

THE GOSPEL IN EZEKIEL

Illustrated in a Series of Discourses

by

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MAN CONVERTED

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26).

It is a happy thing that baptism is not the door of heaven—happy for millions, who, dying in earliest infancy, never pass that way. Dying unbaptized, we hold that they die not on that account unsaved; for whoever dare hang God's mercy on any outward rite, we do not, and although we believe that this interesting ordinance is also, when engaged in with faith, an eminently blessed one, we dare not. Thousands go to heaven without baptism. Thousands, alas! perish with it.

Heaven is greatly made up of little children—sweet buds that have never blown, or which death has plucked from a mother's bosom to lay on his own old breast, just when they were expanding, flowerlike, from the sheath, and opening their engaging beauties in the budding time and spring of life. **“Of such is the kingdom of heaven.”**

How sweet these words by the cradle of a dying infant!

They fall like balm drops on our bleeding heart, when we watch the ebbing of that young life, as wave after wave breaks feebler, and the sinking breath gets lower and lower, till with a gentle sigh, and a passing quiver of the lip, our child now leaves its body, lying like an angel asleep, and ascends to the beatitudes of heaven and the bosom of God.

Indeed, it may be that God does with his heavenly garden as we do with our own gardens. He may chiefly stock it from nurseries, and select for transplanting what is yet in its young and tender age—flowers before they have bloomed, and trees ere they begin to bear.

Baptism attaches us to the local church; admits to that, and is its door of entrance; but, while it unites to the body of professing believers, it does not of necessity form any living attachment between us and the Saviour. Let us see what is done in these ordinances.

Years ago a man stood up in the house of God, and in his arms there lay a sleeping child. Dipping his hand into a laver, the minister sprinkled some drops on the infant's face, and over the unconscious creature pronounced the names of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

That child was you. By hands, now mouldering in the grave, your father then tied you—so to speak—to Christ. Well, time rolls on, and infants grow into children, children shoot up into youths, and youths change into bearded men; and then there comes another day. A table is spread in the house of God. Like the shroud in which kind women swathed his sacred body, a linen cloth covers the memorials of Christ's death. The broken body is uncovered, the commemoration begins; and, amid the stillness of that solemn scene, with thoughtful countenance, a man leaves his seat, and taking the bread, and raising the fruit of the grape in his hand, he dedicates himself to the Saviour. That man again is you. And now awake, not asleep, conscious of what is done, not passive but active now, with your own hands you fast another knot upon the cord by which your father years ago bound you to Jesus. You are now tied—doubly tied—yet it does not follow that you are yet engrafted into him.

I have seen a branch tied to the bleeding tree, for the purpose of being engrafted into its wounded body, and that thus both might be one. Yet no incorporation had followed; there was no living union. Spring came singing, and with her fingers opened all the buds; and summer came, with her dewy nights and sunny days, and brought out all the flowers; and brown autumn came to shake the trees and reap the fields, and with dances and mirth to hold "harvest home;" but that unhappy branch bore no fruit, nor flower, nor even leaf. Just held on by dead clay and rotting cords, it stuck to the living tree—a withered and unsightly thing. So alas! is it with many; "**thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.**" They have no faith; they want that bond of living union between the graft and what it is grafted on—between the sinner and the Saviour. And, therefore, in quitting this part of our subject for another, let me ask, "**believest thou;**" and if thou dost not, O, let me urge you to pray with the man in the Gospel, "**Lord, help mine unbelief?**"

Do you say, I cannot believe? In one sense, that is true; in another, it is not. It is not true in the same sense as it is true—that a man who has no eyes in his head—nothing but empty sockets—cannot see. All men are born with faith. Faith is as natural to a man as grief, or love, or anger.

One of the earliest flowers that springs up in the soul—it smiles on a mother from her infant's cradle; and living on through the rudest storms of life, it never dies till the hour of death. On the face of a child which has been left for a little time with strangers, and may he caressed with their kisses, and courted with their smiles, and fondled, and dandled in their arms.

I have seen a cloud gathering, and growing darker, till at length it burst in cries of terror and a shower of tears. The mother returns; and when the babe holds out its little arms to her, I see in these the arms of faith; and when, like a believer restored to the bosom of his God, it is nestling in a mother's embrace, and the cloud passes from its brow, and its tears are changed into smiles, and its terror into calm serenity, we behold the principle of faith in play.

This is one of its earliest, and—so far as nature is concerned—one of its most beautiful developments. So natural, indeed, is it for us to confide, and trust, and believe, that a child believes whatever it is told, until experience shakes its confidence in human veracity. Its eye is caught by the beauty of some flower, or it gazes up with wonder on the starry heavens—with that inquisitiveness which in childhood, active as a bee, is ever on the wing, it is curious to know who made them, and would believe you if you said you made them yourself.

Such is the faith which nature gives it in a father, that it never doubts his word. It believes all he says, and is content to believe where it is not able to comprehend.

For this, as well as other reasons, our Lord presented, in a child, the living model of a Christian. He left Abraham, father of the faithful, to his repose in heaven; he left Samuel, undisturbed, to enjoy the quiet rest of his grave; he allowed Moses and Elias, after their brief visit, to return to the skies, and wing their way back to glory. For a pattern of faith, he took a boy from his mother's side, and, setting him up, in his gentle, blushing, shrinking modesty, before the great assembly, he said, "**Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.**"

Paul said, "**When I was a child I spake as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things;**" but no man ever thought of leaving the faith of childhood with its rattle and its toys. Faith is, in fact, the soul and life of friendship.

What is a friend, but one in whom I can trust, one who, I believe, will mingle his tears with mine, and whose support I reckon on when my back is at the wall? Without faith in each other's friendship, kindness and honesty, this world would be turned into a Bedouin desert; men would become Ishmaelites—my hand against every man, and every man's hand against me. Faith is the marriage tie; the guardian angel of conjugal felicity; the jeweled zone that binds society together; the power, mightier than steam, or wind, or water, that moves all the wheels of commerce.

Unless man could trust his fellowman, business would come to a dead stand; the whole machinery of the world would stop; our busy streets would bear crops of grass; and, though winds blew and tides flowed as before, rotting ships would fall to pieces in our silent and deserted harbors.

Leaving the busy city for rural scenes, or setting your foot on board ship, and pushing out upon the heaving ocean, you find faith ploughing the fields of both—faith in the laws of nature, and in the ordinances of Providence. When the air has still a frosty breath, and, although cleared of winter snow, the earth is cold and—looks dead as a corpse disrobed of its shroud—it shows neither flower nor leaf, nor sign of life, the husbandman, notwithstanding, yokes his team and drives the ploughshare through its breasts. With confidence in his step, liberality in his hand and hope in his eye, he scatters the seed far and wide on the bosom of the ground. He is a believer; a believer in Providence—in the laws and procession of the seasons.

He has faith; not saving faith indeed, but still true faith. He believes that out of these frosty skies gentle zephyrs shall blow, and soft showers shall fall, and summer beams shall shine; and, looking along the vista of time, he sees golden corn waving thick upon these empty fields, and hears in this silent scene the joy of light hearts ringing in the laugh and song of the reapers. His ploughing and his sowing are acts of genuine faith; and, as he strides across the field with his sowing sheet around him, he is an example of one, who, with his eye, as well as his foot, on earth, "**Walks by faith, not by sight.**"

Then again, sailing as much as sowing is an act of faith. In this rough and weather-beaten mariner, on board whose ship we are dashing through the thick gloom of a starless night, and over the waves of a pathless ocean, I see faith standing at the helm. That man has faith in the needle; and believing that the heart of an angel is not more true to God than this needle to the north, he presses forward over the watery waste in a voyage, that may with perfect truth be called a voyage of faith.

Would to God we had as strong a faith in our Bible! Would to God that our trembling hearts pointed as true to Jesus, as his needle in all weathers, and on all seas, to the distant pole! What we want divine grace to do, is not so much to give us faith, as to give to the principle or faculty of faith, which we have by nature, a right, holy, heavenward direction; to convert it into faith in things eternal. The faith that sees an unseen world—a faith just as strong in the revelations of the Bible as in the ordinary laws of nature, this is what we need. Let it be sought in earnest, persevering prayer. It is “**the gift of God.**”

Saving faith has God for its author, the Spirit for its agent, Christ for its object, grace for its root, holiness for its fruit, and heaven for its reward. Accepting the righteousness of Christ, it makes us just; and seeing every sin pardoned, all guilt removed, God smiling and heaven opening to receive us, it is the spring of a peace of mind which is worth more than the wealth of worlds, which passeth all understanding. May God help us to the confession and the prayer, “**Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief.**”

We have already stated that while salvation was the one thing needful, there were two things needful for salvation. Having considered the first of these, namely, the remission of sin and justification of the sinner, we now enter on the second, namely, the renovation of the soul as enunciated in the words, “**A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.**”

And we remark

I. This is a great change.

Not that all men think so. Once on a time, for instance, we wandered into a church in this city. The preacher read these words for his text, “**Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God.**” And just as at the fords of Jordan, they knew a man’s country by the way he sounded Shibboleth, so you will never fail to know a man’s creed by the way in which he handles such a passage as that. The preacher read his text; and then, as it were, sat down by the cradle, where his charge was sleeping, to rock them over into a deeper slumber. The text, forsooth, was an oriental figure! a hyperbole! pointing to an outward change. No more was needed. In the strong and highly figurative language which eastern nations indulge in, it described the change undergone by the man who abandons a wild and wicked life for habits of decency, honesty, and temperance. Far be it from me to speak lightly of temperance societies, or of any scheme, indeed, that aims at the dignity and elevation of man; yet, according to the preacher, our Lord’s language meant nothing more than the change which these institutions are of themselves able to accomplish—a change of habits without any gracious change of heart.

Did a drunkard become sober? he was born again; a libertine pure? or thief honest? or liar true? he was born again! In short, such was the style and character of the discourse, that if a poor, hungry soul had gone there for bread, he could have got nothing carried away nothing—but a stone; and instead of a fish, we saw the serpent's coil, and heard her hiss.

The preacher taught that these words were applicable only to the scum and offscourings of the city—the dregs of society—those poor, depraved, degraded creatures, who, weighed down by a load of poverty and ignorance, and guilt, have sunk to the bottom, and to our shame, are left to lie there in distressing and dreadful pollution. So far as any congregation of decent, well-dressed, sober, honest, reputable professors of religion were concerned, that truth had no bearing on them; our Lord—although he assuredly found in Nicodemus one of this class—did not speak of them; they, happy mortals! had no need to be born again.

You cannot fancy any two things more opposed to each other than that doctrine and ours. We believe that the purest, gentlest, loveliest, most amiable creature that blesses fond parents, and adorns earth's happiest home—one of nature's fairest flowers—stands as much in need of a new birth as the vilest outcast who walks these streets—the lost one, whose name is never mentioned but by broken hearts and in wrestling prayers to God. The best of mankind are so bad that all have need to be born again; so bad, that the change promised in the text, and insisted on by our Saviour, cannot be a surface or superficial matter—any mere defilement of the skin which nitre and soap may remove. Words have no meaning unless this change is a radical reform—a change great in its character, and lasting in its consequences—a change, which, affecting not the habits only, but the heart, both reaches downward into the deepest recesses of the soul, and stretches forward into the ages of eternity.

Wow, I am afraid that some—dreaming, as they slumber, that they have been born again and so are safe, because their conduct is changed, and because, so far as their mere habits are concerned, they are better than once they were—have gone to sleep before this work is even begun. Beware of rash conclusions of such momentous importance. Have we not seen passions, like the fire upon the hearth, burn out and die for want of fuel? Have we not seen the course of vice, like a worn out machine, stop from the decays of nature—from the mere wear and tear of its materials. Virtue is cheap; vice is costly; and, proving a heavy tax upon the purse, destructive of health, and damaging to character, we have seen self-interest turn a man from the indulgence of his strongest vices. Old age cools hot blood.

Successive bereavements will in a way break the heart, and some deep disappointment may wean those, who have the keenest appetite for its pleasures, from the gayeties and vanities of the world. And, as in Roman Catholic countries, many a cowed monk, and many a veiled nun, enters convent or monastery more from feelings of disappointment than devotion; so, when hopes are blasted, and pride is mortified, and ambition has missed her mark, you may get sick of the world.

Alas! all who bid adieu to the hall-room and theater, and giddy round of fashion, do not leave the circle of their enchantments for the closet, for the sanctuary, for fields of Christian benevolence.

As by sleight of hand and necromantic trick, Egypt's magicians produced a set of mimic miracles, that were clever counterfeits of those which God wrought by the hand of Moses, may not other causes than true love of holiness or godly hatred of sin work such an outward, as bears some considerable likeness to a saving change? In matters of religion, beware of confounding an almost with an altogether Christian. So far as it goes, any change for the better is good. We hail it with hope. It is good so far as it goes, and good so long as it lasts; but Oh, let us not fall into the fatal mistake of confounding an outward reformation with that divine, inward, eternal transformation which is wrought by the Spirit, and promised in the words, "**A new heart also will I give you.**"

Leaving the nature of this change to be afterwards considered, let me attempt meanwhile to show that this is a great change. In illustration of the truth, look, I pray you, to the symbols under which it is presented in the Word of God.

It is a birth.

When an infant leaves the womb—that darksome dwelling, where it has passed the first stage of its existence—although the same creature, it may be said to be a new creature, and to enter on a new being. How great the change from that living sepulcher, where it lay entombed, nor saw, nor heard, nor breathed, nor loved, nor feared, nor took any more interest than the dead in all that was happening around it! Alive, yet how like death its state has been. Having eyes, it saw not, and ears it heard not, and feet it walked not, and hands it handled not, and affections it felt not. Its state was a strange and mysterious mingling of the characters of life and death.

When the windows of its senses are thrown open, and streams of knowledge come rushing in on its young and wondering soul, and its eyes follow the light, and with its restless hands it is acquainting itself with matter, and sounds are entering its ears, amid whose mingled din it soon learns to distinguish the sweet tones of one tender voice—its mother's, and it loves, and is loved, and lies nestling in dreamy slumbers on her bosom, or sweetly smiles in her smiling face—how great the change!

Now, just because the change wrought on the soul in conversion is also great, and introduces its subject into a new and delightful existence, it borrows a name from that change. That is the first, this is the second birth; aye, and infinitely the better of the two.

- Better! because in that a son of man is born but for the grave, whereas in this a son of God is born for glory.

- Better! because the march of these little feet is along a rough path between a cradle and a coffin; whereas, the way of grace, however full of trials, toil, and battle, is from the pangs of birth onward and upward to a crown in heaven.

Happy for you if you are heaven-born and heaven-bound. It may be that a stormy life lies before you; but let storms rage and tempests roar—however rude the gale or high the rolling billows—a heaven-born passenger in a heaven-bound bark, you cannot miss the haven. "**There remaineth a rest to the people of God.**"

This change is a resurrection. A resurrection is a great change. Go to the churchyard. Go where death shall one day carry you, whether you will or not. “**Come,**” said the angels, “**see the place where the Lord lay.**”

Come, let us see the place where we ourselves shall lie, and look at man as we ourselves shall be. Take him in any of his stages of decay. Look at this compressed line of mold, that by its color marks itself out as different from the neighboring clay; it is black earth, and retains no apparent vestige of organization. What resemblance does it bear to a man? None. Yet gather it together and give it to the chemist; he analyzes it, and pronounces this unctuous dust to have been once a human creature.

It may have been a beauty, who with alarm saw the roses fading on her cheek, and age tracing wrinkles on her ivory brow, and mixing in gray hairs with her raven locks. It may have been a beggar, who, tired of his cold and hungry pilgrimage, laid his head gladly in the lap of mother earth, and ended his weary wanderings here.

It may have been a king, who was dragged from amid his guards to the tomb, and sullenly yielded to the sway of a monarch mightier than himself. Or, look here at these yellow relics of mortality which the gravedigger—familiar with his trade —treats with such irreverent contempt.

Look at these preachers of humility—at this moldering skull, the deserted palace of a soul, within which high intellect once sat enthroned—at those fleshless cheeks, once blooming with smiles and roses—at that skeleton hand, which may once have grasped the helm of public affairs, or swayed the passions of capricious multitudes, or held up the cross from sacred pulpits to the eyes of dying men—at those moldering limbs, which piety may have bent to God—and at these hollow sockets—now the nest of slimy worms—where glances of love have melted, and looks of fire have flashed. Turning away your head with horror and humiliation, to think that you shall lie where they are—and be as they are—you say, Alas! what a change is there! Ah! but Faith steps forward, plants a triumphant foot on the black grave’s edge, and silencing my fears, dispelling my gloom, and reconciling me to that lowly bed, she lifts her cheerful voice, and exclaims, True! but what a change shall be there!

Looking through her eyes, I see the spell broken. I see that dust once more animate. And when the blast of the trumpet—penetrating the caves of the rocks, and felt down in the depths of ocean—pierces the car of death in this dark, and cold, and lonely bed, where I have lowered a coffin, and left the dear form and sweet face of some loved one, mortality shall rise in form immortal, more beautiful than love ever fancied, or poet sang.

How great the change, when these moldering bones, which children look at with fear, and grown men with solemn sadness, shall rise instinct with life! Think of this handful of brown dust springing up into a form like that on which Adam gazed with mute astonishment, when for the first time he caught the image of himself mirrored in a glassy pool of Paradise; or better still, in a form such as, when awakening from his slumber, he saw with wondering, admiring eyes, in the lovely woman that lay by his side on their bed of love and flowers.

And now, because the change which conversion works on the soul is also inexpressibly great, it borrows a name from that mighty change; that, a resurrection of the body from the grave, this, a resurrection of the soul from sin. In this “**we pass from death to life**”—in this we are created anew in Jesus Christ. “**We rise with Him,**” says the Apostle, “**to newness of life.**”

The greatness of the change is set forth in the symbolical representation of it in the next chapter. Seized by the hand of the Spirit, Ezekiel is borne aloft, carried away through the air, and set down in a lonely valley among the hills of a distant land. This valley seems to have been, at some former period, the scene of a great battle. Their hosts had sustained the charge of hosts, and crowns were perhaps staked and won. The peace of these solitudes had been rudely broken by the shrieks of the wounded, the wild shouts of the victors, the clash of arms, and the savage roar of battle. It was silent now. The tide that swept over it had left it strewn with wrecks; the dead had moldered unburied where they fell; the skull rattled in the cloven helmet; the sword of the warrior lay rusting beside his skeleton, and the handle was still in the relaxed grasp of the bony fingers.

On these unburied corpses the “birds of the air had summered and the wild beasts of the field had wintered.” The rain had washed, and the sun had bleached them—they were white and dry. In these grim and ghastly skeletons a doleful picture of death lay stretched out before the prophet and while he surveyed the scene there was neither sign nor sound of life, but, it may be the croak of the raven or the howl of the famished wolf, or the echo of his own solitary footfall. Such was the scene Ezekiel was contemplating when a voice made him start. It came from the skies charged with this strange question, “**Son of man can these bones live?**”

We stay not to relate all that happened and was done. It serves our purpose to say, that after the prophet had preached to the bone he prayed to Him who—to dead bones, dead bodies, dead hearts, dead souls, dead families and dead churches—it is the “**Resurrection and the Life.**”

Ezekiel’s was the prayer of faith—and it had its answer. How encouraging to us, when on our knees, that answer! We feel as if Aaron and Hur sat at our aide, and held up our weary arms.

Ezekiel, after preaching, prayed, and there came from heaven a living and life-giving breath. It blows down the valley; and as it kisses the icy lips of the dead, and stirs their hair, and fans their faces, man after man springs to His feet, till the field which Ezekiel found covered with ghastly skeletons is crowded with a mighty army—all armed for battle and war—the marshaled host of God.

That was a great change, and not less great the work of grace in conversion. While the prophet is gazing with astonished eye on this martial array, where, amid trumpet echoes, spears are gleaming, and plumes are dancing, as, bold, in aspect, and stout for war, the serried ranks march on, mark what the Lord said:—“**Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost.**”

Now, is not this the very judgment—the very sentence—which the sinner often pronounces on his own case, when his eyes are first opened, and he sees, himself lost and undone?

What is the house of Israel here but a type of God's chosen people? In Israel we see our state by nature; a state of death; a state in which we are "dead in trespasses and sins." On this account Satan would have us yield to despair. He says that for such sinners there is no help—no hope. It is he who speaks in the complaint, "**Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost.**"

Yes, it is he, the father of lies, the enemy of souls. Yield not even to a doubt, for here "**he that doubteth is damned;**", but mark God's gracious answer to that unbelieving, dark, desponding complaint—"**Thus saith the Lord, God; behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and I will put my spirit within you, and ye shall live.**"

Hereafter, we will enter particularly into the nature of, this great change; meanwhile, let, me ask, Have you any experience of it? I neither ask when, nor where, nor how you felt its first impressions.

On these subjects the experience of saints is very different.

- Some can tell the time of it—giving day and date, the hour, the providence, the place, the text, the preacher and, all the circumstances associated with their conversion.
- They can show the arrow, which, shot from some bow drawn at a venture, pierced the joints of their armor, and quivered in their heart.
- They can show the pebble from the brook, that, slung, it may be, by a youthful hand, but directed of God, was buried in the forehead of their giant sin.
- They can show the word that penetrated their soul, and—in some truths of Scripture—the salve that healed the sore, the balm that stanching the blood, and the bandage that Christ's own kind hand wrapped on the bleeding wound.

Able to trace the steps and whole progress of their conversion—its most minute and interesting details—they can say with David, "**Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.**"

It is not so, however, with all, or, perhaps, with most. Some, so to speak, are stillborn; they were unconscious of their change; they did not know when or how it happened; for a while at least, they gave hardly a sign of life. With many the dawn of grace is, in more respects than one, like the dawn of day. We turn our face to the east, and our back to the setting stars, to note the very moment of the birth of morning; yet how hard it is to tell when and where the first faint, cold, steel-gray gleam appears.

It is so with many in regard to their spiritual dawn—with the breaking of an eternal day—with their first emotions of desire, and of alarm, as with that faint and feeble streak, which brightened, and widened, and spread, till it blazed into a brilliant sky.

The great matter, about which to be anxious, is not the time, nor place, nor mode of the change, but the fact itself. Has this change taken place in you? Are you other than once you were? Rather than be what once you were, would you prefer not being at all? Would you prefer annihilation to your old corruption?

Some, alas! change to the worse, giving themselves up to sins, which once they would have blushed to mention. Dead to all sense of shame, breaking loose from the innocence of their childhood, casting off the comely habits and pious practices of a paternal home, they lunge into excess of riot; and, borne on by the impetus they have acquired in the descent, like one running down hill who cannot stop although he would, when they reach the mouth of the pit they are borne over into perdition. They change, but, like “**Seducers,**” they “**wax worse and worse.**”

The night grows darker and darker; the edge of conscience duller and duller; the process of petrification goes on in their heart, till it acquires the hardness of stone; and, wallowing in the mire of the lowest sensuality, they can make a boast of sins—sins, in regard to which, on the day when they left their father’s room with his blessing on their head, and a mother’s warm tears on their cheek, they would have said with feelings of indignant abhorrence—“**Is thy servant a dog that he should do such a thing.**” What a melancholy change!

In blessed and beautiful contrast to a metamorphosis so sad, has the change in you taken an opposite direction?

Can you say, I am not what once I was—but better, godlier, holier! Happy are you! Happy, although, afraid of presumption, and in the blushing modesty of a spiritual childhood, you can venture no further than one who was urged to say whether she had been converted? How modest, yet how satisfactory her reply! That, she answered, I cannot—that I dare not say; but there is a change somewhere; either I am changed, or the world is changed. If you can say so, it is well. Such an answer leaves no room for painful doubts.

Our little child—watching with curious eye the apparent motion of objects—calls out in ecstasy, and bids us see how hedge and house are flying past out carriage. It is not these that move, nor is it the fixed and firm shore with, its trees and fields, and boats at anchor, and harbors and headlands that is gliding by the cabin windows. That is an illusion of the eye. The motion is not in them but us.

And if the world is growing less in your eye, it shows that you are retreating from it, rising above it, and ascending in the arms of grace to higher regions; and if the fashion of this world to our eye, seems passing away, it is because we ourselves are passing—passing and pressing: on in the way to heaven; Sin never changes. And if what was once lovely looks loathsome now—if what was once desired is detested now, if what was once sought we now shun and shrink from, it is not because sin is changed, but—blessed be God; and praise be to his grace we are changed. Our eyes are opened; the scales have dropped from them; and the solution of the problem may be found in the blind man’s answer—“**Whereas I was blind, now I see.**”

~ end of chapter 14 ~

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