

One of me sins and shall die, the other me loves God and shall live

Each of us is different persons to different people. There are sides to us even those who know us well never see, because they never see us in the situations which bring out those sides of us. If people who know me from different contexts happened to meet and share stories that happened to involve me, I wonder if it would ever dawn on them that they were talking about the same person.

Before God, each of us is different persons, also - well Christians are - and sometimes we also appear as different persons to ourselves. The holy Apostle Paul writes about it, how "I delight in the law of God my inward man." In his innermost self, the Christian loves God and knows His will to be good and right. And yet he also finds that "the good I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I actually do."

This is because the Christian is two persons; he has his own sinful nature in him, which is himself, and all that is his own; and "the intent of the flesh is enmity toward God," as the Apostle also writes it, that is: of sinful nature.

And the Christian also has in him "the new man", born of God by His living Word of love; the new man loves God, because the love of God lives in him; and he is free from all sin before God, because the heavenly Judge, in His Word of salvation, by which the new man is born, declares him to be exactly that, because He Himself has taken all sin upon Himself, and taken it away.

"Now, if I do what I will not to do," the Apostle also writes, "it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." This he does not write to exonerate himself of his wrongdoings; the point is that that in him which sins is not himself, not as he is in the sight of God, and shall appear before His judgement.

Sin in us must die; and it does, all through life. It is crucified with Christ in Baptism, to suffer a slow and painful death, and is tortured to death under the cross, that is: under the sufferings and sorrows the Christian endures in life. And it is constantly being drowned in the love of God, in His Word and worship.

But the new man in me embraces the love of God - even as I still sin. "With the mind I myself serve the Law of God," as the Apostle writes it, namely by faith and worship of God, "but with the flesh the law of sin." And this new man, which also is me, for real, shall not die, but rather live with God for ever in glory.

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