THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

"Productive Faith"

Hebrews 6:9-12

Introduction

1. There is no salvation in the Bible which is not entirely by grace through faith (Ro. 11:6). This enforces the truth that salvation is all of God (Ps. 3:8). It is a wonderful truth and brings to the heart a confidence which would not be possible were salvation a work of man.

2. Eternal security is not some doctrine of man, but an eternal truth of the Word of God. Anyone who has been truly born again of God's Spirit is saved forever (Jn 3:16; 10:28, 29; Phil. 1:6; Eph. 1:13, 14; 1 Jn 5:13). Many lack assurance of salvation, but this does not alter the truth of the Word. The doctrine of eternal security is Biblical; the assurance of it is the personal experience of the believer based on the promises.

3. What then does one do with warnings in the Bible? They are provided to disturb those who make professions without true possessions! The present section gives a severe warning: It is one of many in the Epistle (cf. 2:1-4; 3:7 – 4:10; 10:26-39). Furthermore, there are other warnings in the Bible (Jn 15:2, 3; Ro. 8:12; 13; 11:21, 22). Warnings in the Bible are given to a mixed multitude, that is, some are saved and some unsaved (cf. 1 Thess. 1:4 with 3:5, 6; 2 Tim. 2:19). But the warning is there to separate the true from the false. Give heed to them with sincerity!

4. From this present section (5:11 – 6:20), it has been shown that many among the Hebrews had not gone on to maturity. Therefore, doctrinal truths concerning Melchisedec could not be taught. Strengthened by this fact, the apostle appeals for a movement forward (6:1-3). He shows that persons who have truly accepted the Lord yield fruit evidencing their true faith (6:4-8). If one turns from the truths of the Gospel which he has professed (but not possessed!), he turns from that which alone can save him. There is no other plan of God for salvation. He is, therefore, giving evidence of apostasy.

5. There are major considerations to be remembered in studying this passage. Here are some of them:

a. The "for" (γέφυρα, v. 4) continues the subject of maturity vs. immaturity (5:11 – 6:3).

b. Real belief is involved in the statements of the Bible (vv. 4, 5). True, the items are not sufficient for salvation without the accompanying fruit, but true salvation includes all of these matters.

c. The force of "impossible" (εξαντληθέντος) must not be lost. The thought of backsliding is not evident here, but deliberate apostasy. The impossibility is true in every respect. God has but one way of gestating His children – the blood of Christ. Turn from this and what do you have!!

d. The change of tenses from aorists (vv. 4, 5) to present (v. 6) show persistence in apostate action (cf. 1 Jn 3:8-10; 5:18).

e. The conditional aspect of the participle "fall away" (παραπεσόντος) must be acknowledged indicating that the matter suggested is hypothetical.

f. The use of the third person pronouns "they, those, them," is in contrast with "you" (v. 9) underscores the hypothetical nature of the passage.

Note: All of the above affirms that should one profess to know the Lord and then turn from the sole means of salvation persistently, he cannot get saved! He bears "briars and thorns." He is ready for burning! What an awful end. But there is good news here about the Hebrews. Study it with these three verses of Paul:-

1. A PERSUASION v. 9

a. Designated

Contrary to the profession of apostasy, Paul shows that there is a remnant according to grace. There are those whom he may call "beloved" (φίλους, v. 11) who, though they have not "fallen away," are not lost. This persuasion, a verb in the perfect tense (παρεπεσμένοι) noting that a past hesitation about them has been overcome. Now he has a settled condition concerning them. There is a better state of things relating to them in contrast with the hypothetical persons of the previous verses.

b. Defined

The better things about which he has a persuasion relate to "salvation." At least 50 times this word (σωτηρίας) is used in the N.T. of eternal deliverance. The present tense verb "accompany" (ἐπεχειροῦντες) is used over 600 times in the N.T. and means things "holding on" to salvation or "connected with" salvation. It is a Greek idiom meaning that Paul feels the Hebrews who are saved will truly heed and enjoy all that is attached to the saved condition! This, in spite of the fact that he has spoken so strongly about mere professors of the Lord.

2. A PROFESSION v. 10

a. Demonstrated

It is precious to read that God is not "unrighteous to forget . . . " (σεπετος) . . . (περί 
ημών) ou gar adikos . . . or epilathethai ). He is not faithless to His promises and engagements in Christ. He can be counted upon. The sum total of the believer's life is suggested by the words "work and labour" (ὁργων . . . κοπας . . . έργου . . . κοπου) . It all sprang from love (δύναμις) ! This is proof of true salvation (cf. 1 Thess. 1:8-10; James 2:14-26).

b. Directed

Ah, here is an important factor. The work and labour were "toward His Name" (εις ονόματος αυτοῦ) . This is totally unlike the professor who is apostate (cf. v. 6). This is true direction for spiritual labour.

c. Determined

It is helpful to see the change in tenses here. One is aorist (διακρύβων αντικειμένων) and the other is present (διακοσμούντων) . Paul could write (v. 9) as he did because right up to the present evidence was being given of true faith. Blessed that God sees these things and acclaims them as evidence of vital and true salvation.

3. A PROGRESSION vv. 11, 12

a. Desired

The verb "desire" (ἐδιδόσασθαι) is a strong and enhanced one. Here is a clarion call for spiritual vitality and rejection of spiritual inertia. What he has seen in some, he longs to see in "each one of you" (αυτός αὐτόν), not just an individual, but strong individualism. The goal is to demonstrate what true believers were showing (cf. same verb in v. 10).

b. Definite

There just is no soundness to the thinking that a person who professes conversion through faith in Christ is saved. It is the end which counts! So here, the verb "full assurance" (πεπείθομαι) comes from a root meaning to "bring full," hence, "complete or satisfy." There is to be a satisfaction right up to the end! This was being shown by some (v. 10).

c. Detailed

Here is the appeal. The verb "be" (γένοιτο, a present), is an aorist subjunctive and of a verb meaning to "become." The condition of some was not yet determined (cf. v. 9). Thus, the appeal to do something about it. The thought of "slothful" is well known here (cf. 5:11). Oh, to see some who would rise up and be "followers" (μιμητοι) which in Greek is the word "imitators." Of what? "Faith and patience" (πίστισις και μακροθυμίας) are to be the standard. Faith does not inherit the promises without the patience! "Patience" is from a word meaning "length of spirit." Longsuffering (patience) is predicated of faith and is not an independent quality. "Promises" (πεπειθομένως) is everything related to Messiah and the Gospel.

Conclusion True vital living saving faith will give strong evidence of its true quality. Let those who say they have it, take heed. If not, what then? Amen.