

CHAPTER SIX

CHRIST'S MINISTRY IS MORE EXCELLENT THAN THE LEVITICAL PRIESTS' MINISTRY 4:14 - 7:28

Hebrews 6 and 7 is a continuation of the subject that Christ has a more excellent ministry than the Levitical priests. It has been shown that believers should hold fast their confession (4:14-16). Furthermore, the office of high priest has been described (5:1-4), and it has been revealed that Christ is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (5:5-10). There follows an appeal and a warning begun in 5:11-14 and continuing through 6:12. After this warning Christ will be shown to be the believer's forerunner within the veil (6:13-20).

6:1-12. An Appeal and Warning Is Given

An appeal and warning begun in 5:11 continues through 6:12. The readers need to be certain that they have been genuinely born again. Although they have been saved long enough to be teachers of others, they are spiritually insensitive. Their need for spiritual milk rather than for solid spiritual food demonstrates that they are unskillful in the word of righteousness. They need to understand where they are in their Christian lives and then move on from there to maturity. There is no need to lay again a foundation of Judaism; they need to go on to maturity in Christ.

(1) 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 of faith toward God,
(2) Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.
(3) And this will we do, if God permit.
(4) 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,
(5) And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,
(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.
(7) 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:
(8) But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned.
(9) But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.
(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.
(11) And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

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(12) That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

6:1

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 of faith toward God.

Therefore introduces a strong inference and means *wherefore* or *for this reason* and refers to the fact that these believers to whom Hebrews is written need to move on in their Christian lives. **Leaving** is a participle used to modify *let us go on* and is used to indicate time or a circumstance which occurs in addition to their going on unto perfection. Its tense indicates that the time of their *leaving* takes place before their *going on*. *Leaving*, when used figuratively as here, means *giving up* or *abandoning*. If used to show time, then *leaving* is to be understood in the sense of *after we have left*, *after we have given up*, or *after we have abandoned*. On the other hand, if *leaving* is used to show an attendant, an additional, or an accompanying circumstance or fact in addition to that of *let us go on*, then it should be understood in the sense of *let us leave . . . and (let us) go on*, *let us abandon . . . and (let us) go on*, or *let us give up . . . and (let us) go on*. That which is to be left is **the principles of the doctrine of Christ**. This is *the subject under discussion of the Messiah* or *the word of the elementary teaching of the Messiah*. **Christ** is the Greek term equivalent to the Hebrew term *Messiah*, and both mean *Anointed One*. *The* appears before *Christ* in the Greek text. Hence, the reference is to *the Christ, the Messiah, or the Anointed One*. Here **the doctrine** means *the word* and is used in the sense of *the subject under discussion* or *the matter under discussion* and is particularly *the subject under discussion of the beginning of the Messiah*. It is not referring to the elements of salvation; instead, it is referring to Old Testament Judaism, the proper teaching of which prepared the way for the entrance of the Messiah. It is not to be confused with the abuses of the teaching of the Old Testament brought about by the scribes, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees. **Let us go on** is an

exhortation suggesting that believers should *move on*, and **unto perfection** indicates that unto which they are to go. **Perfection** is *completion* or *maturity* in contrast to an elementary stage of knowledge. In other words, these are saved people. Abandoning Christianity and going back into the things of the Old Testament which anticipated or pointed toward Christianity is not the answer to their present difficulties. However, going on to full maturity in Christ *is* the answer. Christ or Messiah has already come. Believers need to stop looking back, and they need to be both looking ahead and going on to Christian maturity. Too many Christians are content to praise God for their salvation but are unwilling to discipline themselves in the study of the Scriptures and to pursue godliness.

Not laying again is another participle used to describe *let us go on* and is used with *foundation*. Believers are not to lay down the same foundation which has already been laid because that foundation is still there. The truths taught in Old Testament Judaism have not changed. The difference is that the Messiah has now come, and people are no longer to be involving themselves in building the base or foundation when the erection of the actual building has already begun on that foundation. The time for the foundation is past; believers should not go back to working on it again; instead, they need to work on the building and complete it. **Not laying** is used to indicate a circumstance which occurs together with that of *let us go on*. Taken together they are understood in the sense of *let us go on and let us not lay*. The present tense of *laying* indicates something which goes on continuously. Hence, these Hebrews were still laying a foundation. When negated, it suggests that an activity already in progress should be stopped. Thus, this exhortation is understood to mean *let us stop laying* or *let us not continue laying*. **Again** suggests *once more* or *anew*. The problem is that **the foundation** has already been laid; it does not need to be laid another time. To lay this foundation again would constitute returning to Judaism and abandoning Christianity, and the only reason one would really do this would be because he had concluded that Christ and Christianity were not what he had thought they were and was completely rejecting or repudiating both Christ and Christianity with no intention of ever

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changing his mind. *The* does not appear with *foundation* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *foundation*.

This foundation is then described by several phrases in verses 1 and 2. All of these refer to things which were characteristic of Judaism as foundational to Christianity. Although at first glance some may appear to be things characteristic of the New Testament, all are best understood as Old Testament truths. It should not be surprising that nearly all of these things are also found in New Testament Christianity because the Old Testament is the foundation for the New Testament. Someone has wisely said that the New (Testament) is in the Old (Testament) concealed, and the Old (Testament) is in the New (Testament) revealed. First, they were no longer to be laying a foundation **of repentance from dead works**. **Repentance** is literally a *change of mind* or a *remorse*, and it is in particular a change of mind from **dead works** which the writer intends. These works are described as being *dead*. *The* does not appear with *repentance* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *repentance*. **From dead works** is literally *away from dead works*. It is not necessary to lay a foundation of changing one's mind regarding dead works. Although he depended on these prior to receiving Christ as his Savior, he no longer depends on them now. Judaism was filled with works which are regarded as dead now that Christ has come and has fulfilled the Old Testament types. *The* does not appear with *works* in the Greek text in order to emphasize their quality as *works*.

He is also no longer to be laying a foundation **of faith toward God**. **Faith** is *trust*, and **faith toward God** suggests *trust in God* or *trust exercised toward God*. In Judaism trust was in God generally; but in the New Testament trust is placed particularly in God's revelation regarding Jesus Christ and His provision for salvation. *The* does not appear with *faith* or with *God* in the Greek text in order to emphasize their respective qualities as *faith* and as *God*.

6:2

Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of

eternal judgment. The next foundation believers should no longer be laying is **the doctrine of baptisms**. **The doctrine** is *the teaching* or *the instruction*. **Baptisms** is not the word ordinarily translated *baptism* in the New Testament; instead, it is a word for *washings* and refers to the symbolical washings that the priests would go through rather than referring to believer's baptism found in the New Testament era. Believers no longer need symbolic cleansing because they have been actually cleansed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. *The* does not appear with *doctrine* or with *baptisms* in the Greek text in order to emphasize their respective qualities as *doctrine*, *teaching*, or *instruction* and as *baptisms* or *washings*.

A fourth foundation believers should no longer be laying is **the laying on of hands**. It is reminiscent of the laying of the hand upon the head of the burnt offering in Leviticus 1:4 as well as other sacrifices where the laying on of the offerer's hand signified the offerer's identification with his offering and his acceptance. *The* does not appear with the word translated *laying on* or with *hands* in the Greek text in order to emphasize their respective qualities as *laying on* and as *hands*. This is also characteristic of Judaism. Jesus was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. Now that He has died, these sacrifices taught in the Old Testament no longer need to be offered. Jesus paid for sin once and for all time.

A fifth foundation believers should no longer be laying is **the resurrection of the dead**. Judaism believed that the dead would rise again. *The* does not appear with *resurrection* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *resurrection*.

Finally, believers should no longer be laying a foundation of **eternal judgment**. Judaism believed in an eternal judgment. *The* does not appear with *judgment* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *judgment*. However, it is time to move away from all of these things, and it is time to go on to maturity in Christ.

6:3

And this will we do, if God permit. **And** indicates a continuation of the thought of the previous verses. **This** refers to the contents of

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verses 1 and 2, i.e. of leaving the principles of the doctrine of the Christ or of the Messiah, of going on unto perfection, and of not laying again a foundation which no longer needs to be laid. **Will we do** indicates the writer's resolve. **If** is *if indeed, if only, or supposing that*; and **God** is God the Father. **Permit** suggests *allows*. If God allows one to go on, he must.

6:4

Verses 4-6 are not the simplest verses to understand in the New Testament, but they must be taken in the light of Scripture, which clearly teaches that man is eternally saved when he places his trust in Christ as Savior and will never lose this salvation under any circumstances. Whatever verses 4-6 mean, they do not contradict the fact that the Bible teaches the eternal security of the believer because God was not confused when He inspired the Bible. These verses do not mean that one may lose his salvation. The reader should remind himself of the foundation for eternal security clearly taught in the New Testament. John 10:27-30 says,

- (27) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
- (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.
- (29) My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.
- (30) I and *my* Father are one.

Romans 5:1-11 says,

- (1) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
- (2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- (3) And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
- (4) And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

- (5) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.
- (6) For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
- (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.
- (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
- (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.
- (11) And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Romans 8:29-39 says,

- (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
- (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.
- (31) What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?
- (32) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?
- (33) Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.
- (34) Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.
- (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
- (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are

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killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

(37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

(38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

(39) 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.

Philippians 1:6 says,

(6) Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

I Peter 1:3-5 says,

(3) Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

(4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

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

The Scriptures clearly teach the eternal security of one who has been genuinely saved. Furthermore, the change of person in the pronoun *we* in verse 3 to *those, they, and them* in verses 4-8 is instructive. It suggests that the writer does not include himself in this group. He knows that he himself is saved, but he is also aware that some of his readers may not be. He is not dealing with the unscriptural concept that some genuinely saved persons may lose their salvation. He is dealing with the Scriptural concept that some who are genuinely unsaved but who profess Christ may conclude that Christ and Christianity are incorrect and that Christ deserved to be crucified and consequently fully, completely, and finally reject Christ and Christianity. *Those, they,*

and *them* in verses 4-8 are also clearly distinguished from *you, your,* and *ye* in verses 9-12. In verses 9-10, the writer writes,

(9) But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

(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.

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.*

For introduces the reason why it will do no good to lay this same foundation over again. ***It is impossible*** gives the verb and an adjective describing the subject of the verb. However, it does not indicate what the subject of this verb is. The sentence continues through verse 6, and the subject of *is* is the phrase in verse 6 *to renew them again unto repentance*. Thus, the main thought expressed in verses 4-6 is *to renew them again unto repentance is impossible*. For specific comments on *to renew them again unto repentance* the reader should consult the comments on verse 6.

Impossible means that something cannot be done. That which is impossible to do is *to renew them again unto repentance* from verse 6. The text does not indicate for whom this is impossible, but it is best understood as being impossible for humanity to do rather than for God to do. It is impossible from the standpoint that these persons have taken up a set position against Christ believing that He deserved to die, and; even if God would allow them to change their minds, they are not about to do so. *Impossible* cannot be softened to mean *difficult* as some would do. This would be impossible. **For those** refers to people *who were once enlightened, . . . (who) have tasted of the heavenly gift, . . . (who) have tasted the good word of God, . . . (who have tasted) the powers of the world to come, (and who) . . . shall fall away.* All of these things, rather than just one or two of them, must be true of all those under discussion. **Who were once enlightened** suggests *who were once illuminated*. It is a term

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which literally means to *give light to*, to *light up*, or to *illuminate*. When used figuratively as it is here, it means to *enlighten*, *give light to*, or *shed light upon*. In other words, they understood the gospel message; but they did not necessarily exercise saving faith in it. They may have had a *head knowledge* rather than a *heart knowledge* of the gospel. The light with which they were illuminated is the light of the gospel.

Not only have these been enlightened, they also **have tasted of the heavenly gift**. To *taste* means to *partake of* or to *enjoy* when used literally; and, when used figuratively as it is here, it means to *come to know something*. These people have come to know **the heavenly gift**. In other words, they have been the beneficiaries of some spiritual truth.

Furthermore, they **were made partakers of the Holy Ghost**. **Partakers** are *sharers*, *participants*, or *companions*. The same term is translated *fellows* in Hebrews 1:9. What they shared in was the Holy Ghost. Whether they were genuinely saved is open to question. They had at least been close enough to Christianity that they were able to enjoy some of the benefits of God's blessings. *The* does not appear with *partakers* in the Greek text in order to emphasize their quality as *partakers*, as *sharers*, as *participants*, or as *companions*.

6:5

Furthermore, these persons are described by **and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come**. **Have tasted** is the same word already used in verse 4 meaning literally to *taste*, to *partake of*, or to *enjoy*; and, when used figuratively as it is here, it means to *come to know something*. What they have come to know is **the good word of God**. **Word** here is *that which is said*, a *saying*, or an *expression*. *The* does not appear with *word* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *word*, as *saying*, or as *expression*. They have come to know that the word of God is **good**, i.e. *beneficial*, *useful*, or perhaps even *right*.

They have also tasted **the powers of the world to come**. By **powers** the writer means *outward expressions of power* or *deeds of power*. These are miracles or wonders of the coming world. *The* does

not appear with *powers* in the Greek text in order to emphasize their quality as *powers* or as *deeds of power*. **The world to come** is *the coming age*. *The* does not appear with *world* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *world*. The idea is that these people had witnessed certain miracles, and they knew them to be miracles.

6:6

If they shall fall away is literally *and having fallen away*. It is a participle used to describe *is* that has been supplied in verse 4. It may be conditional, but it may also be used to express an accompanying circumstance in addition to that of *is*. If it is conditional, then it should be understood in the sense of *if they shall fall away* as it has been translated in the King James Version. If, on the other hand, it is used to express an accompanying circumstance in addition to that of *is*, then it suggests *and they fall away*. To **fall away** means to *fall beside*, to *go astray*, to *miss*, or to *commit apostasy*. The context of Hebrews suggests that the falling away is the complete and final rejection of salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross at Calvary. It is the result of having an evil heart of unbelief (Cf. Hebrews 3:12). What is impossible is **to renew them again unto repentance** where **to renew** means *to restore*. **Again** is *once more* or *anew*. **Unto repentance** is *unto a change of mind*, *unto a remorse*, *unto a turning about*, or *unto a conversion*. *The* does not appear with *repentance* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *repentance*. The reason it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance is indicated by the phrase **seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame**. **Seeing they crucify . . . afresh** is the translation of a participle which means to *crucify* or to *crucify again*. It is used as an adverb to modify *is* that has been supplied in verse 4, and it is used to show cause or an accompanying circumstance in addition to that of *is*. If it is used to show cause, then it is to be understood in the sense of *because they crucify*, *because they crucify again*, *inasmuch as they crucify*, *inasmuch as they crucify again*, *since they crucify*, or *since they crucify again*. If it is used to show an accompanying

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circumstance in addition to that of *is*, then it is to be understood in the sense of *and they crucify* or *and they crucify again*. **To themselves** is *for themselves* and suggests *as far as they are concerned*. **The Son of God** is the Lord Jesus Christ and serves as a reminder that He is the Messiah. John showed the Jewish thinking on the subject of the Messiah being the Son of God in John 20:30-31 where he stated that his purpose in writing was that his readers *might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*. **And put him to an open shame** is another participle which is used adverbially modifying *is* from verse 4, and its present tense indicates an activity going on at the same time as *is*. This participle is also used to indicate cause or an accompanying circumstance in addition to that of *is*. If it is used to show cause, then it is to be understood in the sense of *because they put him to an open shame, inasmuch as they put him to an open shame, or since they put him to an open shame*. If it is used to show an accompanying circumstance in addition to that of *is*, then it is to be understood in the sense of *and they put him to an open shame*. **To put to an open shame** can mean to *make a public example of* such as by punishment. However, it can also be understood with no idea of punishment in the sense of to *expose, to make an example of, or to hold up to contempt*. It means that this person has judged that the things he has heard and seen about Christ are not so, and it means that he is agreeing with those who crucified the Lord Jesus Christ and has concluded that Christ really deserved what happened to Him on the cross. It is not just a hypothetical situation. Although this individual has been taught the truths regarding the Messiah, He treats Christ's crucifixion with contempt instead of embracing it for himself. It is true that a believer would never do this as has been indicated by the teaching of Hebrews 3:6 and 14, but someone who has gone along with Christianity for a while but who has never been genuinely saved would turn his back on Christ and would conclude that He had been justly crucified. One is reminded of the parable of the sower and the soils and especially of the seed sown upon stony ground which sprang up quickly and then, when difficulty came, was no more to be found. Thus, if somebody were to do these things, it would show that he was

never saved in the first place. As far as an unbeliever is concerned, this may actually happen.

However, although there is certainly a warning here for saved people as well, this verse is only hypothetical for those who have been genuinely saved. If they were to reject Christ, they would forfeit their Christianity. However, as Hebrews 3:6 and 14 indicate, those who have been truly saved will never reject Christ and will never conclude that He was justly crucified.

This verse also serves as a warning for those who would finally and completely reject Christ as their Savior by advising them that any such decision will be final. They will never have an opportunity to change their minds, not that they will care, however. There is no other means by which they may be saved. If they reject God's only way of salvation, it will be impossible for them ever to come to repentance. There is no way that this verse teaches that one may be saved, then lost, and then saved again; instead, it is a case of deliberate and willful apostasy where someone has a full understanding of Christ and the salvation He has provided but completely and with finality rejects both Him and His offer of salvation and wants nothing further do with either of them. These persons thus remove Christ from their lives forever.

6:7

Verses 7 and 8 are given as a reminder that a person produces the kind of fruit that he really is. It is a reminder of *by their fruits ye shall know them* (Matthew 7:20). A saved person is going to evidence his salvation in his life, and an unsaved person is going to evidence his lack of salvation in his life. **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**. **For** is used to introduce an explanation and is to be understood in the sense of *now*. **The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it** is a descriptive phrase which implies that the earth, which allows the rain water to soak in, is being compared to someone who has been genuinely saved. **Earth** is *ground* or *land*. *The* does not appear with *earth* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *earth*, as *land*, or as

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ground. **Oft** is *often, many times, or frequently*. **Bringeth forth herbs** indicates that this same earth is fruitful. The earth not only takes in the rain but also brings forth herbs. **Herbs** means *fodder, plants, or vegetation*. *The* does not appear with *herbs* in the Greek text in order to emphasize their quality as *herbs*. **Meet** is used to describe the vegetation or herbs. It originally meant *well-placed*; then, it came to mean *fit, suitable, useable, or convenient*. **Herbs that are meet** is *suitable vegetation*. **For them** is *for those*. This suggests that these persons did not personally care for their land but had others, such as hired hands or servants, taking care of it for them. **By whom** is *because of whom* where *whom* is the same group spoken of as *them*. It refers to the landowners. **It is dressed** is *it is also cultivated or it is also tilled*. **Receiveth** means *receives one's share, shares in, or receives*. What is received is **blessing from God**. **Blessing** is suggestive of God's bountifulness in giving this productivity. *The* does not appear with *blessing* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *blessing*.

6:8

Verse 8 is given in contrast to verse 7 as is indicated by **but**, which suggests a mild contrast. **But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.** **That which beareth** refers to *that (earth) which beareth or that (ground) which beareth*. **Beareth** is literally *carries out, brings out, or leads out* when used literally. Here it is used in the figurative sense of *produces*. The ground which produces **thorns and briars is rejected**. **Thorns** refers to *thorn plants*. **Briars** are *briars or prickly weeds, especially thistles*. This kind of ground is **rejected**, which means that it *does not stand the test*. Hence, it is *unqualified, worthless, base, disqualified, unproved, or unfit*. This land which bears thorns and briars is not only rejected; it also **is nigh unto cursing**. **Nigh** is *near* and in the context is used in the sense of *close to*. That to which it is near is **cursing**, i.e. *a curse or an imprecation*. With *nigh* it means that it is *almost cursed or close to being cursed*. **Whose end is to be burned** is

whose outcome is for burning or whose destiny is for burning. The farmer is going to burn over this land to get rid of the thorns and the briars. Similarly, the person, who produces things which are characteristic of an unspiritual individual, is in danger because it may very well be (and likely is) that he is genuinely unsaved. That this is the proper interpretation in verse 8 is made clear by the writer's contrasting statement in verse 9.

6:9

Verse 9 is given in contrast to verse 8 as is indicated by **but**. **But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.** **Beloved** is *dear ones or loved ones*. **We are persuaded** is perfect tense which indicates that an action has taken place in the past, and the results have continued on. It is literally *we have been convinced* and, therefore, means *we are certain*. Believers have been convinced of something in the past; and as a result, they are still certain of it today. It is a settled matter. **Better things of you** is *better things about you or better things concerning you* and suggests *better than these works which are characteristic of unsaved people*. **And** may be used to continue the thought; or it may be used in an emphatic sense as *indeed, in fact, certainly, verily, or yea*. **Things that accompany salvation** refers to the better things that the writer is persuaded regarding his readers. He is persuaded that they have evidence in their lives that they are genuinely born again. **That accompany** suggests *of an inner belonging or of a close association with*. It is used in the sense of *belonging to*. What these things belong to or accompany is **salvation**. This is the normal term for salvation and means *preservation or deliverance* from sin and its consequences. *The* does not appear with *salvation* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *salvation*. The writer of Hebrews is persuaded that his readers evidence salvation in their lives and are to be compared with the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it and brings forth herbs which are suitable for them because of whom it is dressed, i.e. for the landowners. **Though** is *even if, even though, or*

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although. We thus speak is *we are speaking in this manner*. The writer is thus convinced that his readers are genuinely saved people, but he wishes to take no chances. As saved people they will not do the things which are mentioned in verses 4-6.

6:10

In verse 9 the writer stated that he is persuaded that his readers are genuinely saved. In verse 10 he introduces an explanation as is indicated by **for** which is used in the sense of *now*. **God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.** **God** is God the Father. **Unrighteous** is *unjust*. To **forget** shows how God is not unrighteous or unjust. **Forget** is a literal translation of a word which, when used in a non-literal sense, means to *overlook* or to *care nothing about*. God knows whether these people were saved. He looked on their works, and their works demonstrated that they were saved. Their works did not save them but are the evidence or proof that they are saved. Ephesians 2:8-10 puts works and salvation in a proper perspective. One is saved by grace through faith rather than by works, but good works are something the believer has been created to do as part of his normal life. Ephesians 2:8-10 says,

(8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

(9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.

(10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

God will not miss this. There will be no confusion on His part regarding their salvation. He did not forget them, and He was not overlooking them now. God is not unrighteous with the result that He would forget their **work and labour of love**. Because God is righteous, He will remember their work and labor of love. **Work** means *deeds*; while **labour** means *work* or *toil* and suggests the weariness that accompanies the toil. **Of love** goes with both *work* and *labour*. These people served the Lord diligently

out of love, and they wore themselves out doing it. They were not unsaved; instead, it appears that they may have been discouraged with the troubles they were enduring as a result of their salvation. **Which ye have shewed toward his name** refers to *love*. **Shewed** is *demonstrated*; and **toward his name** may be used in the sense of *unto His name* or, perhaps better, *because of His name*. **His name** refers to the name *God* and suggests all that He is and all that He represents. It is another way of saying *toward God Himself*. **In that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister** is a phrase which is used to show what their work and labor of love was. They had ministered to the saints in the past, and they were still ministering to the saints in the present. **Ministered** is the word from which the word *deacon* is derived. In this context it means that they were serving, helping, or supporting. **The saints** were God's people; and, as such, they were genuinely saved people. They had been *set apart* for the Lord's use. They were not an elite group of believers but included the entire class of persons known as believers. These believers in Hebrews 6 had not only ministered in the past to these saints, but the import of **and do minister** is that they were continuing to *serve*, to *help*, or to *support* these saints. This is something that was normal for them. God would not forget this. If He were to forget this, He would be unrighteous; but this cannot be because it is contrary to His very nature.

6:11

Verse 11 indicates that what was true in verse 10 was true of the readers as a whole. There were some, however, who were not demonstrating these good works quite as well as others. **And** indicates a continuation of the thought from the previous verse. It could also be emphatic and imply *indeed* or *in fact*. **We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence.** **We** is the literary *we* and means the writer himself. **Desire** is a term which means *long for*. What the writer longs for is **that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.** **Every one of you** is *each one of you (plural)*. It is