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Dependence and In-Dependence

“Independence and In-dependence”

July and August are the only two months which are named after Roman Emperors, July being called after Julius Caesar and August called after August Caesar. Today, in many countries, August is the month in which there is a celebration of independence. For Ecuador their liberation came in stages, Estonia has two Independence Days, and others such as India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Bahrain, and the Central African Republic have one.

It will be observed that the title for this months meditations is “Independence and In-dependence”. There is only a hyphen to distinguish them but they indicate total opposites. To be independent mean to live free from another’s control or conformity to their will. In-dependence means to be dependent on someone or something.

It is on this distinction that people are either saved or not saved. I recall two incidents in my life.

- 1) When in Christchurch New Zealand, I was asked to go to the home of a widow lady who had requested to see me about salvation. I asked her a very simple question which was: “If God were to set you before Him right now and say to you, ‘Give me one reason why I should let you into Heaven’, what would you say”? I reminded her that there is only one right answer, and if she answers wrong, she goes straight into Hell. Waiting for the response, she said: “Well you know Rowan, I have always been a good person, my spiritual advisor comes to me several times a week, and I do the best I can”. Looking straight at her I said: “I am sorry but you are going to Hell”. What was the problem? She was in the words of Frank Sinatra, “I’ll do it my way”. She was trying to make peace with God, have her sins removed, independent on God and His Son!
- 2) When in the Shetland Islands, I had taken a series of meetings. It was the last Sunday night and the hall was packed. God graciously gave much help as the Great White Throne was spoken about. The Spirit of God was moving and afterward one of the brethren went to an elderly lady who was sitting alone. He asked her if she ever thought about these things, to which she answered in the affirmative. He then asked her when was the last time and she answered “Right now”! He opened the scriptures and the dear old lady of some 80 plus years of age accepted Christ as her Saviour. She stopped being independent of God’s way and by acceptance of Christ, lived in-dependence on God and the work of Christ.

If we read Romans chapter one carefully, it is clear that the first major sin of humanity was not some gross wickedness, but it can so easily be missed. It reads: “They glorified Him not as God, neither were THANKFUL” (Rom. 1:21). It was the sin of not being thankful. Thankfulness is the mannerly response of one who is dependent on another. Adam and Eve turned from God to become independent of Him. Of course they were following Satan who was the first to have the attitude of independence on God. Adam, who was with Eve (Gen. 3:6), failed to be the head and guide his wife to protecting her, and she acted independently of him and he of God. Satan promised them freedom from God presenting God as a “spoilsport” who did not really love them. After all, if one loves do they not give the loved one all that will develop them to their full potential? Adam had no idea how privileged and loved he was, and in acting independently of God, learnt that independence brought sorrow, death, hardship and grief. When he lived in-dependence on God there was peace, peace with his spouse, in creation, in himself, and with God. But, in his independence on God there was friction in the family, creation was cursed, and he had no peace in fellowshiping with God and none within his own breast.

God gave Israel the law to act as a mirror (Jam. 1:23) so that they would see themselves as they were before God. Sadly, like so many today, they failed to see it as a mirror and thousands, by honest endeavor sought to keep the law, only to find utter failure. The law was a mirror to show what one was in the sight of God, not how to get right with God! God was showing man that acting independent of full dependance on God only shows one’s weakness.

Thank God there was one man who kept the whole law, not only in its letter but also lived in the spirit of the law. Living in the midst of sinful man who accused Him of having a demon, he asked them the question: “Which of

you convinceth me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46). This was God's perfect Servant who lived in-dependence on God. Reverently we listen:

- 1) To His words prophetically: "He hath given me the tongue of the learned . . . He wakeneth mine ear" (Isa. 50:4).
- 2) The words of God concerning Him: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold" (Isa. 42:1).

He alone could say:

- 1) "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father which dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (Jn. 14:10).

This was the Servant who never rebelled nor murmured against the activity of God. Being the Servant who lived and walked in the light, who never wandered from that perfection, there is set before us a man who, neither in time or eternity ever had any consciousness of hidden sin, never knew what it was to be conscious of lack of worthiness for the glories bestowed upon Him, or the roles to be taken by Him. He lived with a single eye for the glory of God, always being available for the glory of God due to personal perfection. There was never an attraction in any temptation nor any interest in seeing what such and such an experience was like. Because of His perfections He was:

- 1) Always ready to be all that God wanted Him to be
- 2) Where God wanted Him to be
- 3) In the right attitude as God wanted Him
- 4) And be in the right condition for any situation God would cause to come across His path.

As the polished shaft there was nothing to hold Him back. Figuratively speaking, there were no protruding or unbalanced characteristics in Christ. In all His earthly sojourn He never went astray or fell by the wayside, thus never needed restoration. His service to God was complete in that He fulfilled God's will, but it was more than that:

- 1) He fulfilled God's will with whole hearted devotion.
- 2) He fulfilled the will of God with unreserved love.
- 3) He fulfilled the will of God with no other goal than the glory of God.

This is the life of one living in-dependence on God.

In the leading of a soul to Christ, such a one must in truth acknowledge the futility of their own independence on God for salvation. They have been putting their faith in works, ritual, ordinances and church teachings. They must recognize "**FAITH IS NOT A WORK**", it is an attitude they already have, for they have been putting their faith in their works. Salvation is the transference of that faith to Christ alone, that is changing from independence to being in-dependence on Christ and His finished work.

How thankful I am that in the words of Toplady I can sing:

"Not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's commands;
Could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress; helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly; wash me, Savior, or I die.

Salvation is the gift of God for all who will cease independence of God's way for salvation, and live in-dependence on the vicarious sufferings of Christ on Calvary.

. *Rowan Jennings*