

“Impossible to Restore Them and the Eternal Security of the Believer”– Hebrews 6:4-8

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com]

Take a Bible and meet me in Hebrews, chapter 6...

Those of you who have been on Facebook for a little while know that it has a feature that occasionally reminds you of certain “memories.” You log on for the first time in the day or pull up the app on your phone and the first post will be a reminder of some picture or status update that you posted years ago. Thursday morning I had one such reminder. Evidently, exactly 9 years ago to the week I posted a status that read:

“[Brandon] is hoping you’ll pray for him as he preaches through Hebrews 6:4-8 today...a very tough passage.”

Honestly, I had no idea, but evidently I was preaching on this exact same passage of Scripture, this very week, almost a decade ago, at the church I served in the Chicagoland before coming here. I wish I knew what I did with that sermon! That might have made my week a bit easier to prepare. In any case, my trepidation going into the sermon has evidently not changed over the course of those nine years. This *is* “a very tough passage.” Indeed, some would argue this is not just the most difficult passage in Hebrews, but maybe in the entire New Testament to understand. That’s no exaggeration. “This passage is highly debated, often distorted, and always sobering.”¹ At the very least, it is among the most terrifying passages in the Bible, even if we think we understand it.

One of the things that makes the passage so difficult is it doesn’t fit comfortably into anyone’s theological system. It raises difficult questions for both Calvinists and Arminians.² There’s really no way to interpret this passage that doesn’t bring you into at least a *perceived* tension with other passages in the book or the rest of the Bible. Don’t misunderstand. I’m not saying that there are ever any *real* inconsistencies in the Bible. What I am suggesting is that there are often truths that are difficult for our finite minds to reconcile and that there is, therefore, a need for us to grow comfortable with mystery.

I feel compelled to add that this is also a very difficult passage to preach on, not simply because it can be terrifying, but also because there are a half dozen major ways of taking these verses and each of those positions has several variations of interpretations underneath it. Logistically that makes for either a very long and confusing sermon or an abbreviated one that makes everyone mad because they feel their position either wasn’t represented or wasn’t represented adequately. We simply cannot do justice to every interpretive option that has been suggested without lingering on these verses for a couple months (which we are not going to do, don’t worry). We will, however, give them our attention for a few weeks because they have been the source of much apprehension for many in the church and it will take some time to sort out whether or not they should be disconcerting to us.

So then, introductions aside, let’s have a look at what these fiercely contested verses actually say. Follow along as I read, beginning in verse 4. This is the Word of God...

“For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit,⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God

and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. ⁷ For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. ⁸ But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.” (Hebrews 6:4-8)

So let's look at it squarely right out of the gate because we don't skip the hard passages of Scripture around here. The writer has said that it is "impossible" to renew a certain kind of person to repentance. Why is that a problem? Because the Bible consistently teaches that there is no salvation for those who are not repentant. Repentance will always characterize the redeemed. It's not the *basis* or *cause* of their redemption, but it is, to one degree or another, an inevitable *fruit* or *evidence* of redemption. It invariably accompanies saving faith. The two are inextricable.

What then is repentance? Simply put it means a turning from sin and unbelief and turning instead to Jesus Christ. It's not the absence of a struggle with sin, but the absence of a "settled defiance" toward God about our sin.³ To be repentant means to own up to the fact that your sin is wrong. It means renouncing sin and resolving to follow Jesus. It's not a one-time act, but a lifetime battle waged in the power of the Holy Spirit. It's characterized not by the complete absence of sin but a decline in the frequency of sin and in a difference in what we do when we sin: "When those who believe the gospel fall, they renew their posture of repentance, re-embrace the gift-righteousness of Christ, thank God for the promise of their victory, and *get back up*."⁴

One cannot experience the saving power of the Gospel without genuine repentance. That is the consistent teaching of Jesus and John the Baptist and Paul and every other New Testament Apostle. So when the writer of Hebrews says that there is a person for whom it could be said that it is impossible for them to be brought to repentance, he is saying that there is a person for whom salvation is an impossibility.⁵ When repentance becomes an impossibility, so does salvation.⁶ Let that sink in... The writer is describing a kind of person who is a lost cause, what Christians have historically referred to as an "apostate," one who has committed "apostasy." Now, my guess is that most of you have never heard a sermon on apostasy (let alone more than one in sequence!), so let's take our time here.

One of the Greek words translated "falling away" (though not the same word in our text) is *apostasia* and that's where these terms come from (e.g., 2 Thess. 2:3). It's a word that's related to the Greek word for "divorce" actually. By way of definition, one Christian writer offers the following definition for the apostate:

"Apostates are those who fall away from the true faith, abandoning what they formerly professed to believe. The term describes those whose beliefs are so deficient as to place them outside the pale of true Christianity."⁷

They have so fully and finally fallen away, that in the words of the Hebrews, it impossible for them to be brought again to repentance. Now, don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that God would turn away such a person when they genuinely repented after falling away. I'm saying that the kind of person being described is one who will never desire to repent again. As F. F. Bruce has said, "God has pledged Himself to pardon all who truly repent, but Scripture and experience alike suggest that it is possible for human beings to arrive at a state of heart and life where they can no longer repent."⁸ The desire never comes. All such grace is removed. This irreversible condition is one that the author will again highlight in 10:26-31 and even illustrate through an Old Testament figure named Esau in 12:16-17. We will get to those texts later.

But before we consider the identity of the people the writer is describing in chapter 6, let's notice how they got there. The first word in our passage is key at this point: "*For*." That little word grounds this warning in what was said before it, which we have been studying for the last several weeks (5:11-6:3). It dealt with the author's frustration with the lack of growth and regression in his audience. What does that have to do with our text today? "The 'for' (γάρ) explains why it is imperative that the readers progress on to maturity and do not remain spiritual infants."⁹ He seems to be indicating that growing up is crucial because if they continue to regress they may prove to be the very people the author is now describing. "Apostasy is where their 'sluggishness' could lead."¹⁰ One recent commentator puts it like this:

"Both for ourselves and for each other, we must beware of the trajectory that begins with flaccid hearing and an infantile incapacity to 'digest' God's word (5:11-6:3), that then proceeds to a deliberate repudiation of God's Son (6:4-6), and ends in a cursed and fiery destruction (6:8)."¹¹

But who exactly could meet that end? Before they fell away, they could be described as "*those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come...*" (6:4-5). Who does he have in mind when he writes these words? Are these people who at one time were genuine Christians? At first glance it certainly sounds like a description of true believers, if we're being honest. But herein lies one of the central debates of this passage—Is the writer describing full-fledged Christians or just "almost Christians"? Are these real believers or just people who look like believers but have never truly experienced salvation?

For our purposes today, I'd like to do a couple things with the remainder of our time. First, let's begin considering a couple of interpretive options that are available to us, if we conclude that the writer has in mind true Christians (really we will just get to one today). Then, next week, we will continue that conversation and I want to give you some contextual reasons why I don't think he's talking about true Christians. This will set us up for the following week, where I intend to make a case that verses 4 and 5 could actually be a description of people who have never truly experienced salvation in Christ. Along the way we will consider this passage in relationship to other key doctrines of the church:

This Week:

"Impossible to Restore Them and the Eternal Security of the Believer"

Week Two:

"Impossible to Restore Them and the Perseverance of the Saints"

Week Three:

"Impossible to Restore Them and the (In)Visible Church"

That's the plan, written in pencil, as of right now. So let's get after it...

WHAT IF THESE ARE BELIEVERS?

If someone concludes that the description in verses 4 and 5 is describing people who were saved at some point in the past then there are two *major* interpretive options to choose from (and a few minor ones and spinoffs that we won't have time to address). Two major positions. Here's the first one...

Option 1: The Loss of Salvation View

It has been said that this is the toughest passage in the Bible for those who hold to the eternal security of the believer, that is, those who believe that when people are saved they can never lose their salvation. And if the writer of Hebrews is describing true, bona-fide believers who fall away and can never be brought to saving repentance, then indeed this would be a passage that would call into question the doctrine of eternal security. Over the centuries there have been several who have believed just that—salvation can be lost. Generally,

“Those who hold this view believe that God supplies grace to those who are trusting him, but the ultimate perseverance of any believer depends on the cooperation of his free will. Therefore, any Christian, whatever his state, is capable of the apostasy and condemnation here described.”¹²

While it is certainly true that not every Arminian believes this, it is also true that those who believe this text is warning believers that their salvation can be lost tend to be Arminian (and those sincerely trying to be consistent). “This is the classical Arminian position, though it should be noted that the early followers of Arminius did not at first completely affirm that genuine believers could commit apostasy and thus lose their salvation.”¹³ Not surprisingly then the view tends to be associated with more Arminian or Wesleyan wings of Protestantism.

So, for instance, John Wesley, the father of the Methodist denomination, was quite clear on this matter: “Must not every unprejudiced person see, the expressions here used [in verses 4 and 5] are so strong and clear, that they cannot, without gross and palpable wrestling, be understood of any but true believers?” He goes on to say, “On this authority, I believe a saint may fall away; that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish eternally.”¹⁴ He says elsewhere, that this warning passage applied to “willful, total apostates” who “lost their faith, hope, and love,” making it “impossible to renew them again to repentance.”¹⁵ Translation: you Christians can lose your salvation so guard yourselves against falling away from the faith.

But if it teaches that you can lose your salvation, it should be noted that it also teaches with abundant clarity that you can't get it back, which is a belief that even our more Wesleyan-leaning brothers and sisters have by and large had trouble accepting (though Wesley himself did not). They tend to take the word “impossible” as something less than “impossible,” so as to leave open the door for some future salvation experience. In fact, arguably the majority of “modern day Arminians affirm the possibility of repentance and regaining salvation,” despite what Hebrews 6:6 would seem to suggest and many of their forebears explicitly did.¹⁶ Again, this is not a passage that is difficult for any one theological framework. It's difficult for them all.

So can a genuinely converted person be eternally lost? I don't believe so. I believe the Scriptures teach quite the opposite in fact, so the “Loss of Salvation” view is a nonstarter for me. If it was true, then it would mean a complete overturning of saving grace in the heart of a genuine believer. It would mean that the new life you have in Christ could be overcome by death. It would mean that the person the Lord has “*delivered...from the domain of darkness*” (Col. 1:13) could at one point be returned to the domain of darkness. It would mean that the page that contained those “*whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world*” (Rev. 17:8), would need to be stripped from the binding, as Art Azurdia put it.

“Regeneration would now become unregeneration. The new birth, would now become the new death. The heart of stone, which by the grace of God had been transformed into a heart of flesh, would now revert back to a heart of stone. Love for God would now be replaced with hatred for God, which is the natural disposition of the unbeliever. Spiritual understanding would now be given way to the old spectacles of spiritual blindness. The power of sin, which according to Romans 6, is

broken at the point of salvation must somehow experience a glorious resurrection. Worst of all, forgiveness would now become unforgiveness, which would mean that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross would have proved to be inadequate to save his people... Suffice it to say, for a genuine believer to have the gift of eternal life taken away from him would necessitate a thoroughgoing, complete overturning of saving grace in his life and on his behalf.”¹⁷

But most importantly, such a conclusion—that a believer could lose his or her salvation—would be a direct contradiction of the clear and consistent teaching of the rest of Scripture. The Protestant Reformers has operated by a principle referred to as the *analogia fidei*—“the analogy of faith”—which essentially taught that Scripture must interpret Scripture. I appreciate the way the Westminster Confession of Faith (1.9) articulates it:

“The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.”

In other words, if all Scripture was inspired by the Holy Spirit, then it all of it has in a sense the same Author. Since this Author is divine, we should expect for Him not to contradict Himself. Therefore, whatever a passage means, it cannot contradict the meaning of other passages of Scripture. If it does, we have not arrived at the meaning. Any “contradiction does not reveal a flaw in the mind of God” but a “faulty interpretation on the part of man.” To arrive at the truth and harmony of Scripture, we must allow the clearer portions of God’s Word to help us interpret the not so clear ones. And if there is one thing that we can all probably agree on, the warning passage in Hebrews 6 is not at all clear on its own. So we ought to weight interpretive options against other texts that are more clearly stated. “Whatever this passage does mean, it cannot be at odds with what is so overwhelmingly clear in the rest of the Bible.”¹⁸ And if one wants to argue that Hebrews 6 denies the eternal security of the believer, then I would contend that your interpretation is at odds with the teaching of Scripture.

Does Wesley’s view not fly in the face of Jesus’ words concerning His followers in John 10,

*“I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.
29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”* (John 10:28-29)

Do you know why eternal life is in fact “eternal”? Because once we are given eternal life, we cannot be snatched out of the Father’s hand. Or what about His words in John 6?

“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:36-40)

What about the words of Paul we considered last week from Philippians?

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

Here are some of Paul’s words to the Romans:

“And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” (Romans 8:30)

It certainly sounds like those whom God justifies through faith will all be with Him in glory. I detect no seepage between any link of that “golden chain” of salvation. Therefore, the encouragement that Paul offers a few verses later is a real encouragement.

“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

We will get a similar encouragement in Hebrews 7:25.

“Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

In Jude, after describing believers as those “called” and “beloved” by the Father and “kept” by the Jesus Christ (Jude 1), the brother of Jesus ends his little letter with these words:

“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.” (Jude 24-25)

We could easily go for a whole month of sermons on various texts that teach the eternal security of the believer in the Bible. Ephesians 4:30 teaches that we “*were sealed*” by the Holy Spirit “*for the day of redemption.*” In Matthew 24:24, Jesus seems to suggest the impossibility of leading astray those He calls “*the elect.*” 1 Corinthians 1:8 describes believers as those whom Jesus will “*sustain to the end...guiltless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ*” and then reminds us in the next verse that “*God is faithful*” (1:9). To say nothing of passages like 1 John 2:19, Philippians 2:13, Ephesians 1:3-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, Ezekiel 11:19, 36:27, Deuteronomy 30:6, Jeremiah 24:7, 32:40, and so on. You get the idea. There is a pattern of teaching in the Bible that is much clearer than Hebrews 6 and our interpretation of Hebrews 6 must not contradict that pattern. In my estimation, to say that Hebrews 6 is teaching that real Christians can lose their salvation is to contradict the clear teaching of the rest of Scripture. Whatever this passage may be teaching, it cannot be teaching that Christians can lose their salvation.

But make no mistake about it, the eternal security of the believer, rightly understood, should always be accompanied by the doctrine of perseverance. Believers are secure. But believers also persevere in faith. Their perseverance proves the possession of saving faith. If they don’t persevere to the end in faith, they show themselves not to be believers, but we are getting ahead of ourselves. We will consider that thought later.

There is another major option though among those who believe the writer of Hebrews is describing believers in 6:4-5. We might call it...

Option 2: The Hypothetical View

This option does *not* involve believers losing their salvation and there are a couple variations of the view as we will see. But not today...Next week we’ll consider this position and why I don’t think the context

supports it. Then in week 3, I'll give you the right view. Just kidding. I'll give you the position that I hold humbly. It's not the only viable interpretation, but I'll make a case for why I think that it's the right one.

But today I just wanted to remind you of the security of the true believer, the one whose trust rests in Christ alone for the salvation of their soul. The one who has given up trying to save themselves through good works, but who trusts exclusively in the work of Christ alone to save. The one who believes that they cannot earn their own salvation, but Christ died to save them. His blood alone washes away sin. His resurrection removes our guilty verdict. His salvation is a free gift through faith accompanied by repentance. Those who believe this truly are secure in the hands of God.

One writer put it like this:

“If anyone attacks the security of the believer, first of all he is attacking God and claiming He changed His verdict. Second, he is attacking Christ and claiming His work on the cross was inadequate and that His high-priestly work can't maintain us. Finally, he is attacking the Holy Spirit and claiming He is inadequate to help the believer persevere. A discrediting of the Trinity is wrapped up in a denial of the security of salvation.”¹⁹

And for this we should rejoice: our security doesn't rest in the performance of man, but in the faithfulness and grace of God. Rejoice O' sinner! Again I say rejoice! To that end, let me close with these words from a nineteenth century hymn, by a Scottish poet and preacher named Horatius Bonar. The title is “The Sin-Bearer”:

Thy works, not mine, O Christ,
Speak gladness to this heart;
They tell me all is done;
They bid my fear depart.

To whom, save Thee,
Who can alone
For sin atone,
Lord, shall I flee?

Thy pains, not mine, O Christ,
Upon the shameful tree
Have paid the law's full price,
And purchased peace for me.

Thy tears, not mine, O Christ,
Have wept my guilt away;
And turned this night of mine
Into a blessed day.

Thy bonds, not mine, O Christ,
Unbind me of my chain,
And break my prison-doors,
Ne'er to be barred again.

Thy wounds, not mine, O Christ,
Can heal my bruised soul;

Thy stripes, not mine, contain
The balm that makes me whole.

Thy blood, not mine, O Christ,
Thy blood so freely spilt,
Can blanch my blackest stains,
And purge away my guilt.

Thy cross, not mine, O Christ,
Has borne the awful load
Of sins, that none in heaven
Or earth could bear, but God.

Thy death, not mine, O Christ,
Has paid the ransom due;
Ten thousand deaths like mine,
Would have been all too few.

Thy righteousness, O Christ,
Alone can cover me;
No righteousness avails
Save that which is of Thee.

Thy righteousness alone
Can clothe and beautify;
I wrap it round my soul;
In this I'll live and die.²⁰

Let's pray...

¹ Michael P. Andrus, "Bad News, Good News," a sermon preached on January 3, 2010, to First Evangelical Free Church in Wichita, KS.

² "Some of the theological problems have been imported to the text by people whose principal concern is to salvage their pet theological system—whether Calvinist or Arminian." Ibid. Along these lines, Raymond Brown writes, "Those who are committed to a Reformed or Calvinistic doctrine of grace rightly emphasize God's sovereignty in our salvation and have been careful to point out that once a person is saved, he is always saved. Those who favour an Arminian interpretation of salvation do not deny that the truly saved person will ultimately be saved, but emphasize endurance. They rightly stress the importance of human responsibility, pointing out that we are not celestially manipulated robots making our way along predetermined routes totally outside of our control. Theologians from both schools of thought adduce appropriate Scriptures. The Calvinist naturally

rejoices that we are kept by the power of God, whilst the Arminian reminds us that we are also to keep ourselves in the love of God.” Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews* (BST; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 111-112. Dennis E. Johnson writes, “Those who believe God’s sovereign grace to be more dominant than human freedom of choice find their convictions challenged here. But this passage also challenges those who believe that our choice is the decisive factor in salvation, for the text asserts that a decision to turn one’s back on God’s Son and his heavenly benefits *can never be reversed*.” Dennis E. Johnson, “Hebrews” in *Hebrews-Revelation* (ESV Expository Commentary; Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 85.

³ J. D. Greear, *Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart: How to Know for Sure You Are Saved* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 64.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵ “The apparent absoluteness and rigor of this statement has been a source of consternation to interpreters of Hebrews from Christianity’s earliest centuries.” Buist M. Fanning, “A Classical Reformed View” in *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman IV (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007), 184.

⁶ “Repentance and faith are regularly used in the NT to describe the human response necessary to enter the people of God. So by saying that they couldn’t repent again, the author indicates that they would be outside the people of God if they fall away, that there would be no room for coming back in through repentance and faith. Such language precludes the notion that rewards are intended.” Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (BTC; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 181

⁷ This quote is from John MacArthur, who goes on to say (rightly in my estimation): “True Christians do not apostatize. Those who fall away into apostasy demonstrate that their faith was never real to begin with (1 John 2:19).” Accessed online as of the date of preaching at: <https://www.gty.org/library/questions/QA78/what-is-an-apostate>.

⁸ Quoted in Brown, 110.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁰ Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 171; Cf. Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrew* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 219.

¹¹ Johnson, 89. Similarly, Herbert W. Bateman IV writes, “Whereas Hebrews 5:11-6:3 reveals an unhealthy attitude that makes believers vulnerable, 6:4-8 warns that such an attitude can lead to abandoning the only foundation for faith, which results in divine judgment. . . Thus it appears that reluctant learners who limit themselves to rehashing the basics of the faith are faced with the danger of ‘turning away’ from the Son and ultimately opening themselves to the prospect of divine judgment (however we might define God’s judgment here). Perhaps the point of Hebrews 6:4-8 may be stated in this manner: Believers who are reluctant learners are prone to abandon the only foundation there is for repentance and faith and thereby liable to face some sort of divine punishment.” Bateman, “Introducing the Warning Passages in Hebrews” in *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, 77-78, 80-81. Andrew Murray teases out some of the implications: “The argument is one of unspeakable solemnity. . . . In commerce, in study, in war, it is so often said: there is no safety but in advance. To stand still is to go back. To cease effort is to lose ground. To slacken the pace, before the goal is reached, is to lose the race. . . . The whole point of the argument from the case of those who fall away is—*Let us press on to perfection*.” Andrew Murray, *The Holiness of All: An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1993), 207.

¹² R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul* (PW; Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 156.

¹³ David L. Allen, *Hebrews* (NAC; Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 371; see also Schreiner and Caneday, *The Race Set Before Us*, 23.

¹⁴ John Wesley, “Predestination Calmly Considered,” in *The Complete Works of John Wesley* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 10:248. Also quoted in Allen, 357-358.

¹⁵ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (1754; reprint, Salem, OH: Schmul, 1976), 574, cited by Randall C. Gleason, “A Moderate Reformed View,” in *Four View of the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, 336.

¹⁶ Allen, 371.

¹⁷ Arturo Azurdia III, “The Fatality of Apostasy, Part 1,” a sermon accessed at the following address as of September 2018: http://media.thirdmill.org/mp3-16/art_azurdia.Heb13.mp3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* As Raymond Brown states: “we need constantly to remember that, forceful and relevant as these words are, because they are but a fragment of Scripture’s total message, they can preset us with only a *partial truth*. If we are to be built up in our faith, then it is of the greatest importance to store our minds with the truth of God’s Word. That will mean that whenever we come across a bewildering passage in the Bible, we shall attend carefully to what it has to say and then make sure that we compare scripture with scripture. Many distorted notions are promulgated because a verse in Scripture is wrested from its original context and then pressed into service in order to support an unbalanced idea which other verses in the Bible would deny.” Brown, 115.

¹⁹ Accessed as of the date of preaching at the following address: <https://www.gty.org/library/study-guides/180/eternal-security>.

²⁰ *Ibid.* Taken from *Hymns of Faith and Hope* by Horatius Bonar (London: James Nisbett & Co., 1872), 100-102.