



THE TWO NATURES;

OR,

Why does the Believer Sin?

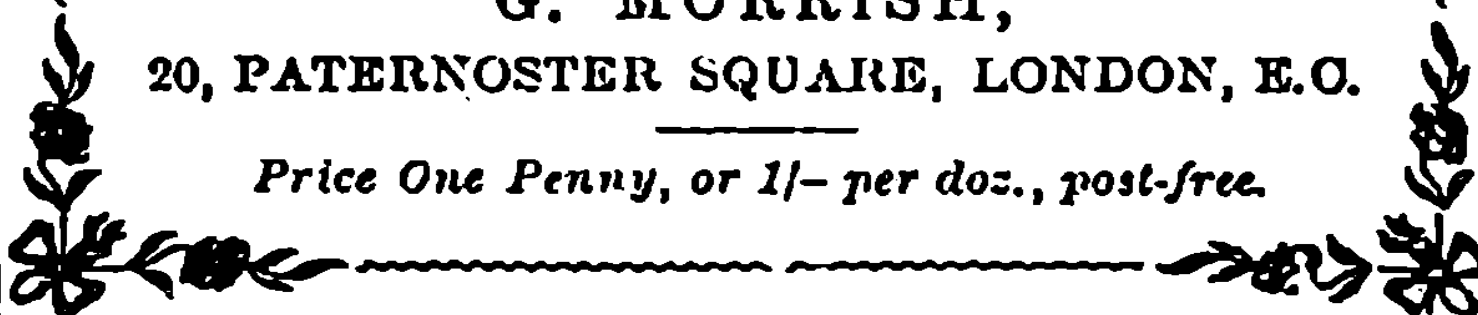
BY

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THERE are many Christians who, after having seen that their sins have been forgiven them, are very much troubled to find the workings of sin within—old lusts and desires constantly rising up, which they find they cannot get rid of. “I thought,” say they, “that after I was converted I should not sin any more, and that I should have nothing but joy all the way along.”

Perhaps, coming down one morning, something puts them out, and they lose their temper. Satan immediately comes and whispers, "How can you be converted, and have such a temper as that? Are you sure you ever have been converted? Have you not been deceiving yourself all the time?" Thus the poor souls are thrown, perhaps, into more trouble than when first awakened to their state as lost sinners before God. Now, all this arises from not seeing that Christians, although born of God, have sin

dwelling in them as long as they are in this world.

When we were born into the world we were born in sin (Psalm li. 5), born with a corrupt, fallen nature, at enmity with God, and not subject to the law of God. (Eph. iv. 22 ; Rom. viii. 7.) This is true of every one born into the world, although they may be amiable, kind, gracious, or benevolent, and have all other so-called good qualities.

It is important to see that what we are by nature born into this world is not capable of

improvement ; for it says, in Rom. viii. 7, “ The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be* ” ; so, then, they that are in the flesh (children of the first Adam) cannot please God. The Lord, knowing how utterly bad the old nature was, said to Nicodemus, “ Marvel not that I said unto thee, *Ye must be born again* ” (have a new nature). It is evident that if the old nature could be improved there would be no necessity for a new one. As soon as a person believes in

Christ, and receives Him as his Saviour, it shows that he has been born of God, as in John i. 12, 13 : “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” It is looking at a Christian as having this new nature when it says, in 1 John iii. 9, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because

he is born of God.” The flesh, the old nature, is not born of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” (John iii. 6.)

The root and principle of evil, which we have in us as children of fallen Adam, is called, in many places in Scripture, SIN. When it speaks of SINS, it means the fruit which this evil nature produces—actual offences committed (for instance, in Matt. vii. 17)—“Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” The tree is the man with

his evil nature, the SIN; the fruit which it produces, the SINS. If all the fruit were stripped off a tree, the tree itself would still remain, and would probably bear more fruit. So it is with us. If our sins were forgiven up to this day, we have still an evil nature capable of committing many more. It is important to see the two distinguished in Scripture. SIN, the root and principle, and SINS, the fruit, actual offences committed. You will see SIN and SINS contrasted in 1 John i. 8, 9,

“If we say that we have no SIN” (evil nature), “we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our SINS, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”

Now, how has God dealt with what we are by nature, as in Eph. ii., “by nature children of wrath,” for we could not be in the presence of God and do by nature the very things that bring down the wrath of God upon us.

Christ on the cross not only bore our sins, but was also made SIN. (2 Cor. v. 21.) In Rom.

viii. 3 we read, "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned *sin in the flesh*." So that, for the believer, *sin in the flesh* (not sins here), root and branch, has been condemned on the cross. The only way to put an end to a nature is by death. We cannot speak of a nature being forgiven. Suppose it was sin for a man to breathe, the only way to stop him from breathing would be to kill him, and thus there would be an end of him. It would be useless to say, "You must not

breathe," because it is his nature to do so. So it is with us. We are born in sin, and therefore sin by nature, so to speak. As we read in Gen. vi. 5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." His thoughts were evil and his actions were wicked. It is that which troubles the man in Rom. vii., which is the experience of a soul who has been born again, as verse 22 shows. (An unconverted man does not

“delight in the law of God after the inward man.”) He wishes to keep God’s law, and finds he cannot do so, because the law not only says, “Thou shalt not steal” — an unconverted man might keep that part of it—but it also says, “Thou shalt not lust” (covet); you must not have an evil desire in your heart. But a person may say, “I cannot help having evil desires.” That is just the point; we cannot help sinning by nature, and that is why everyone is lost if unconverted. The next thing he

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learns, in verse 18, is, that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing; and in verse 20 he finds out that if he did that he would not, it is no more he that did it, but sin that dwelt in him. In verse 23 this sin that dwells in him is too strong for him, and makes him do what he does not wish to do, and brings him into captivity, which causes him to cry out (*v.* 24), not “Who shall forgive me my sins?” but “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” that is, from myself; that which I inherit as

a child of Adam. How he is delivered is found in Rom. vi., where the question of SIN is spoken of. The word SINS is not found in that chapter, because it treats of the Nature-SIN.

Now, as before said, the only way to put an end to what a man is by nature is by death; but if we were actually dead we should be out of the world altogether. Christ on the cross took our place, became our substitute in grace, and was "made SIN." And in Rom. vi. 6 we read, "Knowing this, that our

old man is crucified with Him, that the body of SIN" (not SINS) "might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." So, by faith, we see that not only our sins are put away, but the question of our SIN (what we are) has been settled, the body of sin destroyed, by our old man (ourselves as children of Adam) having been crucified with Christ. Christ, our substitute, died; and what is true of our substitute is true of us, and so God counts it just the same as though we had died :

as in verse 8, it says, “If we be *dead with Christ.*” In Col. iii. 3 it is still more forcible, for it says, “Ye *are dead.*” Thus there is an end for ever in God’s sight of what we are as fallen children of Adam. We are not called upon to feel dead, but to believe that in God’s sight we are so. The following incident that I once heard will, I think, illustrate this truth.

In the late Franco-German war all the Germans in England were called upon to serve in the German army. A person seeing

his German friend walking about the streets of London, asked him how it was he had not gone to the war. "Oh," he replied, "because I am dead." "You are dead?" was the answer; "explain yourself." "Well," he said, "I did not want to go to the war, and I found a young man who offered to go as my substitute; he went instead of me, he took my place, and was killed. Now that was counted just the same as though I had been killed, and so I am considered a dead man, and they

can never take me to be a soldier any more.” Now, you see, the man himself was not actually dead, but he was counted so by the Government, although he was really alive. So with us. Christ, our substitute, died, and that is the same as though we had died, in God’s sight. What a comfort to know that sin in the flesh has been condemned, and that our old man has been crucified with Christ, and that there is an end of us for ever in the death of Christ. In Rom. vi. 10 it says, “In that

He " (Christ) " died, He died unto sin once : but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." The Lord rose again the third day, free from sin and sins. He stands risen, having passed through judgment and death for us who believe, in full, perfect acceptance and favour with God ; and we stand in Him in that unclouded favour, " accepted " (or taken into favour) " in the Beloved." (Col. i. 21, 22 ; Eph. i. 6.) What a wondrous place to be brought into ! What a salvation, worthy of God Him-

self, that we who were once enemies, and by nature the children of wrath, should not only be saved from sin and sins, but be brought *to* God, into a place of infinite acceptance and favour in His beloved Son.

How blessed to gaze up into the glory, and to see, by faith, that blessed One there, who once was made sin for us on the cross, and to be able to say, "*As He is, so am I* in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) I have His place as man before God. What a place of acceptance He is in!

Does God the Father love Him ?
Hear His words : “ This is My
beloved Son, in whom I am well
pleased ” ; “ Mine elect, in whom
My soul delighteth ” (Matt. iii. 17 ;
Isa. xlii. 1) ; and to think that we
are loved as He is loved (John
xvii. 26), “ Thou . . . hast loved
them, *as* Thou hast loved Me.”

“ So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be ;
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love to me.”

What a lovely picture the
Lord has given us in Luke xv. of
a sinner brought to God in Christ.
Look at the son, who was once

in the far country in his rags, now brought into the father's house, seated at his table, clothed in the best robe, and feeding on the fattened calf. Not only is the joy of the son full, but the father's heart is made glad to have him there. Hear the father's voice saying, "It was meet that *we* should make merry, and be glad : for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found."

How blessed to see that we are thus brought to God in Christ, made "the righteousness of God

in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21); "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6); sons of the Father, able to stand in the unclouded light of His presence without a spot, and loved as Christ is loved, going to share the same glory as Himself (John xvii. 22); not only fulness of joy on our part, which truly it is, but to know that God our Father finds joy in having us, His dear children, before Him, who once "were far off," but now "made nigh" in Christ. (Eph. ii. 13.)

"Behold, what manner of love

the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God : therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." (1 John iii. 1.) It is indeed boundless love !

But if this is our place in Christ, we are left in this world to manifest Christ, and to walk as He walked, "that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life" (Phil. ii. 15, 16),

till the Lord comes, “who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body,” when we shall have done for ever with sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and everything that interrupts our joy and communion here, and be for ever with and like the Lord.

“When left this scene of faith and strife,
The flesh and sense deceive no more ;
When we shall see the Prince of life,
And all His works of grace explore ;
What heights and depths of love divine
Will there through endless ages shine !”

But although we are in Christ before God we still have sin dwelling in us, and often our ex-

perience and feelings would tell us that we are not “dead to sin.” But in Romans vi. 11 we read, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord,” or in Christ Jesus.

We should not be told to *reckon* ourselves to be dead if we were actually so, but this verse means we are to believe that we have died with Christ, because God tells us so in His word ; for we shall always have sin in us as long as we are in this world,

and therefore we must put this truth of our having died with Christ into practice, and mortify (or put to death) our members which are upon the earth (Col. iii. 5); or, as it is written in 2 Cor. iv. 10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying" (or putting to death) "of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body"; that is to say, if practically sin is not allowed to reign in our mortal body (Rom. vi. 12), because we have died with Christ, the life of Jesus will shine out.

But we may fail in this, or, in other words, we may sin ; what are we then to do ? We are to go to God our Father as a child, and confess our sin, and we have the word, in 1 John i. 9, “ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We ought not to think of sinning as Christians, but if we do sin, our standing in Christ remains unchanged, but our communion and joy are interrupted ; but when confession is made, we are, through grace, re-

stored again through the advocacy of Christ. It is not a question of sin put away before God—that was settled at the cross; but a Father forgiving a child, and communion being restored.

May we all know more what practical deliverance from sin is, so that the Holy Spirit that dwells in us may be free to lead us into the apprehension of all that God is, and of all the purpose of His love towards us.

R. F. K.

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