

FEARFUL OF COMING SHORT.

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**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” — Hebrews 4:1, 2.

THE general strain of the apostle Paul is confident and even jubilant. Where in the whole compass of revelation do you meet with bolder writing than that which comes from his pen? “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?” “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.” He is the great doctor of faith, and teacher of full assurance. You meet with nothing in his writings which would encourage doubting and fearing, or lead the saints into bondage to anxiety and suspicion. Yet, in the text before us, Paul does not speak of faith so much as of fear, and does not so much exhort us to boldness as to a reverent trembling, lest by any means we should come short of the rest which God has promised. Before we have concluded this morning’s discourse, we shall be able to show that such caution is quite consistent with the apostle’s usual teaching, and is indeed an essential part of it. He would have us cautious, that we may thereby lay a solid foundation for confidence. He who has been careful to build his house well, and to found it upon a rock,

is the man who can fitly be at peace in the day of storm. The holy fear of to-day brings forth the full assurance of days to come.

It was important that the apostle's teaching should be of a complete and balanced nature. Only unwise persons allow any one quality of their character to destroy another — a moral balance must be aimed at and maintained. The teacher of full assurance must also inculcate watchfulness, or he will be a one-sided instructor. Boldness and confidence are all the more likely to be preserved in their integrity if seasoned with the salt of holy fear, without which faith may become carelessness, and full assurance degenerate into presumption.

The apostle here exhorts us to fear upon a subject of the utmost importance. He had such a value for the rest which God has laid up for his people, that he trembled lest any one of his brethren should miss it, or seem to miss it. I do not marvel that a man so strong in faith as he was, and so full of holy expectancy of the promised rest, should feel a jealous alarm lest any of those committed to him should fail to reach the desired end. Is not every loving father fearful that his child may not succeed in life? Love never thinks of a beloved one tossed upon the sea without a measure of anxiety, nor can we see our friends crossing the ocean of life without a tender fear for them. That fear makes us beg them to be cautious and watchful. My earnest love to your souls compels me to dwell upon such sacred warnings as that of my text. Heedless and Toobold are never wise; in watchfulness is our safety. To this subject I shall address myself with all my heart, trusting that the Spirit of God may also arouse your hearts to give it the consideration which it deserves.

I. We shall first answer the inquiry WITH WHAT DOES THE FEAR ENJOINED IN THE TEXT MAINLY CONCERN ITSELF? "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Now, the apostle cannot mean that we are to fear lest we should come short of heaven for want of merit. Why, my brethren, there is not a man living, nor has one ever lived, nor shall one ever live, who will not come short of heaven if he tries that road. Human merit is not the way to heaven. Since the hour in which our first parent broke the law for us, the perfect keeping of the law has been impossible; neither is the keeping of the law set before us in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as the way of accept lance with God. "By the works of the law there shall no flesh living be justified; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The just shall live by

faith, and it is in the matter of faith that we are cautioned against coming short. The apostle would with indignation have spurned the idea that the gospel race is to be run at the foot of Sinai, and that its prize would be a reward for good works. Over and over again he has plainly declared “it is not of works, lest any man should boast”; but by grace, as the pure gift of the good pleasure and mercy of God. We must not, therefore, twist his words into a legal injunction, for they were never intended to bear such a meaning. The great point which we are to be concerned about is lest we come short of the heavenly rest by failing in the faith which will give us the rest. Notice the second verse of the text, for that makes it clear enough — “For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” To this, therefore, we must give earnest heed; we must see to it that faith is mixed with our hearing of the Word. The way to heaven is by faith — we are to fear lest we have a false faith, a faltering faith, or a temporary faith, and so come short of the heavenly rest.

Note, then, that it becomes us to be peculiarly anxious that we do not come short of fully realizing *the spirituality* of faith. The Jews in the wilderness saw the sacrifices, but they did not look to the grand Sacrifice; they saw the blood poured out at the altar, but their eye did not look to the blood which would in the fullness of time be shed for many for the remission of sins; they looked at the washings and the divers cleansings, but they did not see that their spirit needed to be renewed and their nature changed. They were content with the outward ritual, and missed the inner meaning; they did not recognize that faith in the living God is the grand essential. I fear that many religionists of all denominations fall short in this. They are satisfied because they have attended to their sacraments and their ceremonies, or they are quite content because they have taken their place at a simple, unadorned service, but the mysterious power of the Holy Ghost is not felt, nor is its absence lamented by them. The outward things being done, they conceive that everything is done. Some read a chapter of the Scriptures and repeat a prayer daily, with the full conviction that the practice will be sure to do them good, though they do not meditate on what they read, or pour out their hearts in their prayers. As the Papist rests in his crucifix, and does not in soul come to Jesus, so may the Protestant rest in his Bible, or his form of prayer, and come short of real intercourse with God.

Many are content with the shells of religion, whereas it is the kernel only which can feed the soul. The bonded knee is nothing, the prostrate heart is everything; the uplifted eye is nothing, the glance of the soul towards God is acceptable. The hearing of good words and the repeating of them in prayer or in song, will amount to very little; if the heart be absent the whole thing will be dead as a stone. We must be born again, baptism availeth nothing apart from that; we must live spiritually upon the slain Redeemer, the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper avail nothing if we do not feed upon Jesus. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The inner nature, the soul, must be quickened, for "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." I exhort you, brethren, to fear lest any of you cosine short of this, for if you do, you will come short of the rest which remaineth for the people of God. "Rend your hearts and not your garments," draw nigh unto God with your hearts, for if not your lips insult him. It will not matter how orthodox you may be in creed, nor how attentive to the rites even of the church of Christ itself: unless your spirit, your inner self, shall be reconciled to God, and pardoned through Jesus Christ, and have access to the Father in the power of the Spirit through Jesus, your religion is vain. This exhortation is to be repeated in every street of our city, and the great majority of professing Christians need to be admonished concerning it, for everywhere the religion of show is set up, and the religion of the heart is neglected. The outside of religion is garnished with fine churches, organs, and altars, and enriched with learning and eloquence, but the vitality of godliness, and careful conscientious discipleship are utterly despised.

The exhortation of our text leads us to say, next, that we must take heed *lest we fail to discern the fact that the whole way of salvation is of faith.* Many have not even learned this elementary gospel truth. They suppose religion to be a matter of attendances upon religious exercises, observances of moral precepts, and the like; and so long as their life is regular, and their habits are respectable, they remain peaceful in the conviction that things are pretty right, or at any rate will right themselves one of these days, they scarcely know how. But who that reads this Bible attentively will fail to discover that the way of salvation runs in quite another direction, lies, in fact, here, — "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him"? "It is of faith that it might be by grace." "By grace are ye saved through faith." The commission which our Lord gave to the apostles on the Mount of

Olives ran thus, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." He did not say, "To him whose life is orderly faith is unimportant," but he made faith an absolute essential. Let us not stop short of this, or be at peace till we can claim the promise, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Faith is essential, and we must have it. In a word, we must put our trust in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; we must give up all other confidences, and cast ourselves entirely upon him, otherwise we shall certainly never enter into the rest which is reserved for believers.

Here let us examine ourselves with great anxiety, for on many points we may come short. As for instance, we may fail in reference to *the object of our faith*. A man may say, "I have faith," but another question arises, "What have you faith in?" "Well, I have faith in what I have felt." Then get rid of it; for what you have felt is not an object of faith, nor to be trusted in at all. "I have faith," says another, "in the doctrines which I have been taught." I am glad you believe them, but remember, doctrines are not the Savior, and a man may believe all the doctrines of truth, and yet he may be lost; a creed cannot save, neither can a dogma redeem. What is the object of faith then? It is a person; it is a living, divine, appointed person. And who is that person? He is none other than Jesus, the Nazarene, who is the Son of God, God over all, blessed for ever; and yet the son of Mary, born into this world for our sakes. No faith will save a man which does not rest upon Jesus Christ as God; we must depend upon a whole Christ, or else our faith is not the faith of God's elect. We must believe in his proper humanity, and rejoice in the sufferings which he endured: we must believe in his assured Deity, and rejoice in the merit which that Deity imparted to his sufferings. We must believe in Christ as a substitute for us, suffering that we might not suffer; making atonement on our behalf to the broken law of God, so that God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth. If we do not fix our faith upon this basis our faith is not the work of the Holy Ghost, for his work always tends to glorify Christ. Brethren, let us be very careful here, for if our faith be strong, but rests upon a weak foundation, it will be like a builder who should lay a course of granite upon a foundation of sand. It will be of no service whatever to have a firm fails, unless that faith has a substantial basis. If mistake be made about the person of Christ, they are fatal, for they destroy the foundation. If the very foundation be a false one, then all the upward building will only hasten the

ultimate fall. Build safely, therefore, on the solid rock of God in human flesh, redeeming us by the sacrifice of himself. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid." "There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." Rest ye, therefore, on his blessed person and his finished work, or ye will surely come short of his rest.

Here let us remark that *the quality of our faith* must be one object of our anxious care, and for its qualities I would mention, first, that it must be simple. To rely upon Christ in part is deadly, our faith must be altogether unmixed. If I depend in part upon the righteousness of Christ, in part Upon the occult influences conveyed by a priest, in part upon sacraments, in part upon my own repentance, in part upon my overt faith, in part upon anything, I am lost for ever. Jesus will be a whole Savior or no Savior. I must throw my whole weight upon his bosom, and cling to him alone, for no other can bear me up from destruction. Look well to the simplicity of your confidence, my brother, and beware of mixing self-confidence with your faith, for all that is of nature's spinning must be unravelled, every thread of it must be destroyed. You think to help Christ? Would you yoke an emmet with a seraph? If you did, they would be a far more equal pair than Christ and self. Loathe, abhor, detest everything like confidence in yourself, or in your fellow men, or in sacraments or in creeds, or in anything whatsoever, save Jesus Christ your Lord.

***"On Christ the solid rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."***

This faith must be as *real* as it is simple. It will not avail you merely to say, "I believe in Jesus;" you must really do so. So often have men told us, "Only believe in Jesus and you shall be saved," that persons have conceived faith to be a trifle, and have imagined that to think they believe will be quite enough; but to think you believe and actually to have faith, are very different things. To rely alone upon Jesus is no small matter. "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent."

May your faith be not only real, but intense and *heartly*, earnest and living. Let your trust be a whole-hearted one, for, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." You know with what heart soldiers have trusted their commanders: they have gone into the fight and been outnumbered, but they have felt that their leader was so skillful in war, and so sure to win, that they have remained undaunted under terrible attacks, and their battalions

have stood firm as iron walls amid a sleet of deadly missiles. With faith unstaggering they have rested in the prowess of their leader, and have earned the victory; such must be our confidence in Christ. Whatever may discourage our hope, whatever may contradict the promise, ours it is to repose in Jesus with all our soul and strength, for such faith unites to the Lamb and brings salvation through his name. Beware of a notional faith, an historical faith, a faith which deals with statements, theories, and opinions; get an enthusiastic confidence which flings itself at the pierced feet, and lies there, or only rises up to march forward at the bidding of him who said, "It is finished," when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. Oh, may we never even seem to come short of such a faith as this!

But we must also take care that we do not come short as to *the inner working of faith* upon our nature. True faith walks hand in hand with repentance. A faith that never wept is a faith that never lived; faith without repentance is dead. Hatred of sin always accompanies a sense of pardon. Faith is the inseparable attendant upon regeneration, even as light attends the sunrising. When faith comes into the soul, the heart is changed, the man becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus, he receives new life, and with it new faculties, new hopes, new dreads, new loves, new hates, new pleasures, and new pains. "Behold I make all things new," is the voice of Christ when he comes into the heart by faith. Now, beloved, are you really, radically, and totally changed? If not, it is not for me to flinch from stating the truth to you, — however reformed and however devout you may seem to be, you come short of the divine rest: for "ye must be born again." There must be the new birth in your spirit, or else amongst the chosen of God you are not numbered, and amongst the saved ones you can never sit in heaven. Do search yourselves, lest ye be deceived.

*"Vain are your fancies, airy flights,
If faith be cold and dead;
None but a living power unites
To Christ the living Head.
"Grace, like an uncorrupted seed,
Abides and reigns within;
Immortal principles forbid
The sons of God to sin."*

Faith must also be judged of by *its power upon the character*. The man who really believes in Jesus becomes a man of prayer. Never had a man faith and yet despised the mercy-seat. "Behold, he prayeth," is a

declaration akin to “Behold, he believeth.” How about your private prayers, then, my dear friends? Are they neglected? Are they performed in a slatternly manner? I will not inquire so much as to your formal prayers, as to the spirit of prayer: does your heart all the day long go up to God in silent cries and secret groans? Do you speak to God out of your inmost soul by snatches while at your work? Do you say, “My God, my Father, help me,” when none could tell that your lips are moving? If you have not the spirit of prayer, you are destitute of one of the surest signs of spiritual life, and you may conclude that your faith is dead, and that you come short of God’s rest.

True faith works upon us by leading us to obedience. When we believe in Jesus, we desire to do all that Jesus tells us. Many Christians fall short here. They want to do as little as they can, and yet keep a quiet conscience; they do not read some parts of the Bible, for fear they should discover duties which would be inconvenient to attend to. Shutting the eyes to heavenly light is dangerous work. Do not knowingly neglect the smallest command of our Lord Jesus Christ, for an act of wilful disobedience upon a point which may seem to be non-essential may sufficiently prove that your profession is rotten at the core, because we do not delight in the law of the Lord.

*“Faith must obey her Father’s will,
As well as trust his grace
A pardoning God is jealous still
For his own holiness.
“When from the curse he sets us free,
He snakes our natures clean;
Nor would he send his Son to be
The minister or sin.*

Faith works in us separateness from sinners. Those who believe in Jesus cannot enter into the pleasures of the ungodly; they have higher joys; like the eagle they disdain the carrion upon which the world’s vultures feed. Shall an angel be seen rioting with the unclean and the profane, enjoying their fooleries, and laughing at their excesses? Yet the heir of heaven is akin to angels, and it were a shame for him to stoop to that which charms only the baser part of mankind. “Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” is the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and his true disciples imitate him. What say ye as to your faith, my brethren? Is it of that kind which separates you from the world? Does it inspire you to

fight against temptation? Does it lead you to conquer sin? Does it impel you to walk with God? Does it put you into the light where God dwells? For remember that text, half of which is often quoted and the rest wilfully forgotten, “If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Mark well that the cleansing by blood is joined to the walking in the light, why is this so seldom mentioned? Walk with God, brethren, then are ye cleansed, but if there is no walking with God you may well fear that your faith is not of that kind which brings the saints to their everlasting rest.

I would fain speak with many tears and plaintive entreaties at this time, so as to press these solemn thoughts upon your minds; for, my brethren, there is room to fear lest a promise being left of entering into this rest, some of us will come short of it. Refuse not to examine yourselves, for there is urgent need of it; I dare do no less than implore you to attend to the matter at once.

II. Pursuing the same subject, our second point is this: — WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MAY SUGGEST THE NECESSITY FOR THIS FEAR?

The first is this. It is certain that many professors apostatise. We sang truly dust now,

*“When any turn from Zion’s way,
Alas, what numbers do!”*

Apostates throng the gates of hell. True faith is in every case immortal, and cannot be destroyed. If men have really entered into God’s rest by living faith, they will never depart from it, for “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” He who has begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. They who come short of entering into this rest, may have thought they believed, but they never did. They may have had a sincere belief that they were children of God, but they were not; they deceived themselves, and mistook the name of life for life itself. Now, if others apostatise, may not we also? If we have really believed we shall not apostatise, but perhaps our faith is not real; our candle may have been lit by our own flame, and, if so, it will surely go out; nothing but the work of the Holy Ghost will endure to the end.

Note, again, that we ourselves know others who are, we fear, much deceived, and fall short of true salvation. We are not to judge, God forbid

we should, but we cannot help, from the actions of some of our fellow-professors, shrewdly suspecting that their profession covers a good deal that is unsound. They could not act as they do if they were truly converted. We would with the utmost charity hope the best, but we cannot conceal from ourselves with fear and trembling that a large mass of professors are so worldly, so fond of every trifling amusement, so given up to self, and so negligent of anything like zealous service of God, that they cannot be Christians, though they profess to be such. Well, if we think so of others, may it not happen that somebody or other is thinking so of us? And what is much worse — for it is of very little importance what people think of us — it may be true that it is so. Though we have very much that is morally excellent, it may be that we are destitute of the real work of grace, and so come short of the rest which is given to faith. I suggest it to you all; I suggest it to myself most of all, and am prepared to abide the necessary tests.

Yet, more, remember there are some professors who know that they are not at rest. “We that have believed do enter into rest,” but you know you do not rest. Am I not addressing some who claim to have faith, and yet they have no peace? You dare not sit down and cast up your spiritual accounts, and put yourself through an examination, because you more than half suspect that you are spiritually insolvent; you do not like too searching a sermon, because you are conscious that there is something rotten in the state of Denmark, something amiss within your heart. You know it is so, for when you have a little sickness, or fear of death, you tremble dreadfully. Now, “if thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, what wilt thou do when thou contendest with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou hast trusted, they have wearied thee, what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan?” If you cannot bear a little shaking by the truth when I, your feeble fellow-man, am preaching, how will you bear the dread shakings of the last skeleton orator, who shall say, “This night thy soul is required of thee”? How will you endure the thundering voice of the great Judge of all?

I put to you another question; are there not professors here who are not even now content with Jesus? You take your Savior’s yoke as a necessity, but not as a delight; and when you want to enjoy yourself you run off away to the world: is not this a sure index of where your heart is? If you cannot find your richest joy in Christ, if he is not your chief delight, then it is clear you are already short of the rest; for to a true saint there is no music like

his charming name, and there is no delight like fellowship with Jesus. Now, if you already fail to discover the sweetness of religion, may you not fear that you not a possessor of it at all?

O sirs, I beseech you to fear lest you come short of the living faith which will give you rest, for are not some of you listless and indifferent? Do not many professors go to their places of worship without heart? Are they not mere formalists, bowing their heads as if they were moved by machinery, but destitute of heart worship? They do not care whether Christ's church prospers or not; it never costs them a sleepless night whether Jesus' kingdom comes or Antichrist triumphs. They show far more concern about the rise and fall of Console, or a change in the Cabinet, or the state of the crops, than they do about the kingdom of God and the things which make for the glory of the Most High. Now, where there is this listlessness and carelessness, does it not seem as if you came short of the sacred rest?

Some professors are quite destitute of energy or zeal; they serve God as if they were in a dream, they go about every godly work as if they had taken laudanum or soothing syrup; indeed, they look at religion as if it were a kind of cordial, given them on purpose to quiet them. Now, if the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, do not such people *seem* to come short of it?

We know others who are awake enough, but they are captious, critical, snarling. They *seem* to come short of the spirit of Christ, do they not? I am not going to judge them, but what can we say of them? They do not look very like their Master; the attribute of love is not very apparent.

We know some who do nothing for Jesus. Ragged schools? They have no interest in them. The preaching of the gospel? Of course they never attempt that, though they can speak well enough at a political meeting. Could they visit the sick? Oh, no! they have not the time. Could they teach in the Sabbath School? No, they cannot bear children! Could they open a cottage meeting? No, it is not a thing they at all approve of. Lions are in the way. There is nothing they can do; say rather, nothing they *will* do.

Many also of those who profess to belong to Christ give him of their substance the bare odds and ends, the small crumbs from under their table, and cheese-parings, which they never miss. Now, I do not say that such niggards are not Christians, but I do say let us not be like them, lest we should *seem* to come short. When I read the lives of martyrs giving themselves to burn for Christ, and see the worldliness of those Christians

who cannot bear even a word of ridicule, I am sure they seem to come short of it. When we see men at the very first brush of battle ready to run, what judgment can we form of them? Are these the soldiers of the cross? Will these be more than conquerors? They leave the pure worship of God because it is not respectable, and they get away to the reputable religion of the world. Where is the blood of your sires, if sires ye had worth mentioning, if ye are ashamed to bear the reproach of Christ? Surely you *seem* to come short of what Jesus deserves. When I see the self-indulgence of many professors, the utter absence of any sacrifice for Christ, the lack of anything like ardor and zeal for the propagation of the truth, or prayer for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom, am I too severe if I say that many do seem to come short of it? Here, then, are arguments for holy anxiety.

Brethren, it may be that even now I am addressing some who are anxious to avoid the offense of the cross, who cut and trim in order to please their neighbors, who reckon the repute of the world to be greater riches than all the treasures of Jesus, who make provision for the flesh, and think fashion, credit, and respectability to be everything. These are the men whose god is the world, and who mind earthly things. May God have mercy upon such, and have mercy upon us by never allowing us to fall into such evil ways.

III. Thirdly, WHAT SOLEMN TRUTHS DEMAND THE FEAR SUGGESTED IN THE TEXT! If we should really come short of heaven we shall have lost all its bliss and glory for ever; for us no vision of the Crucified! no sight of the King in his beauty! And we shall have lost heaven with this aggravation, that we did begin to build, but were not able to finish. We shall be eternally covered with shame. The damned in hell will laugh at us because we professed to be different from them and came short after all. If I must be lost, let me not be lost as a pretender to religion, for the inner dungeon of the infernal prison-house is for those who played the Judas, who sold their Lord for pieces of silver, or came short by some other means. To have gone a little way towards heaven and then to miss it will render the loss of it the more intolerable. What if you should drink of the sacramental cup and then for ever drink of the cup of devils? It must be wretchedness itself to remember when lost, "I used to hear the gospel, and I professed to believe it; I sat with the saints of God and sang their hymns; I bowed my head and joined ostensibly in their prayers, and now I am for ever banished from the God of love. Instead of Sabbath rest I feel infinite misery, and instead of the songs of the saints I hear the howling of lost spirits forever." O my brethren, fear lest ye come short of it. Nay begin sooner, fear lest ye

scent to come short of it, for he that is afraid of the seeming will be delivered from the reality.

IV. And now to close, HOW DOES OUR FEAR EXERCISE ITSELF? I must dwell on this a moment to prevent mistakes. Our fear of coming short of the rest must not lead us to unbelief, because in that case it would make us come short at once. As I have already shown you, the way is by faith. I am not, therefore, to fear believing, but rather to fear distrust and unbelief I must not doubt the promise, or I shall at once come short of rest. The translators, by inserting the word “us” into the text, have clouded the meaning. There is no promise to us which we can ever come short of; every promise is sure. The text speaks of a promise which is left, left to believers, and so left that some must enter in. Do you belong to that *some*? That is the question. You do if you are a true, real, genuine believer in the Lord Jesus, if the word which you hear is mixed with faith, according to the second verse of my text; but if the word you hear is not mixed with faith, there is no promise made to you that you shall enter into God’s rest, and you must come short of that which is promised to faith, because you have no faith. The promise is made to the believer in Christ. I will, therefore, fear to doubt my Lord, fear to distrust him, fear to suspect his veracity; I will believe that he came into the world to save sinners, I will believe that he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. I will not hesitate to trust him, for I fear to doubt the God who cannot lie, lest it be said of me, “He could not enter in, because of unbelief.”

Next, the apostle does not mean to have us always stand in doubt whether we are saved or not, for that would be to come short of the rest. A man cannot rest while he is in doubt about his own salvation, and, indeed, many texts teach the doctrine of assurance, and we are told that “The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” Now, Paul would not run contrary, nor have us run contrary, to the testimony of the Holy Spirit within us. If I have indeed believed in Jesus Christ then I am saved, and I must not doubt but what I am saved. I am bound to believe it, and so to enter into rest; I am to fear lest I should not fully realize my own personal salvation when I profess to trust my whole soul with Christ.

What the apostle would have us do I gather from the chapter in which my text stands. We are to hold fast our profession. If you have believed in Jesus cleave to him; if his cross indeed be your support, hold on to it as for

dear life, never let it go. And when you are tempted by new-fangled notions, or by pretendedly old religions, say to them all —

*“Should all the forms that men devise
Assault my soul with treacherous art,
I’d call them vanities and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart.”*

“Christ for me, Christ for me, and none but Christ.” Hold to that, and then you will not come short.

Next, submit yourselves to the whole word of God, for it is living and powerful. It will search your inmost soul even to the joints and marrow; habitually let it do so. Never be afraid of your Bibles. If there is a text of Scripture you dare not meet, humble yourself till you can. If your creed and Scripture do not agree, cut your creed to pieces, but make it agree with this book. If there be anything in the church to which you belong which is contrary to the inspired word, leave that church. To the law and to the testimony, here is the infallible chart of faith, follow it closely, and if you do, you need have no fear of coming short, for this book cannot lead you astray. Follow it to the letter, and be precise about it, even though men shall laugh at you for being too particular. Keep to every jot and little, and to the living spirit of it, and you will not come short.

Then, come boldly to the throne of grace. So the chapter concludes. There you will obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Cling to the mercy-seat as Joab to the horns of the altar. Pray much, pray always. Cry to God for help. Your help cometh from the eternal hills, and as you become more and more prevalent in prayer, you will feel that you do not come short, for God hears you, and he would not hear you and answer you from day to day if you were after all short of the faith which brings the soul into rest.

In a word, believe fully. If we have been half-and-half Christians, let us be wholly Christians. If we have given up to God a little of our time, a little of our substance, a little of ourselves, let us be baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ, buried with him, given up to him totally; no longer sprinkled with a little grace, which may suffice to bespatter us with enough godliness to make us decent, but for ever dead unto the world and alive unto God in newness of life. Is it worth it? O ye that are bought with blood, is Jesus worthy of your entire selves? Ye profess to be Christians, and I charge you

by that profession to answer my question. Is the faith of God and the kingdom of God worth your whole selves? I know what your answer is if you are sincere. You will say,

*“Had I ten thousand thousand tongues,
Not one should silent be;
Had I ten thousand thousand hearts,
I’d give them all to thee.”*

O brethren, we have not done enough For God, because we have not loved God enough; we are not powerful, because we are not intense. If we were on fire with love, we should be very different; but we are cold, carnal, worldly, half-hearted, and we shall come short if we do not alter. May God in infinite mercy cause the faith which is in us to grow till it affects our entire nature, and the zeal thereof consumes us.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON —
Hebrews 3:12-19; 4.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK” — 906, 668, 666.