongst the Hebrew Christians not slip back but see the better things of Christ and submit to Him in truth, once for all.

To interpret that these are Christians also contradicts a doctrine which is set forth in the book of Hebrews itself. It is important to note that this parenthetical passage is bracketed by the doctrine of Christ as the better High Priest, the comparison of Christ as a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. If the author is seeking to instruct his audience on the everlasting nature of the priesthood of Christ, why would he confront his readers with a teaching on the not-everlasting nature of the gift bestowed by Christ? It does not fit the context. The very idea in fact directly contradicts the author's teaching of Christ as a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Unfortunately space does not permit that we delve too deeply into this area of the exegesis however one example of the contradiction that arises can be shown. If we continue on into chapter seven we find the doctrine of the priesthood of Christ as being an everlasting priesthood. This priesthood is superior to that priesthood given by the Law. Christ is eternal and the Levitical priests were temporal. Hebrews 7:24 tells us, "But this man [Christ], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." So Christ in His priesthood continues forever, but the implication of this everlasting priesthood is given in the very next verse; Hebrews 7:25 "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Here the author shows us that Christ saves us to the "uttermost"^{**} which is to say the "absolute end" or the "final destination" because He eternally lives to make intercession for those who believe. In showing the superiority of Christ's priesthood the author presents the doctrine of OSAS.

^{**} *πᾶντελος* Strong's 3838 (unto completeness, all-complete, perfect, completely, perfectly, utterly)

By this we can conclude that by no means does the author intend to teach (in the very same letter no less) that truly saved individuals can lose their salvation.

A consistent hermeneutic when applied to this passage of the Bible shows that these who could fall away were not in fact Christians. To report them as Christians is inconsistent with the context of the book, with the style of the book, with the language used, and with the historical background. So while in application we must announce this dire warning to those who are fence-sitters we must also be responsible to not instruct believers that they can indeed lose their salvation.

Chapter Three

Eternal Security Confirmed

In applying a consistent hermeneutic we discovered that the author was not referring to saved people as being able to fall away. He was showing the grievous error of those who were coming to the cusp so to speak, yet not committing to the Lord. Of these, who fell back into Judaism (or truly who fall back now into any other form of religion) it is impossible to bring them to repentance again. The author does not say that it is impossible for them to be saved, to eisegete that into the verse introduces the worst kind of error, the error of limiting the power of God. Jesus told us “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). Theologically the only thing that is impossible for God to do is to deny His Word. This is not an impossibility because of a limit upon the power of God, but it is an impossibility because of the righteousness of God. In his epistle to Titus the Apostle Paul writes, “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;” (Titus 1:2). This verse shows us not only that God cannot lie but also that eternal life was promised to us by God who cannot lie. If eternal life is promised by God, and God cannot lie how could we ever lose our eternal life? We simply could not, and we can rest assured that our eternal life is secure because it is promised to us by God, who again does not lie.

One consideration that must be faced is the means by which we could lose our salvation. The only answer that is even remotely possible is sin; since it is sin alone which separates from God (Romans 6:23). Those who support the doctrine that salvation can be lost would not suggest that it is the common sins such as all Christians commit which cause salvation to be lost. But rather it is rather some great and terrible

sin(s) which cause our salvation to be lost.¹This presents a great problem from a Biblical perspective because it supposes that there are some sins that have not been washed away, or that cannot be washed away. This is in stark contradiction to the passage that we examined at Hebrews 7:25 which teaches that Christ secures salvation to “the uttermost” and that He “ever liveth to make intercession for them.” If Christ is ever living and ever interceding how is it that there are some sins for which He does not intercede? This is not a biblical teaching. We must also consider Romans 8:1 which instructs that, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” If there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus then there is clearly no sin that could have the power of condemnation that would be required to remove us from being in Him. Consider also the teaching of the tenth chapter of Hebrews which runs a comparison between the sacrificial system of the Old Testament and the Supreme sacrifice of the New Covenant. In Hebrews 10:10 we are told, “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” So if we are sanctified through this offering once for all there is no second working of sanctification. This sacrifice is accounted once and finally. The Old Covenant required a continual sacrifice but the New Covenant presents a sacrifice that is sufficient for all sins past, present, and future. Christ then replaces the covering which was offered in the Old Testament. If then a sacrifice has already been made for our sins of the future and we are seen through the blood of Christ, there is no sin which can remove us from our position in Him.

Ultimately those who believe that salvation can be lost usually appeal more to experience and reason than to the testimony of the Bible. When turning to experience it is often recounted that some individual has first been a Christian and then, later, became unsaved; but in every such instance two unsupportable assumptions appear. First it can

¹ Systematic Theology Volume III, Lewis Sperry Chafer

never be demonstrated that the person named was saved in the first place, nor could it be established that he was unsaved in the second place. These are two impossibilities for any to know. The author does not support the labeling of such people as never Christians. For how could anyone besides the person and the Lord truly know? If the person was truly saved then they still are and God will work on their hearts. The life of a Christian does not include a maintenance of salvation. You can no more lose your salvation than you could ever gain it in the first place. The only thing which a Christian can lose is the rewards of works. Paul instructs on this doctrine in his first letter to the Church at Corinth in this way, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:15). Here Paul shows us that what we do after salvation is a matter of heavenly rewards and we will either have rewards that have everlasting value or we will have rewards that are consumed and valueless. Note especially that Paul clarifies that salvation is secure, even in the case of a believer with perishable works the apostle says, "but he himself shall be saved". So it is even in the life of a Christian who does nothing (has no works with everlasting value) that salvation is secure.

The doctrine of OSAS is a clear teaching of the Bible. It is a necessary idea for the believer to understand because within this doctrine is revealed the perfect will of God. There are too many verses in the Bible which show the truth of this doctrine to expound upon in this paper. This doctrine is critical to the believer because without it there is always the idea that one must somehow maintain their salvation. In this way they begin to follow a system of maintenance works, which is a form of salvific works, which is utterly anti-Biblical. Salvation is a gift, and it can not be taken away. We are adopted by God and are His sons, there is nothing that an adopted child can do that would unadopt him. Jesus himself presented the doctrine of OSAS in the Gospel of John. Speaking of those who are saved Christ says, "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 10:29). The Greek word for pluck here is ἁρπαζο²(har-pad'-zo) and is a derived word which means to seize and take by force, the idea is of a petal being plucked from a flower. In order to pluck a believer from the Father's hand, the external element would have to be stronger than the Hand in which the believer rests, and there is no hand such as that.

² Strong's 726

Conclusion

The object of this paper was to determine whether or not the passage from Hebrews chapter six as discussed during the seminar “Better Things by Faith II” showed that true believers can lose their faith.

In applying a consistent hermeneutic we discovered that the idea that those who fall away are Christians is inconsistent with the immediate context, language, historical context, teachings of the book, and the context of the whole Bible. Additionally we find that this passage fits the mold of an obscure passage, and so should not be used as a doctrinal foundation.

There is, however, a grave danger to those who come to certain experiences and assents about Christ and yet fall back into their old lives without ever being saved.

Finally we considered the doctrine of the security of the believer. In that section we found that there is nothing in existence which could cause us to lose our salvation. Christ is the ever living and ever-interceding Lord of our lives. He provides for us eternal life and there is nothing that can remove us from the hands of the Father. The only danger to the believer is that he will commit works during his earthly life which will not have an everlasting value. Even so, if the works are insufficient, salvation is sufficient unto life everlasting. With a firm understanding of this doctrine the believer need never consider his own salvation again. Rather, understanding that he is secure, he can turn his focus outward and strive to reach others for Christ. To believe that you can lose your salvation is not the walk of an overcomer, it is the walk of the overcoming. You can no more lose your salvation than you could ever attain it by your own works in the first place: “Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”

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