

# THE GOSPEL IN EZEKIEL

Illustrated in a Series of Discourses

by

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## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### THE NEW LIFE, PART II

The predestination which I believe in is that of Paul—“**Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.**” To redeem us from the power, as well as punishment of iniquity, Jesus died. For this his precious blood was shed—for this the Spirit has descended. We are “**called with a holy calling;**” —called to pluck the love of sin from our hearts, to dethrone every idol that usurps the place of God; and having nailed to the cross the old man, with his affections and lusts, we are called to be like Jesus.

His meat and drink was to do his Father’s will. He was “**holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.**” By this lofty end of a good’s man’s life, by the regard which you cherish to Christ, by the welfare of your soul, by the interest of other men’s souls, you are called to beware of everything which might blemish your profession, obscure the luster of your graces, and hinder you from walking in God’s statutes, and keeping his judgments, and doing them.

So far, therefore, as circumstances permit you, “**depart from evil,**” and in the choice of your company and companions, follow the example of David, and remember the warning of his son, “**I am a companion to all them that fear thee;**”—“**a companion of fools shall be destroyed.**” Shun the place of infection, and—more than if they had plague or fever—the company of the infected. Avoid and abjure every scene, pleasure, pursuit, which experience has taught you tends to sin, dulls the fine set edge of conscience, unfits for religious duties or religious enjoyments, sends you prayerless to bed, or dull and drowsy to prayer. As the seaman does with surf-beaten reef or iron-bound shore, give these a wide berth; and passing on, hold away in your course straight for heaven.

Never fear to suffer; but Oh! fear to sin. Stand in awe of God, and in fear of temptation. “**Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.**” It is not safe to bring gunpowder within reach even of a spark. Nor safe, however dexterous your driving, to shave with your wheels the edge of a beetling precipice. Nor safe in the best built bark that ever rode the waves, to sail on the rim of a roaring whirlpool. The seed of the woman has, indeed, bruised the head of the serpent, yet beware! the reptile, is not dead. It is dangerous to handle an adder, or approach its poison fangs, if the creature is alive, even although its head be crushed.

Let me also warn you that such a holy life as the text enjoins, is impossible to all but those who are on their guard against the beginnings of evil. Take alarm at an evil thought, wish, desire. These are the germs of sin—the floating seeds which drop into the heart, and finding in our natural corruption a fat and favorable soil, spring up into actual transgressions. These, like the rattle of the snake, the hiss of the serpent, reveal the presence and near neighborhood of danger. The experience of all good men proves that sin is most easily crushed in the bud, and that it is safer to flee from temptation than to fight it. Fight like a man when you cannot avoid the battle, but rather flee than fight. Be afraid of it, avoid it, abhor it; let your answer, as you tear yourself from the encircling arms of the enchantress, and seek safety in flight, be that of Joseph's—"**Shall I do this great evil, and sin against God?**"

True, religion, however, consists not in a passive but active piety. We are to walk in God's statutes, keep his judgments, and do them. Our pattern is not the man who wears a monkish cowl, and tells his beads, and keeps his vigils, and goes through the dull routine of prayers and fastings within the walls of a monastery; nor she who, having assumed the black veil and renounced the world, seeks safety from its contamination, or solace from its sorrows, within the cell and cloisters of a convent.

The pattern of a Christian is that divine man, who—while he passed a brief period of probation in the lonely desert, and often spent whole nights on the mountain in solitary communion with his God—walked the fields of Galilee, frequented the fishing villages on the shores of Tiberias, and was often to be met with in Judah's towns, and on Jerusalem's busy streets. Our exemplar is he, who, wherever he went, "**went about doing good,**" earning for himself this noble opprobrium, "**the friend of publicans and sinners.**"

Observe, that activity of Christian life is implied in the very terms of the text. Grant that we may thereby be exposed to hardships and temptations, from which a quiet and retiring piety might exempt us. Still, a life of active service will be best for others and in the end also for ourselves. A candle set beneath a bushel is, no doubt, safe from wind and weather; but of what use is it? On whose work does it shine? Whose path does it illumine? I would rather burn and waste on some lofty headland to guide the bark through night and storm to its desired haven. No light shineth for itself, and "**no man liveth for himself.**"

Besides, the very trials to which piety is exposed on the stormy heights of duty, will impart to it a robust and healthy character. The strongest trees grow not beneath the glass of a greenhouse, or in the protection of sheltered and shaded valleys. The stoutest timber stands on Norwegian rocks, where tempests rage, and long, hard winters reign. And is it not with the Christian as with the animal life also?

Exercise gives health, and strength is the reward of activity. The muscles are seen fully developed in the brawny arm that plies the ringing hammer. Health blooms ruddiest on the cheek, and strength is most powerfully developed in the limbs of him, who—not nailed to a sedentary occupation, nor breathing the close atmosphere of heated chambers—but fearless of cold, a stranger to downy pillows and luxurious repose, rises with the day, sees the early worm rise in the dank meadow and hears the morning lark high over head, and passing his hours in athletic exercises, increases his strength by spending it.

Even so, the most vigorous and healthy piety is that which is the busiest, which has difficulties to battle with, which has its hands full of good works, which has—I may say—neither time nor room for evil, but aiming at great things, both for God and man, promptly, summarily dismisses temptation, with Nehemiah's answer—“**I have a great work to do, therefore I cannot come down.**”

This world—with so many living and dying in it without God and hope, with the whole heathen world still unconverted, with thousands and tens of thousands at home sunk in the deepest ignorance, and slaves of the vilest sins, with members of our families or of friendly circles far from God, and between whom and us—terrible thought!—death would make an eternal separation—has much need that we were up and doing, and throwing ourselves into the cause of active Christianity.

Our opportunities of good are many and multiform. A Christian man should feel like some strong swimmer, who has hundreds around him sinking, drowning, shrieking for help; the difficulty is to make selection, and on whose unhappy head first to lay a saving hand amid such scenes and calls. Oh, it is lamentable to think how much of our time has been frivolously and uselessly spent. “**The time past of our lives has been more than sufficient to have wrought the will of the flesh;**” to have enjoyed our own ease, made money, and secured for ourselves the comforts of life. To nobler ends be its remaining sands devoted! Take Christ for your copy. Run in God's statutes without wearying, and walk in them without fainting; and let the day on which some good has not been done to ourselves or others—some glory won for God, some progress made in the divine life—be a day mourned over, wept for, and this written down against it in the calendar of our life—“I have lost a day.”

Our Christianity is a name, a shadow, unless we resemble him who, being incarnate God, was incarnate goodness, and of whom, although he stood alone in that hall—without one kind or brave voice raised to speak for him—there were hundreds and thousands to bear this testimony, that he “**went about doing good,**” and was the friend both of sufferers and sinners. It is thus that we are to fulfill the duties of the Christian life, and exhibit a living picture of one in whom this promise is fulfilled—“**I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and to keep my judgments and do them.**”

In closing my observations on this part of our subject, I remark—

*I. One of the most powerful means to accomplish the duty of the text is to cultivate the love of Christ.*

They who would live like Jesus must look to Jesus. What effect will follow? Look at the sun—and now to the eyes which have been bathed in his dazzling beams, how do other objects appear? Why, all are changed. They have grown dim, if not dark and invisible. Candles, that burned bright, have no flame; flowers, that looked beautiful, have no color; the very diamond has lost its sparkling. And could we see Jesus Christ in the full effulgence of his Saviour glory, all sinful and even all common created objects, would appear to undergo some such change.

We see but through a glass darkly. The dimness of sin impairs our vision, but were we to see Jesus, as we shall see him in heaven, I think it would happen to us as once it happened to a celebrated philosopher. Pursuing his discoveries on the subject of light—with a zeal not too often consecrated to science, but too seldom consecrated to religion—he ventured on a bold experiment.

Without protection of smoked or colored glass, he fixed his gaze steadily, for some time, on the sun—exposing his naked eyes to the burning beams of its fiery disc. Satisfied, he turned his head away; but, strange to see!—such was the impression made on the organ of sight—wherever he turned, the sun was there; if he looked down, it was beneath his feet; it shone in the top of the sky in the darkest midnight; it blazed on the page of every book he read; he saw it when he shut his eyes, he saw it when he opened them. It was the last object which he saw when he passed off into sleep; it was the first to meet his waking eyes. Happy were it for us if we got some such sight of Christ, and this glory of that sun of righteousness were so impressed upon the eye of faith that we could never forget him, and, ever seeing him, ever loved him.

With Christ ever present to our mind's eye, then we should be able more fully to adopt the words of Paul, and say, **“the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then we are all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.”**

Experience has proved that of all instruments, the mightiest for conversion is the love of Jesus. It was only **“Christ and him crucified,”** ‘that Paul was to know and preach; and in every age of the church and region of the world has not that proved the rod to smite rocky hearts?’

Let me illustrate the fact by referring to oft-quoted experience of some Moravians who had gone to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the cold clime and rude savages of Greenland. For what reason I know not, but it is a fact that they commenced and continued for months to preach to these savages of their sins. They told them of the wrath of God; they sounded Sinai's thunders; they blew its loudest trumpet in their ears; they appealed to their conscience, to their fears, to their self-love and self-interest. They told them of a heaven above, with a sun that never set, and of a dark and dreary hell below, where nor sun, nor hope ever rose; of fire that purified and a worm that gnawed incessantly. Thus they preached. But their preaching was all in vain.

The aspect of their hearers had its counterpart in the wintry landscape of these northern regions; characterized by perpetual night—the intensest cold—death-like silence; a sunless sky; and a sea bound fast in chains of ice. These good men changed their plan. They chose another theme. Exchanging the law for the love of God, they preached of Calvary, and expatiated on the love which brought Jesus to a cross, and opened his blessed arms to embrace the world. The effect was almost as immediate as remarkable. When summer came and the snows melted on their hills, and, with sounds, like the salvos of cannon that announce a victory, the ice broke on these frozen seas; and beneath the beams of a sun, which blazed at midday, nor set at midnight, the earth—like a corpse come to life—disrobed itself out of its snowy shroud; and the sea, rejoicing in freedom from its icy bonds, with tides that ebbed and flowed, once more answered to the influences of heaven, and rising to the wind, praised God night and day with the voices of its roaring breakers.

This glorious change was but a picture of the melting, moving, transforming, regenerating power felt by the soul of the poor, wondering savage, as he looked with weeping eye on the love of Christ and the bloody cross of Calvary.

As the love of Christ to us is the mightiest power to awaken faith, so in the love of our hearts to Christ will be found the mightiest power to secure obedience, and insure our walking in God's statutes, and keeping his judgments, and doing them. Therefore, we urge you to cultivate it; for—

*Love is the most powerful of all motives.*

Samson's great strength lay in his hair. Shorn of that, he was like other men. The Christian's great strength lies in his love; and when Christ invites us to sacrifices and sufferings which the world would pronounce intolerable, love is ready to explain and justify the language of his invitation—**“Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, for it is easy, and my burden, for it is light.”**

On the back of love the burden loses more than half its weight, and the work that is done in love loses more than half its tedium and difficulty. It is as with a stone, that in the air, and on the dry ground, we strain at, but cannot stir. Flood the field where it lies; bury the block beneath the rising water. Now when its head is submerged, bend to the work. Put your strength to it Ah! It moves—it rises from its bed—it rolls on before your arm. So, when the tide of love goes swelling over our duties and difficulties, a child can do a man's work, and a man can do a giant's. With love in the heart, **“out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God ordaineth strength.”** Strength!

What strength of Death pulls down the youngest and the strongest—but love is stronger than death She welcomes sacrifices, and glories in tribulation. Duty has no burden, and death has no terror for her.

Look at that bird, which, with wings outstretched, sits dead on the scorched and blackened tree. She might have flown away in safety. The smoke below alarmed her. Dashing through and through it on frightened wing, she screamed, as, climbing from branch to branch, the Fire rose to her nest and brood She dashes right into the danger; and, perched on the brim of the nest—a tender mother—she fans her young ones with her wings. Now the flames lick it with their fiery tongues—she leaves her perch. False to her offspring? No. A true mother. She abandons it—not to soar away to heaven—but, as on dewy nights and in happier hours, to seat herself above her young to die with them; and, with expanded wings, protecting them to the last—to be found dead with a dead brood beneath her.

I look on that—or I look on this other mother, who stands with her child on the side of the sinking wreck, to catch the last chance of a passing boat. She catches it—not to leap in herself; but, lifting her boy in her arms, and printing a mother's last kiss upon his rosy lips, she drops him in, and remains behind herself to drown and die.

Or I look at that maid in old border story, who, having caught a glance of the arrow that, shot by a rival's hand, came from the bushes on the other bank, flung herself before her lover, and received the fatal shot in her own true and faithful heart.

I look at these things, and, seeing that love is strong as death, I urge you to cultivate the love of Jesus, and go in its divine strength to the field of duty, and the altar of sacrifice. I do not say that you will find it easy to walk in God's statutes, to keep Christ's commandments, and do them.

To pluck sin from a bleeding heart—to put our right hand on the block and cut it off—to pull a right eye from its socket, and put our foot upon it—for a proud man to learn humility—for a lover of the world not to love it—for one who has strong native corruption to nail it to the cross, and keep it nailed there till it die—when the path of duty is strewn with flints and thorns, to walk over them with bleeding feet—is, and must be painful. There is no use of concealing it, of denying it. No. But all the more need there is that you inflame your love by looking to Christ.

Go often, and, with the shepherds, gaze on the heavenly babe laid on a pallet of straw in the corner of a manger. With the disciples, accompany him to Gethsemane, and sit beneath her hoary olives to listen in the still night to the moans and groans of the Son in the hands of his Father. Or join the weeping women, and, with the other Marys and his fainting mother, take up your station near the awful cross, and meditate on these things till you can say with David, "**While I was musing, the fire burned.**"

*Love is a motive to duty as pleasant as it is powerful.*

Love weaves chains that are tougher than iron, and yet softer than silk. She unites the strength of a giant to the gentleness of a little child; and, with a power of change all her own, under her benign and omnipotent influence, duties that were once intolerable drudgeries become a pure delight.

The mother, for instance, away from scenes of gaiety, without which to others and once also to herself the cup of life was flat and tasteless, is awakened to new enjoyments. She never wearies watching by her infant's cradle; nor does she grudge the nights of broken rest, the toils, the cares, the troubles that creature costs her, although these have blanched her cheek and paled the luster of her eye. To cares that others would feel irksome, she cheerfully devotes herself, even before the babe can lisp her name, or reward her kindness with a look of recognition and its grateful, winning smile.

Nor does the father weary of the toil that wins his children's bread. The thought of these strengthens the arms of daily labor, fires the patriot's zeal, kindles a soldier's courage, cheers the seaman on his lonely watch, and reconciles thousands of our honest poor to a life of incessant struggle—carrying them through toils and hardships, otherwise intolerable, with a cheerful, contented, happy, singing spirit.

You would think it a most weary and dreary thing to lead the life which that mother passes. You think so, because you do not feel her love.

And it is just because they are strangers to the love of Jesus—because they have never known him, nor loved him, that many cannot comprehend such things as—how a pious life can be a pleasant one—how any man can think that the finest music is the sound of Sabbath bells—that God’s is the best house—and the lord’s the best table—how a man of exalted grace would rather sit down with a pious peasant at the Lord’s supper, than at a banquet where he was the guest of kings—and how King David should have thought a day spent in the sanctuary better than a thousand passed amid the stirring scenes of a camp, or the glory and luxuries of a palace.

They cannot understand how, unless they were fools or fanatics, the disciples should leave the judgment-seat with bleeding stripes, and rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ; how Paul and Silas should have sung as cheerfully in a dungeon as ever dark that shook the night dew from its wings, and rose to greet the morning sun; and how the only fear of that brave old man, John Welch, in yonder rocky prison of the Bass, was lest, that when others were winning the crown of martyrdom, he should miss it, nor be counted worthy of that bloody honor.

But they, in some measure at least, understand these things, whose pulse beats true to the law of God, and whose heart burns with the love of Christ. To the feet of love the ways of that law are like the fresh and flowery sward, **“ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.”**

Love changes bondage into liberty, and, delighting in that law which was once to us what his chain is to the dog, what his task is to the slave, and against which our corrupt passions once foamed and fretted like angry seas on their iron shores, she takes up the harp of David, and thus sings its praises—

**“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb.”**

**“Oh! how I love thy law, Lord; it is my meditation all the day.”**

*II. A powerful motive to the duties of the text lies in the fact, that by our obedience to these statutes the verdict of judgment shall be settled.*

We are saved by grace, but shall be tried by works. We are to be judged by the **“deeds done in the body whether they were good or bad.”** **“Every one of us,”** says Paul, **“shall give account of himself to God,”**

Oh! how should these solemn truths hedge, wall up our path to a close and holy walk in his statutes! The great realities of eternity are projected in outline on the field of time, and this world lies under the long, solemn shadow of coming events. Imagine them come—the day of judgment come! For whatever purpose met, there is something most impressive in the spectacle of a great multitude; that vast sea of faces—that mighty aggregate of human beings with living hearts, immortal souls, eternal destinies—all in a few years to be dead and gone; and the joys and sorrows, the fears and hopes, that now animate and agitate them, cold and buried in the dust.

But how unspeakably more solemn a world come from their graves to judgment! and amid circumstances of terrible and transcendent sublimity—thunders that rend the skies—the perpetual hills passing away—burning mountains hurled into boiling seas—the sun dying—the starry heavens rolling up like a scroll—and all eyes fixed on the “**great white throne,**” which rises in lonely majesty high above the countless crowd.

It shall be a solemn thing to meet the dead again, and see those—father and mother, children, our brethren—who are now moldering in the dust. How solemn it was to part with them—to stand by the dying bed, and look on as they passed away, till we heard life’s departing sigh, and saw the last convulsion quiver on the lip of one that was our own. But the meeting of those who, although lying side by side, have been long parted—who, although their coffins and dust commingle, have held no communion in these silent graves, will be a more solemn thing; and an awful thing, if we should meet, as many shall meet—how dreadful the thought!—with mutual accusations and bitter recriminations; awful, overwhelming, unless we meet with mutual congratulations, to spend eternity together in a better than our old, earthly home—in the mansions where friends meet to part no more.

Still the solemnity rises. If it shall be a solemn thing to find ourselves face to face with the dead, how much more solemn to stand face to face with the great Judge both of the quick and dead. We have read—we have often thought of Jesus Christ, till we felt as if we saw him. We have followed him in fancy’s vision through the checkered scenes of his earthly history—along his rough and bloody path, from the night that angels sung his advent, to the day when they returned to escort the conqueror home. We have seen his form stretched out—for want of a better bed—upon the dewy field, or wrapped up in coarse boat-cloak as he lay buried in slumber amid the storm on Galilee. We have seen the eyes of pity he bent on the weeping Magdalene—the expression of reproachful love he cast on a recreant disciple—that dying look, so full of fond affection, which he turned on a fainting mother. We have seen him standing calm and collected before a prejudiced and time-serving judge, patient and self-possessed beneath the bloody scourge, mute and meek before the frenzied multitude; and as we watched the successive events of the cross, we have seen the joy—typified by the passing away of this eclipse—that gleamed in his dying eyes as he raised them to heaven and cried, “**It is finished,**” We have often in fancy seen him. When our dust revives, and the grave that is now awaiting us shall give up its dead, with these very eyes we shall see him—by the light of a world in flames we shall see him, a God enthroned for judgment.

The day grows yet more solemn; its solemnity reaches its highest point, and culminates in the momentous issues of judgment. It is God’s day of settlement with a world that has had a long credit. It is the winding up of this earth’s bankrupt estate, and each man’s individual interests. It is the closing of an open account that has been running on ever since the Fall. It is the day when the balance is struck, and our fate is heaven or hell; and what invests my text with solemn and sublime importance is this, that by the manager in which we have walked in these statutes, and kept these judgments, and done them, shall our destiny be determined.

The most common action of life, its every day, every hour, is invested with a solemn grandeur, when we think how they extend their issues into eternity. Our hands are now sowing seed for that great harvest. We shall meet again all we are doing and have done.

The graves shall give up their dead, and from the tombs of oblivion the past shall give up all that it holds in keeping, to be witness for or witness against us. Oh, think of that, and in yonder hall of the Inquisition, see what its effect on us should be. Within those blood-stained halls, for whose atrocious cruelties Rome has yet to answer, one is under examination. He has been assured that nothing he reveals shall be written for the purpose of being used against him. While making frank and ingenuous confession he suddenly stops.

He is dumb—a mute. They ply him with questions, flatter him, threaten him; he answers not a word. Danger makes the senses quick. His ear has caught a sound; he listens; it ties his tongue. An arras hangs beside him, and behind it he hears a pen running along the pages. The truth lashes on him. Behind that screen a scribe sits committing to the fatal page every word he says, and he shall meet it all again on the day of trial. Ah! how solemn to think that there is such a pen going in heaven, and entering on the books of judgment all we say, or wish, all we think, we do. Would to God we heard it—everywhere, and always heard it! What a check! and what a stimulus!

Are we about to sin, how strong a curb; if slow to duty, how sharp a spur. What a motive to pray for the blood that blots out a guilty past, and for such grace, as, in time to come, shall enable us to walk in God's statutes, to keep his judgments, and to do them. Do any flatter themselves that, as to their sins and transgressions, God hath not seen, or doth not regard, or hath forgotten?

Most fatal delusion!

**“I have seen all that Laban hath done unto thee,”** said the Lord to Jacob in a dream. **“Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth,”** are his words to Elijah, when he sends away his ambassador with a commission to throw down the gauntlet at a king's feet, and to proclaim war between heaven and the bloody house of Ahab. Naboth has been foully murdered, but lies quiet in his bloody shroud. The crime is concealed. Cunning and cruelty have triumphed; and no living man now stands between Ahab and the vineyard. His evil genius approaches his bed. **“Arise,”** says his wife, **“Naboth is dead, arise and take possession.”**

The king rises, rides down in royal state to Jezreel, and luxuriates among the clustered grapes of his ill-got possession. Suddenly a man clothed in rough garment, unsummoned, unwelcomed, appears upon the scene, and intrudes himself on royalty. It is Elijah. With steady step and stern look, he marches up to Ahab, and, fixing his eyes on the quailing coward, asks, **“Hast thou killed and also taken possession? In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, they shall lick thy blood, even thine.”**

Tread upon a worm and it will turn on you. To be a king, and yet be bearded before his court by this rude, unmannerly intruder, to have the damning deed—which had been contrived with such cunning, and executed with such success—dragged out from its concealment by this bold hand into the light of day, to be branded before his courtiers, and proclaimed throughout all the country as Naboth's murderer, stirs—if not the courage—at least the wrath of Ahab.

With guilt on his scowling brow, and malignant anger burning in his eyes, he turns on the prophet, saying, **“Hast thou found me, mine enemy?”**

**“I have found thee,”** was the calm, terrible, intrepid answer.

Impenitent and unbelieving sinner! flatter not thyself that God hath not seen, or doth not regard; fancy not that thy crimes are buried in a grave deeper than Naboth's, and that, as the dust of death lies on the lips of the partners or witnesses of thy guilt, therefore you may be at ease, since the dead tell no tales.

The day is coming when every unpardoned sin shall find out its father;—when what has been done in darkness shall be revealed in daylight, and the word whispered in the ear shall be published upon the housetop.

We shall be tried by our obedience to these statutes and judgments. We have often disobeyed them, and if, on that dread day, we would not have these sins to meet us as Elijah met the king— if we would meet not our sins but our Saviour. Oh let us have recourse now to the blood that blotteth them out. Without a pardon, Jesus shall have no answer to us but one, the humble reply of Jehu, **“What hast thou to do with peace?”**

Peace!—Yes, there shall be peace—**“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;”** and the secret of our peace shall lie in that which hold up the head of a royal favorite, while undergoing trial before his country for a very heinous crime.

Men wondered at his strange serenity, and how he could bear himself so calmly. He passed on to the bar without a cloud upon his brow, or an expression of anxiety in his eye, as he looked around him on judges, accusers, the crowd of anxious spectators.

The trial began. His case grew darker and darker—not so his aspect. Witness after witness bore crushing evidence against him, yet the keen eyes of his enemies could detect no quiver on his lip, or shade upon his brow. Long after hope had expired in the breast of anxious friends, and they looked on him as a doomed man, there he was, looking round serenely on that terrible array.

His pulse beat calm, nor started suddenly, but went on with a stately march; while peace sat enthroned upon his placid brow. When at length, amid the silence of the hushed assembly, the verdict of “Guilty” is pronounced, he rises.

Erect in attitude, in demeanor calm, he stands up, not to receive the sentence—which was already trembling on the judge's lip—but to reveal the secret of this strange peace and self-possession. He thrusts his hand into his bosom, and lays on the table a pardon—a full, free pardon for his crimes, sealed with the royal signet.

Would to God we all were as well prepared!

Then fare ye well, earth, sun, moon, and stars; fare ye well, wife and children, brothers and sisters, sweet friends, and all dear to us here below. Welcome death, welcome judgment, welcome eternity; welcome God and Christ, angels and saints made perfect, welcome heaven.

In the grace that leads to a holy walk, in some measure of godly obedience to these statutes, in the faith that worketh by love, purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world, have you the evidence that you are forgiven?

In these, do you carry in your bosom God's pardon, ready to be produced when you are summoned to trial? Look forward without fear to the great account. These shall be witnesses that you have received the righteousness which makes the inner just. Best of all shrouds, may you be wrapped in the "**clean linen**" of Jesus' righteousness!

With that robe around you may you rise from the grave!—his your plea—Almighty God! of my own works I have nothing to say but this, "What is bad in them is mine; what is good in them is thine. Behold this pardon—look on this robe, and know now whether it be thy Son's coat or no."

~ end of chapter 19 ~

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