

intensely approve of that goodness which is the condition of those who harmonize with God, yet it is found difficult to make men good, even with the assistance of that internal ally. The holy walk and Divine translation of Enoch, with the hundred and twenty years of faithful preaching by Noah, did not seriously check the downward trend of the Antidiluvian population. The terrible warning of the deluge, followed by the bow in the cloud and the lesson of the Babel confusion, did not prevent the sad culmination of wickedness which brought down the fires on Sodom and Gomorrah. The plagues of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the giving of the law in so impressive a manner, the constant miracles of the pillar of cloud and the manna, the frequent miracles of deliverance and of retribution with which Jehovah gave sanction and emphasis to his own law, did not thoroughly cure the nation of Israel of the tendency to sin. And although those arguments for holiness increased and accumulated from generation to generation, yet still, that people who were under the closest supervision by God, and who were favored by him above all the nations of the world, were ever backsliding from their occasional reformatory to such an extent as to prove, if proof was needed, that the tendency to sinning was so constant and so powerful, that it can only be accounted for and explained by assuming the truth of Jeremiah's complaint, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick, who can know it."

The impulsion towards righteousness was certainly as strong in the nature of Paul as in the average nature of men, and very probably much stronger. Yet see the picture of his struggles with his lower self so vividly painted in the seventh chapter of Romans which has been quoted from above. It ends with a wail of despair, "O wretched man that I am;" wretched because always defeated, because he found a law in his members, bringing him into captivity to sin continually. And every one who essays that warfare with the furnishing that he then had, will realize a similar experience. To attempt holiness according to the standards which Christ has set up in the absence of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, is always to invite defeat, for it is an attempt to reverse nature by the force of a resolution which emanates from the nature that needs reform and renewal. It is like the effort of a leper to become healthy by the hiding of his sores without external or internal medication. It is, to use a Bible figure, like the

effort of an Ethiopian to change the color of his own skin.

But, as inbred sin has come into humanity by yielding to the unholy spirit, so its expulsion or cure comes from yielding to the Holy Spirit. Pentecost brought the cure of this constitutional disease to man, when those who were obedient to God's teaching which was uttered by the mouth of Jesus, were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Then was fulfilled the prophecy written by Ezekiel, chap. 36, 25 to 28 verse: "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 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. And I will put *My spirit within you*, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them." God's spirit within man, makes his perfect loyalty possible, and when that perfect loyalty is the character of his life, inbred sin is as Paul puts it in the sixth of Romans, "done away," R.V.—or "destroyed" as it is in the authorized version. And to all this agrees the brief but emphatic description given in the Acts, of the Pentecostal church, for the murmuring that led to the appointment of the seven deacons was perfectly just and legitimate. And when Peter made his explanatory defence at the council of Jerusalem, he declared that the reception of the Holy Ghost "purified the hearts" of the Gentile believers; cured the intense deceitfulness and desperate sickness complained of by Jeremiah.

But what about Ananias and Saphira, and Simon of Samaria? If the Holy Ghost thoroughly cures inbred sin, how do you account for their depravities? Just as we account for the fall of the devil and his angels, just as we account for the fall of Adam and Eve, just as we understand the warnings and encouragements found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, just as we read the messages from Christ and the Spirit to the seven churches. Just as Paul puts the matter in Romans, 11, 19, "Well: by their unbelief they were broken off and *thou standest by thy faith*." There is no blessing that may not be lost by unbelief, there is no gaining of God's favor or indwelling, but by faith.

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For God in man brings man to God through
faith and love and sorrow,
And toil and strife that lift the world up
toward a brighter morrow.