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THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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THE INDEPENDENCY OF GOD

By: Dr. C. D. Cole

Isaiah 46:9, 10, *“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”*

The one and only being who is independent is God the Creator. We sometimes speak of a rich man as being independent, but in reality this is not so, for no creature is independent.

Webster defines the adjective “independent” as follows: “Not dependent; free; not subject to control by others; not relying on others; not subordinate; self-governing; sovereign; not contingent or conditioned,” etc. Now God is the only Being to whom this definition can be absolutely applied. God is a free and absolute Sovereign; He is not subject to control by His creatures; He is self-existent and self-sufficient.

The independency of God does not mean that He does not use His creatures in accomplishing His purpose, but it means that He does not depend upon us; He does not have to use us. The popular expression,

“God is depending on us,” makes Him weaker than we are. God uses His people in furthering His cause, but what He does with them He could as easily do without them. God derives no power or wisdom from His creatures.

Paul, speaking of the gospel, says: II Corinthians 4:7, *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”* The gospel is proclaimed by lips of clay, but the power of conversion is not in the man who speaks, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The faith of the sinner is not the result of man’s wisdom, but of the power of God. I Corinthians 2:4, 5, *“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”* Faith is not the result of man’s persuasive powers; it is the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22, 23, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness temperance: against such there is no law.”* The new birth is not the result of man’s will, but of the will of God. James

1:18, *“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”* For results in the ministry God does not depend upon the preacher; the preacher must depend upon God. This is why we urge all Christians to pray for God to make our preaching effective. I Corinthians 3:6, 7, Paul says, *“I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”*

The story is told of a man who bought a run-down farm. For three years he worked hard and finally was able to produce a good crop. One day he was showing his pastor the patches and fields of good crops, and the pastor remarked several times that it looked as if he and the Lord were partners in farming. And as the preacher was about to leave, the farmer said, “Pastor, I agree with all you say about me and the Lord being in partnership. But pastor, you should have seen this place when the Lord was running it by Himself.” This irreverent joke has no place in the pulpit as teaching that God had to depend upon that farmer for good crops. That worn-out land was not an exhibit of

what God was able to do. It was the natural retribution for abuse of what God had made. The thorns and briars and weeds that had grown on that run-down farm were a reminder of sin. They did not speak of what God could produce, but of what man deserves. God made the earth fruitful and good; sin caused it to abound in thorns and thistles. A run-down farm does not represent the best God can do. God used the farmer in producing good crops, but He did not depend on him.

Moses cautioned Israel, Deuteronomy 8:17, 18, *“And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.”* And our Saviour taught us to pray, Matthew 6:11, *“Give us this day our daily bread.”* Man is responsible to work for his daily bread, but after all his work he is still dependent upon God for his bread. No man, who can work, has the right to expect bread apart from work; not because God cannot give bread without work, but because he will not put a premium on laziness. That God can give food apart from human work is seen in the fall of manna in the wilderness. Numbers 11:7, 9, *“And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium...And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.”* And the feeding of Elijah by the ravens. I Kings 17:4, *“And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee*

there.” O God we can truly sing:

*“He sits on no precarious throne,
Now borrow leave to be.”*

God is self-existent. This is mysterious but a blessed truth. Every thing must have a ground for its existence, either in or out of itself. The ground of man’s existence is outside of himself; he does not cause himself to exist. Man is dependent upon something outside of himself for existence, but God is not dependent upon anything outside of Himself for existence. Nor did God will Himself into being, for He did not come into being. God is eternal. Genesis 1:1, *“In the beginning God...”*

God is also self-sufficient. He is sufficient for His own support, glory, and happiness. Romans 11:36, *“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”* We must distinguish between what God is and what He is declared to be by His creation. The heavens declare His glory, but they add nothing to it. Psalm 19:1, 2, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.”* Men are to ascribe glory to God in their eating and drinking, but this is only in recognition of His glory and adds nothing to it. In Judges 5:23 we have the exhortation to “Come up to the help of the Lord,” but this does not mean that God was in need of man’s help, but that it is man’s duty to serve God. Psalm 78:41, *“Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.”* But this only imports their attitude of mistrust or unbelief.

They did not believe that God could take care of them in the wilderness. Psalm 78:19, *“Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?”*

God is called the blessed or happy God. I Timothy 1:11, *“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God...”* This happiness of God can neither be added to or destroyed. Sin merits and receives His displeasure, but it does not destroy His happiness. Righteousness in His moral creatures may and does receive His approbation, but it adds nothing to His essential happiness and glory. God was happy and glorious before there were any creatures, and He will remain the happy God even when the wicked are cast into hell. God’s happiness rests upon three facts:

There is no moral conflict in God. God is at peace with Himself. He is infinite in wisdom and spends no time in grieving over mistakes. He is infinite in holiness and knows no remorse for sin. While there are three persons in the Godhead, they are an absolute unity and in perfect accord. Peace is the great desire of the human race, but peace belongs essentially to God. Hebrews 13:20, He is called, *“...the God of peace...”* And there is harmony among all the Divine attributes. Psalm 85:10, *“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”* Man is not sufficient of himself for happiness because of inner conflicts.

God knows no limitations. He is never at the end of Himself, or as we might put it, at His row’s end. God’s resources are never dimin-

ished. He knows nothing of crises. He never has to resort to any new deal, for His plans and purposes are all eternal. Wisdom designed all His plans, and His power executes them; therefore known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world. There never was a time when God wondered what He would or could do. He has no experiment station where He learns what is best, for He naturally knows what is best. In all these points man is different from God. We are often straitened in ourselves; often at our wit's end and helpless. We are limited in power and wisdom. We are limited in time, but God is the King of Eternity. Joshua 10:12, 13, *"Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies...So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."* Napoleon, at Waterloo, saw the shadows of the evening falling upon his defeated army and is reported to have said, "O that I had the power of Joshua to retard the march of the sun one hour!"

God's happiness consists of His holiness. Sin destroys happiness. Look at Adam and Eve before and after they sinned. There was nothing to mar their happiness until sin came. Sin promises happiness but cannot produce it. Sin is a deceiver and a cheat. Sin is breaking with God, and since God is the source of all true happiness, when man broke with Him, he lost joy and peace.

No man in his natural state as a sinner has any true peace and joy. These are fruits of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance..."* The people of God will not be completely happy until they are completely saved, and this will not be until they are conformed to the image of Christ in resurrection glory. Psalm 17:15, *"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."*

Satan gives a counterfeit happiness. He has built a fool's paradise for his dupes. But the ever happy God will make His children truly and eternally happy in a real and lasting paradise. His grace has satisfied us with the imputed righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ for justification, and has also created a thirst within us for personal righteousness, and that thirst will be satisfied when we are glorified in personal holiness. Here is His promise: Matthew 5:6, *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."* For those of us who are hungry and thirsting to be personally righteous and holy it is a comfort to know that we shall some day be as good as we now want to be.

It has been said that pleasure seeking is a sign of heart hunger. If this is true there is a vast amount of heart hunger in our country. The masses are in pursuit of pleasure and carnal joy. Everywhere men and women and children are seeking entertainment in a thousand forms and in many places. When Maxim Gorky visited America sev-

eral years ago, some friends took him to Coney Island to see the huge playground swarming with hundreds of thousands of people. At the end of what may have seemed to them a perfect day, they asked him how he liked it. After a moment's silence he said, "What a sad people you must be!"

The only source of true joy is the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul exhorts us to rejoice in the Lord alway. We can be happy in our acceptance of God through faith in Christ, and we can also rejoice in hope of the glory of God when Christ returns to make us like Himself.

*"I know not the hour when My Lord will come
To take me away to His own dear home:
But I know that His presence will lighten the gloom,
And that will be glory for me.*

*I know not the form of my mansion fair,
I know not the name that I shall bear;
But I know that my Saviour will welcome me there,
And that will be glory for me.*

*When I stand in His presence,
And like Him shall be,
Oh that will be glory for me."*



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—Author Unknown

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