

A GRACIOUS DISMISSAL

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"And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath
saved thee; go in peace" —*Luke 7:50*

THE main part of my subject will be—that gracious dismissal, "Go in peace." To her who had been so lately blest, the word "*Go*" sounded mournfully; for she would fain have remained through life with her pardoning Lord; but the added words "*in peace*" turned the wormwood into honey—there was now peace for her who had been so long hunted and harried by her sins. Rising from the feet she had washed with tears, she went forth to keep her future footsteps such as those of a believing, and therefore saved, woman ought to be.

We like a motto to begin the year with, and it has been useful to some spirits to choose a motto with which to enter on a new course of life. We climb the hill of enterprise, or dare the wave of trial, with an inspiring word upon our lip. To certain young men a word has come in life's early morning, wet with the dew of heaven and that word of their day-dawn has kept with them. The echoes of that life-evoking word have followed them long after it was spoken; amid strange scenes it has come to them like a voice from the unseen. It has whispered to them within the curtains of their dying bed: it has murmured consolation amid Jordan's swelling waves. That first word of joy, and peace from Jesus with which they began the new life came to them over again just as they were melting away into the invisible land; so they began the service of the Redeemer, and so he declared that their work was finished. Perhaps that love-note will be their welcome at the very gates of heaven.

Our Lord, in the instance before us, sent a penitent away from the chill atmosphere of self-righteous cavilling, and thus relieved her of a controversy for which she was not fitted; but I see more than that in this benediction. It looks to me as if our divine Master, when he found this poor sinner so full of love to him that she washed his feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, having by a parable explained to the Pharisee the reason for the greatness of her love, then said to her, "Go in peace"—meaning that word not only to be cheering for the necessary purpose of the moment, but to go with her, and to attend her all the rest of her life, until, when she came into the dark valley, she should fear no evil, for she would still hear that sweet voice saying, "Go in peace." What music to have heard! What music still to hear!

Now, I would to God that the word which I shall speak at this time might be honoured of the Lord to serve that sacred purpose to some here present. May it be a life-word to certain of you! May it be to others of us who have long known the Saviour a revival of our rest, and may we get such a draught of peace from Jesus that we may never thirst again! The lips of our divine Lord are a well-spring of delight; each word is a chalice brimmed with sweetness. Imbibing this, we shall go

our way henceforth even to our journey's end, after the manner of the hymn which we sang just now:

"Calm in the hour of buoyant health,
Calm in my hour of pain;
Calm in my poverty or wealth,
Calm in my loss or gain;

"Calm me, my God, and keep me calm,
Soft resting on thy breast;
Soothe me with holy hymn and psalm,
And bid my spirit rest."

Oh, that our life may be as a sea of glass! May the sacred circle of our fellowship be within the golden line of the peace of God! Thou who didst bid us come to thee and rest, now bid us "go in peace."

I am going to say a little in my opening upon *a delightful assurance* which constituted the reason why the woman went in peace: "Thy faith hath saved thee"; or, as in the forty-eighth verse, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Upon the strength of the assurance that she was saved, she might safely go in peace. When we have talked a little upon that subject, we will then come to *a considerate precept*: the Saviour directed her, in the moment of trial, to "go in peace." There was an assurance for her comfort, and a precept for her guidance.

I. First, then, consider A DELIGHTFUL ASSURANCE. The ground upon which the penitent woman might go in peace was that she had been saved. The Saviour assured her: "Thy faith hath saved thee."

She was not saved otherwise than we are saved; but she received the common salvation by like precious faith. The way of salvation to her was faith in Christ: there is the same way for us, but she had what some of you, no doubt, would greatly like to have: she had *an assurance that she was saved, from the Lord's own mouth*. I think I hear some saying, "I should go in peace, I am sure, if the Lord Jesus would but appear to me, and speak and say with his own lips, 'Thy faith hath saved thee'." It is natural that you should think so; it must have been rapture to receive a benediction from the mouth of our King, our Saviour. Yet, dear friends, we must not hang our confidence upon a mere circumstance. For a mere circumstance it is, whether Christ shall literally stand before you in the flesh, and say, "Thy faith hath saved thee," or whether he shall say it to you by the infallible record of his own Word. It does not make much difference as to my faith in what my father says to me, whether I meet the venerable man in the morning in my garden, and there hear his voice, or whether I get a letter by post in his handwriting, and he says to me upon that paper just what he would have said if I had met him face to face. I do not require him always to come up the hill to my house to tell me everything that he has to say: I should think myself an idiot if I did. If I were to say, "My dear father, you have assured me of your love by letter; but somehow, I cannot credit it unless you come and look me in the face, and take my hand, and assure me of your good will," surely, he would say to me, "My dear son, what ails you? You must be out of your mind. I never knew you to be so childish before: my handwriting has always been enough. I can hardly think you mean it when you say that you cannot credit me unless I stand manifest before your eyes, and with your ears you hear me speak." Now, what I would not do to my earthly father, I certainly would not do to my heavenly Saviour. I am perfectly satisfied myself to believe what he writes to me; and if it be so written in his Book, it seems to me to be quite as true and sure as if he had actually come from heaven, and had talked with me, or had

appeared to me in the visions of the night. Is not this the reasoning of common-sense? Do you not at once agree with me?

"Well," you say, "we go with you there, dear sir; but, then *he spoke that word to her personally*. We should never have any more doubts, but should go in peace, if he said that word of assurance to us. You see, it is not merely that Jesus himself spoke, and said, 'Thy faith hath made *thee* whole,' but he looked that way; he turned towards her, and she knew that he referred to her. There was no mistaking to whom the assurance was given. There were other people in the room, but he did not say it to Simon; he did not say it to Peter; he did not say it to James and John. She knew by the look of him that he meant it for her, and for her alone, for she was the only person to go, and consequently the only one to 'go in peace.' Our Lord put it in the singular number, and said, '*Thy faith hath saved thee. I want it to come home just so to me.*'"

Yes, but I think that this is a little unreasonable, too; is it not? Because if my father (to carry on my figure) were to speak to me, and to my brothers and to my sisters, and were to say, "Dear children, I have loving thoughts concerning you, and I have laid up in store for your needs," I do not think that I should say to him by-and-by, "Now, father, do you know that I did not believe you, or derive any pleasure from what you said, because you spoke to others beside myself? I did not think your statement of love could be true, because you included my brothers and my sisters. You did not use the singular, but you put it in the plural; and you spoke to all my brothers and sisters, as well as to myself; and therefore I felt that I could not take any comfort out of your tender assurances." I should be a most unreasonable kind of body if I were to talk in that way; and my father would begin to think that his son was qualifying for a lunatic asylum. If he did not attribute it to unkindness of heart, he certainly would ascribe it to imbecility of head. Why, surely, if my father says the same to each one of his children as he says to me, his words are all the more likely to be true, instead of being less worthy of belief; and therefore I derive comfort from his promises of love being put in the plural rather than in the singular. Surely, it should not be less easy to believe that God would deal graciously with me in company with thousands of others than that he should pursue a solitary plan with me as the lone object of his love. Is it not so?

"Ah, yes!" says one, "but you have not hit on it yet. I want to know that I am one that is in that plural, and I want to know that I really am one of those to whom Jesus speaks in his Word." My anxious friend, you may know it; and you may know it most certainly. It is written, "He that believeth on him hath everlasting life." It need never be a question whether you believe in him or not; if you trust him, that is the gist of the matter. You can readily ascertain whether you do really trust him, or do not trust him. If you do trust him, you are his, and every promise of his covenant is made to you. You have faith, and when the Lord lays it down as a general statement that faith saves—the statement is applicable to all the world, in every place, and in all time, until the present age shall end, and men shall have passed into the fixed state of retribution, where no gospel faith is preached. "Thy faith hath saved thee": if thou hast faith at all—if thou believest that Jesus is the Christ—thou art born of God. If thou canst say to the Lord Jesus,

"All my trust on thee is stayed,
All my help from thee I bring,"

that is faith, and Jesus testifies, "Thy faith hath saved thee." Now, because the infallible Witness says this of all who have faith, I do not think you ought to doubt it. It is true you do not hear his voice, because he says it rather by the written Word than by word of mouth; but surely this does not affect your faith. We believe a true man whether he writes or speaks: indeed, if there be any choice, we prefer that which he has deliberately put upon paper; for this remains when the sound

of the voice is clean gone. It is most profitable for us that we should read our Lord's declaration over and over again, and put it in all sorts of shapes, and see how it remains evermore faithful and true. It is more assuring to you to find it in the volume of the Book than it would be if the Saviour met you tonight, and said to you, "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Thy faith hath saved thee." The record excels the voice.

"No," say you, "I cannot see that." Well now, Peter was with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, and nothing could shake Peter's conviction that he had been there in the midst of that heavenly glory; and yet, for all that, Peter says, concerning the inspired Word, "We have a more sure Word of testimony." He felt that even the memory of that vision, which he had assuredly seen, did not always yield to him so much assurance as did the abidingly inspired Word of God. You ought to feel the same. If I were conscious tonight that, at some period of my life, I had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to me, the very spot of ground on which it occurred would be exceedingly dear and sacred to my spirit; but I am certain that when I grew depressed, when darkness rushed over my soul, as it does sometimes, I should be sure to say to myself, "You never saw anything of the kind. It was a delusion, a figment of imagination, a delirium, and nothing more." But, beloved, when I get to this Book, and see before me the sacred lines, I know that I am not deluded. There it stands, "God so loved the world, that he gave his Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I am sure about that, and I am sure that I believe, and therefore I am sure that I am saved. I like to put my finger right down on the passage, and then say, "Lord, I know thou canst not lie. I have never had a question about this being thy Book. Whatever other doubts have plagued me, this has not. Thou hast so spoken it home to my soul, that I am as assured that this is thy Book as I am assured of my own existence; and, hence, thou has done better for the removal of my doubts, and for the assurance of my soul's eternal salvation, by putting thy promise in the Book, than if thou hadst thyself personally appeared to me, and spoken with thine own voice."

O my hearer, the written Word is most sure! If thou believest, thou art saved as surely as thou art alive. If thou believest, heaven and earth may pass away, but the Word of the Lord shall stand fast for thee. "He that believeth in him hath everlasting life." He has eternal life in present possession. Our Lord has put it thus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "He that with his heart believeth, and with his mouth maketh confession of him, shall be saved." There are no "ifs" or "buts" about these words of promise. Salvation is put as a present thing, and as an abiding thing, but in every case as a certain thing; and why should we be worried and worn about the matter? It is so, and let us take the comfort of the fact. We must either throw away this Book by beginning to talk about "degrees of inspiration" and all that foul rubbish, or else we are logically bound to be sure of our hope, and to rejoice in it. I warrant thee, O my hearer, that as long as thou standest fast by the belief that this is a sure Word of testimony, thou wilt know that thou art saved! If this Book be true, every believer in Jesus is as safe as Jesus himself. To say, "I believe, but I am afraid I am not saved," is to say, only in a roundabout way, that you do not believe at all; for, if you believe, then you believe that God speaks the truth; and this is the testimony, that "God hath given us eternal life, and that life is in his Son."

This is the testimony of the great Father, and the testimony of the eternal Spirit; and we must not dare to doubt it. You may doubt whether you believe or not; but given that you do really and unfeignedly put your trust in the Lord Jesus, then, as effect follows cause, it is certain that the cause of faith will be followed by its sure effect—salvation. "Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." Do not worry any longer: go in peace. Have done with questioning; end debate; go in peace. Go about your business, for the work of salvation is done. You are a saved soul: go and rejoice in finished salvation, and ask no more questions. "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" said God to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." Wherefore do you

question and doubt any longer? Go forward to enjoy what God has prepared for you; and as you are saved and justified in Christ, now seek sanctification, and all the other blessings of the covenant of grace which lie before you in Christ Jesus your Lord. The promise is sure; be sure that it is so, and in perfect rest of soul enjoy the good which God provides you.

I think I have thus brought out as clearly as I can that delightful assurance which is the ground of the command, "Go in peace."

II. We come, secondly, to hearken to A CONSIDERATE PRECEPT. Our Lord, with wise tenderness, dismissed the beloved object of his pardoning love, and bade her "*Go in peace.*" May the Holy Spirit bless this to us! This precept divides itself into two parts. There is, first, "Go," and then there is "Go in peace."

There is "*go.*" Now, in "go" there are two things: to go *from* and to go *to*. *Where was she to go from?* First, she was *to go from these quibblers*. Simon and the Pharisees are as full of objections as a swarm of bees is full of stings. They say in their hearts one to another, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" They have even dared to question the character of the perfect One, and have hinted a suspicion of his purity for allowing such a woman to come so near him, and to wash his feet with her tears. Therefore the Saviour says to her, "Go." This was not a happy place for a child-like love to linger in. Her soul would have been among lions. Jesus seems to say, "Do not stay to be tormented by these cavillers. Thy faith hath saved thee; go. You have gained a great blessing; go home with it. Let these people argue with each other; you have a rich prize, take it out of the reach of these pirates."

Oftentimes, I believe that the child of God would find it to be his greatest wisdom, whenever he is in company that begins to assail his Lord, or to denounce his faith, just to go about his business, and let the scoffers have their scoffing to themselves. Some of us have thought it our miserable duty to read certain books that have been brought out against the truth, that we might be able to answer them; but it is a perilous calling. The Lord have mercy upon us when we have to go down into these sewers; for the process is not healthy!

"Oh," says a man, "but you must prove all things!" Yes, so I will; but if one should set a joint of meat on his table, and it smelt rather high, I would cut a slice and if I put one bit of it in my mouth, and found it far gone, I should not feel it necessary to eat the whole round of beef to test its sweetness. Some people seem to think that they must read a bad book through; and they must go and hear a bad preacher often before they can be sure of his quality. Why, you can judge many teachings in five minutes! You say to yourself, "No, sir, no, no, no! this is good meat—for dogs. Let them have it, but it is not good meat for me, and I do not intend to poison myself with it." The Saviour does not tell the woman, "Stop, now, and hear what Simon has got to say. Dear good woman, you have been washing my feet with tears and here is a highly intelligent gentleman, a Pharisee, who has a very learned prelection to deliver; give him a fair hearing. You have to prove all things; therefore, stop and hear him. And here are more gentlemen who object to my pardoning your sins; and their objections are fetched from deep veins of thought. Listen to them, and then I will meet their questions, and quiet your mind." No; the Saviour says, "Go, go, go in peace. You have peace: do not stop till you lose it. You have your comfort and joy: refuse to be robbed of them." Why, if you were in a room, and you saw a certain number of gentlemen of a suspicious character, and you had your watch with you, you would not feel it necessary to stop and see whether they were able to extract your watch from you, but you would say to yourself, "No; I am best out of this company." We are safest out of the society of those whose great object it is to rob us of our faith. "Thy faith hath saved thee. Go home. Leave them. Go in peace."

I think that he meant, besides going away from the men, "*Go away from the publicity into which you have unwillingly stepped.*" If our Saviour had been like some excellent people of the present day, he would have said, "Stand before all these men, and tell your experience. I shall require you to be at half-a-dozen meetings this week, and you must speak at every one of them." A splendid woman, was she not, who washed the Saviour's feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head? She might have exhibited her eyes and her hair, and told their gracious story. Who can tell but several would have been impressed by the narrative? The Saviour said to the woman—so excitable, for she was all that, as well as grateful—"Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." As much as to say, "There are certain of your own sex that you can speak to. You will find some poor fallen woman to whom you can quietly tell of my pardoning grace. But yours is a case in which the very beauty of your character will lie in the quietude of your future life. 'Thy faith hath saved thee.' That is enough for thee. Thou hast come upon the stage of action by that splendid act of thy love; but do not acquire the habit of winning publicity. Do not aspire to display thyself in a bold and heroic attitude, but go in peace." He almost seems to say, "Subside now into thy family. Take thy place with the rest of thy sisters. Adorn by thy future purity my doctrine, and let all men see what a change has been wrought in thee; for, mayhap, that very weakness of thine, which made thee what thou wast as a sinner, may put thee in danger even as a saint. Therefore I do not ask thee to tarry here, and join my disciples, and follow me publicly through the streets, but thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace."

I think that the Master taught a great deal of wisdom here, which some of those who are leaders in the church of God would do well to copy. Yea, I think that I shall go a little further, and say, that I think *the Saviour there and then dismissed her from that high ministry which, for once in her life, she had carried out.* She washed his feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. It was the action of a love which had risen to a passion. It was an action such as shall be told for a memorial of her everywhere; and we may well imitate her penitence, and her heroic courage, as well as her love to Christ. But, at the same time, we cannot always be doing heroic actions: life is mainly made up of common deeds. It would not be possible to be always washing feet with tears, nor to be always unbraiding tresses to use them as a towel. The difficulty with some people is that they are always wanting to practice the sublime. Alas! they often fail by just one step, and become ridiculous. They are always straining after effect; and, hearing of what has been done once, by one choice person, they must do it themselves, and they must keep on doing it. O my sister! there may come a time when you will have to speak for Christ, and speak openly before many; but tomorrow you had better go home, and see to the children, and make home happy for your husband. You will glorify Christ by darning stockings, and mending the socks of the little ones, quite as surely as by washing his feet with tears. You make a great mistake if you have not a piety which will take you into domestic life—which will help you to make the common drudgery of life a divine service.

We want men that can serve God with the axe and plane, or behind a counter, or by driving a quill. These are the men we want; but there are many that crave to vault at once into a conspicuous place, and perform an astounding deed. Having done it once, they become unsettled all the rest of their lives; and do not seem as if they ever could take to plainly keeping the ten commandments, and walking in the steps of Jesus. I wish that those who must flash and blaze would hear the Lord Jesus say to them, "Go in peace." I mean any of you who really did distinguish yourselves on one occasion, and deserved much praise from your Christian friends. I fear lest you should pine for unusual and even undesirable forms of service and become useless in the ordinary course of life. Now, do not be spoiled for life by having been allowed in one unusual deed, but hear the Master say, "Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace. Serve me in the daily avocations of life, and bring glory to my name at home. Go from the strain of publicity to the gentler pressures of family duty."

Do you not think that he even meant that she was now to cease *from that singular fellowship with him that she had enjoyed*? She had been very close to him; but she was, perhaps, never to be quite so near to him again. In spirit she should be; but certainly not physically. It happens that those who take to the contemplative life—and there is no life higher than that—are apt to think that they must forget the practical life. But it must not be so. We must do that which the Master bids us do, as well as sit at his feet. I am tempted to tell a story which most of you must know concerning the famous man of God, who, in his cell, thought he saw the Lord Jesus, and under that persuasion he worshipped with rapt delight. But just then the bell at the convent-gate rang, and it was his turn to stand at the door, and deal out bread to the hungry. There was a little battle in his mind as to which he should do—tarry with his Lord, or go to hand out bread to the poor mendicants. At last, he felt that he must do his duty even at the cost of the highest spiritual bliss. He went and distributed the bread, and when he came back, to his great delight, the vision was still there, and a voice said to him, "If thou hadst stayed, I would have gone; but as thou hast gone, I have therefore stayed still to commune with thee." The path of duty must be followed, and no spiritual enjoyment can excuse us from it. Never offer one duty to God stained with the blood of another. Balance your duties, and let not one press out another. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Do not think that thou needest to be all day long at thy Bible, or all the evening at thy prayer. There is a time for everything. Let every holy work have its place, that thy life may be a fair mosaic of brilliant colours, all set according to the divine pattern, to make up a perfect character. "Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace, and do the next thing, and the next, without weariness."

That leads me to speak of *what she was to go to*. It seems to me that the Saviour said, "Now *go home*. You have been a fallen woman: home is the place for you. Go home to your mother and father, or other relatives. Seek a home. Be domesticated. *Attend to your own work*. Whatever your place is, go to it. Leaving daily duty was the source of your temptation; return to walks of usefulness, and habits of order, and this will be your safety. You will be less likely to be led away if you have to work to occupy head, and heart, and hands."

Did he not mean, "*Go now to your ordinary life-trial*"? Do you think yourself a very peculiar person—a sort of saint, that has to float in the air, or live upon roses? Do not fancy such a thing. I have heard of the Chinese, that they sell shoes with which you can walk on the clouds; and I believe that some people must have bought a pair of these remarkable articles; for their lives are spent in cloudland, walking as in a dream, upon high stilts of fond imaginations. Do not think great things of yourself. You are but a commonplace man or woman. Do such duty as your fellow-Christians do, and do not think yourself a superior person. The worst people in the world to work with are superior people. Those are of no importance who think they are of great importance. Poor creature! it is not the grace of God which turns your brain, but your own silly conceit.

Go forth to your further service: "Go in peace. There are some to whom you can tell of my love. Oh, how you will tell it! You that have washed my feet with your tears, go and shower those tears over fallen ones like yourself. Go, use those eyes, that you may look my love right into their hearts as you are speaking to them. Go all your life in peace, and do for me all that I shall put in your way to do for me." That is what I think our Lord meant. Brethren, do not think of sitting here to enjoy yourselves; but go off, and glorify your Redeemer's name. Go!

But then here is the point of it: he said "*Go in peace*." O my brethren, I desire that all of us who love the Lord may go henceforth all the rest of our life journey in peace. May pardoning love put us at peace concerning all our sins! O pardoned one, thou lovest much, for thou hast had much

forgiven; let thy thoughts all run to love, and none to fear. Fret not about the past—the dark, dishonorable past. The hand that was pierced has blotted it all out. The great Lord has frankly forgiven thee all thy debt. Let not that disturb thee any longer. Go in peace. What a rest it is to be rid of the burden of sin, and to know of a certainty, from the teaching of God's own word, that your sins are forgiven you! This is peace which passeth all understanding.

Our Lord meant, next, *"Go in peace" in reference to all the criticisms of all these people who have looked at you.* Do not mind them. Do not trouble about them. What have they to do with you? It is enough for a servant if his master accepts him: he need not mind what others have to say about his service. Thy faith hath saved thee. Forget all the unkind things they have said, and do not trouble thy heart about the cruel speeches they may yet make. Go in peace, and be under no alarm as to upbraiding tongues.

And then I think he meant, *"Go in peace about what thou hast done."* I know the need of a word like that. I have preached the gospel: I have thrown my whole soul into it; and after it is all over, I have felt bound to chide myself that I did not do much better as to style, or spirit, or length, or some other matter. Oh, but if the Master accepts it, one may go in peace about it! This woman had done a very extraordinary thing in washing Christ's feet with tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head; and when she got away, she might have said to herself, "I wonder that I was so bold. Was I not immodestly conspicuous? How could I have done it? How must I have looked when I was bathing his feet? For me, too—such a sinner as I am—for me to have done it to the blessed and holy One! I fear he must have felt vexed at my rudeness!" Have you not sometimes done a brave thing for Christ, and then afterwards felt just like that? "I was a bold minx," say you, "after all, to push myself so forward." The good young man, who has just preached for the first time, says, "Well, I got through it this time, but I will never attempt it again, for I am sure that I am not fit for such holy work." So the Master says to this woman, "Go in peace. I have accepted thee and thy loving service. Do not trouble about what thou hast done. It is all sweet to me, and has a rich perfume of thy great love. Never fret about what you have done. You have done the right thing. Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace." I want us to have just that kind of peace—peace about what we have done for our Lord, even as we have peace about sin forgiven, and peace about human criticisms.

"Go in peace." Oh, to possess, from this time forth, a holy quiet! We are so apt to grow fretful. I know some good brethren who have a swollen vein of suspicion about them, that bleeds every now and then, and pains them greatly, and alarms other people. I know some sisters: they are very good, but unreasonably fearful. They say that they are "nervous." Perhaps that is the fact; and so I will say no more. But, oh, that we could get them cured of this disease of the nerves! I would they could be quieted! I admire the members of the Society of Friends for this virtue beyond almost any other which they exhibit: they seem to be so steady, self-contained, and equable. They are a little slow, perhaps; but then they are very sure, and firm, and steadfast, and calm. We are some of us too much in a hurry to go fast. If we were a little slower, we should be quicker. If we left our affairs more entirely with God, our peace might be like a river.

Yes, I would to God, dear friends, that we might feel henceforth a constant joy. Why not? Nothing ought to trouble us, for we know that all things work together for good. If we live by faith, nothing can trouble us; for between here and heaven we shall keep company with thee, thou Blessed One! And if the way thou takest be rough, the fact of thy being with us shall make it smooth to us. We will travel merrily with this as our march-music—"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Still, to come back to where I began, I dare say that the good woman thought that she would like

to speak a word for the Lord. When they said that he could not forgive sin, would not she have liked to say, "But he did forgive my sin, and he changed my nature. How dare you speak thus?" But the Saviour said, "Go." She was not called to contend. Thank God every child of God is not called to fight with the adversary: those of us who are men of war from our youth up take no pleasure in strife. We wish that, like this holy woman, we could be exempt from this warfare. She might well rejoice in her escape from the sacred conscription. Many a cuff and blow she thus avoided; and as her Captain sent her off the field, she might go home right happily.

She might have lost the blessed frame of mind in which she then was, and this would have been a real injury to her. She was sweetly wrapped up in love, and there her Lord would have her abide. He seems to say, "You are too precious to be battered and bruised in battle. Go—go in peace. Dear soul, you are so full of love to me that I do not want you to be worried with fighting, and contending, and controverting. Go in peace." She would have done no good, I dare say, if she had ventured into a fray for which she was so unfitted. If she had spoken, she would have said something which the cruel Pharisees would have turned into a jest. So he said to her, "Go in peace." Why should her feebleness give them an occasion for unholy triumph? All true hearts are not fit for fight. Besides, she had her Lord to be her Advocate, and there was no need for her to speak. Therefore he said, "I can manage them without your presence. Go in peace." When we may believingly leave a difficulty with our Lord, it is faith's duty to go home quietly. No doubt, by going in peace, she would be doing greater service than she would by using her tongue upon these ungodly men. A quiet, happy life is often the noblest witness that we can bear for Christ. Therefore I say to everyone who loves the Lord, there are times when he will say to us, "Do not enter into any of this conflict, and turmoil, and muddle. Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace."

The last word I have to say is this. There are many poor souls who talk about coming to Christ, who are not yet saved; and they are always hearing about faith, and thinking of it, and yet they never do, in very truth, believe. Now, do not hear nor debate any more about faith, but *believe*. Trust Jesus Christ, and think no more about your own trusting. Thou shalt think of it as a thing done, I mean, but not as a thing to be done. God help thee now to believe in Jesus, and so pass over the bridge of belief to the golden shore of Jesus himself!

Well, but I notice some say that they believe, but it is not believing, because if it were believing, they would "go in peace." A person comes to the bank with a cheque. He believes it to be honestly his, and the signature to be correct. He puts it down on the counter, and the clerk puts out the money. But see! The man does not take it! He stands and loafs about; and the clerk looks at him, and wonders what he is at. At last, when the person has been there long enough to wear the good man's patience out, the clerk says, "Did you bring that cheque to have the money?" "Yes, I handed it in." "Well, then, why do you not take the money, and go about your business?" If he is a sensible man, he delays no longer; nay, he would not have delayed so long. He takes the money, and departs in peace. Now, dear soul, if thou hast a promise from God—"He that believeth is not condemned," or "he that believeth hath everlasting life"—dost thou believe? Then take the blessing, and go about thy business. Do not keep on saying, "Perhaps it is so," and "Perhaps it is not so." Do you believe that God speaks the truth? If so, then take the promised blessing and enjoy it; for thou art a saved man. "But I have been going to a place of worship for years, and I have been believing in a sort of a way; but I have never dared to say that I was saved." Then you are acting the part of an unbeliever. If you do not know that you are saved, how dare you go to sleep tonight? How should a man dare to eat his meals, and go about his business, and yet say, "I do not know whether I am saved or not?" Thou mayest know it, and thou oughtest to know it. If you believe, you are saved: if you doubt that fact, you are rather an unbeliever than a believer. Take up your money, and go home. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Trust Jesus! Thy faith has saved thee. Go in peace.

The Lord help you truly to believe, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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