

There is NO such thing as an **Independent-Self**...

By Sylvia Pearce

Who would ever consider these things? Even if someone would consider it, who would believe it anyway? Our spiritual leaders and teachers don't tell us these truths. Why isn't anyone saying it, and why won't we Christians believe it? "Saying, what? And believing what"? Why aren't we saying and believing that there is no such thing as an independent-human self? If we would dare to truly understand our human selves maybe there wouldn't be so many weary and defeated Christians. And maybe, just maybe we would be free. Hey, the word, FREE certainly is an overused word these days, but I am compelled to use it anyway.

FREE, YES, "FREE INDEED"!

Aren't we all really longing to be free? Free from what? Free from the chains of us trying to fix, change, improve, keep, protect, and save ourselves from doing evil. Haven't we all given it our best shot? If you haven't given it your best try, then maybe you should keep on trying. That's right; keep on trying until you can't anymore. But, how many more times do you need to go around before you finally get it? Don't you understand that doing good by self effort is an expression of Satan? "What? Now wait a minute!" I told you that you wouldn't believe it.

Most Christians believe that we are independently just ourselves, with some outside help influencing us from Jesus walking beside us? Don't we basically believe that we are living our own lives, doing our best to maintain some kind of happiness and contentment by keeping and maintaining ourselves in good standing with God? Don't we think that it is through our good moral behavior, along with continual self improvement, self-achieving, and self-motivated self-effort that will hit the spot with God? Anyway, wouldn't we all be sinful lazy bums if we didn't hold on to ourselves and try as hard as we can to do our best?

Listen to this News flash! The human being has always been expressing the life of another, and NEVER, NEVER had a life of its own. Or, to say it another way, we humans are not independent beings....We are helpless expressions of someone else and we always have been our whole life. The human self has never been filled with itself alone, expressing just itself! This is the biggest lie in the whole universe, and what the bible calls, "the mystery of iniquity".

Wow! That is food for thought.

Paul proclaimed oneness with Christ to every young fellowship that he fathered all through-out the middle east and as far west as Rome. Jesus also prayed for the "body of Christ" to know oneness in His intercessory prayer in John 17:20-23. Hey, Jesus

always gets His prayers answered. But why would it take so long for Jesus' prayer to unfold in time? I think it is because the Father has designed it to be **now** in our time that His people would know and operate in oneness with the Son, and as true sons of God. Oneness with Christ is the answer to the problem of independent-self. Operating in independence is the root sin, dysfunction and misuse of God's people. And oneness with Christ is the antidote, the right use, and proper function of the family of God.

Another time Jesus said "if any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children and brethren, and sisters, yea, and **his own life** also, he cannot be my disciple, and whosoever shall save his own life shall lose it, but whosoever shall **lose his life** for my sake shall find it"? Do we even hear what Jesus is saying?

Losing and finding? Hum...It seems to me that what we lose is the delusion of an independent human self with a life of its own. And the life we find is the fullness of our union with Christ. Seems to me that Paul summed it up by saying that "he suffered the lose of all things, that he might win Christ." (Phil 3:8).

Why don't we hear these truths? Is it basically because they have been lost in the actives of Christianity? Isn't this the truth of the gospel that Paul preached in the first century to the hungry

sinner? And didn't they respond in faith which birthed Christianity in the first place?

What has happen to the gospel of oneness with Christ? Somehow the age-old trick of "diversion" and "preoccupation with self-improvement" which Satan has used for eons, has worked. Yet, doesn't the church sing, "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand" as well as, "ON Christ Alone". Yelp, we sing these songs alright, but do we really believe what we are singing? I hardly think so.

We all falsely think that God needs our help, or maybe we think that we can give him permission to help us become better. Both these foolish statements are gross misnomers. The sin and pride of the world is: "I am sufficiently able, so I really don't need God." While the sin and pride of the Christian is: "I'll give Christ permission to **help me** be sufficiently good enough, and advance His kingdom by **my own efforts.**"

Ok, are you beginning to get the point?

The human being is a derivative dependent slave to the one who indwells us, or owns us. The bible tells us so: We are called "**slaves** of sin" before we were saved, and now through the Cross of Christ, we are "**slaves** of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18), but never free to just do our own thing....It says that we are either

“**vessels** of wrath” before we were saved and now we are “**vessels** of mercy,” (Rom. 9:22-23) but always just a vessel and never the content...We are called “**branches**” of the true vine which is Christ, but we were “**branches**” of the false vine Satan before we were saved, but never any thing but a branch that can do nothing apart from its source, the vine (John 15:1-5)....We are called **temples** of the Holy Spirit,(I Cor. 6:19-20), but when unsaved we were **temples** of Satan (John 8:44), but always just the temple not the god in the temple....We are called **wives** of our old husband, but now through the Cross we are **wives** of our new husband Christ (Rom. 7:1-4).

Now, look at all these examples of what the human being really is and you will see the secret of human dependency and the lie of human independence. OK, we see it, but I will tell you another secret...“It will cost you everything to really know it in your spirit as a living reality.” God has to prove to us by the process of hard knocks and heart breaking exposure, that **WE REALLY CAN'T DO ANYTHING** apart from Christ.

Since most Christians are living from a sense of a false independent-self, we certainly wouldn't want to give that self up too easily. But think about it, it is the only self that we have ever known. Yet Jesus demands surrender, in Matthew 16:25 when He said, “whosoever shall save his own life shall lose it, and whosoever shall **lose his life** for my sake shall find it”? What life

is Jesus talking about? It must be a independent life of our own in which we falsely call “**my own life**”.

Think about it, God alone is the only independent person in the whole universe. He depends on no one and nothing. He is the only self-sufficient, self-generating, autonomous person that there is. Wait a minute, how can we call God a person? Didn't God say to Moses at the burning bush, “I AM that I AM”. “I am” is first person present tense, or being. That is personhood. Therefore only God is the one independent person in the whole universe (Isa.45:5-7). That makes man, angels, even devils as well as all created beings and things dependent on the Creator. All creation is created to derive its life from the Creator, so all creation depends on and derives its very existence on the one independent person in the universe that is God Almighty, Himself.

Why is creation trying to be independent and self-sufficiently self-generating? Isn't that rebellion against God? Yes it is. Satan was the first sinner and cosmic criminal who rebelled and declared himself to be independent and self-sufficiently able to just be his own evil self. The bible tells us in Isa. 14:12 that Satan said in his heart, “I will be like the most High God.” Wasn't he saying “I will be independent, all powerful, and sufficient in myself, just like God, and I will be Lord of my own kingdom and my kingdom

will be greater than God's. Wow, I bet you never thought of it like that!

OK, since God is the only independent person in the universe, then Satan must be self-deceived. And the light that was in him must have imploded inwardly into darkness, and as the bible says, "how great is that darkness" (Matthew 6:23). Do you remember his created name was "Lucifer" which means "light bearer". A light bearer is like a lamp, or expresser, bearing the light of God, but pridefully said, "no thank, I won't bear your light, God, I will be my own light." That is how he became the "Prince of Darkness."

Now what does Satan have to do with mankind? Well, we all know that through the fall mankind rebelled against God's word and fell right into the hands of Satan who owned us (Heb. 2:15) until we were redeemed by our faithful God. However, while we were in Satan's hands he brain washed us into believing that we were independent-selves like him. What? He deceived us into believing that we too are independent beings who live life by our own power and sufficiency. Gosh, I thought we were supposed to be responsible human beings? Maybe, we've had it all wrong. Hey, we can't trust in ourselves to be sufficient and responsible, Paul warns against that in I1 Cor. 3:5 when he said, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." Maybe we should look at responsible

another way, maybe it is, MY-RESPONSE-TO-HIS-ABILITY. See how if we look at it that way we are not trusting in ourselves, but our faith is now placed in God who has the ability, sufficiency, power, and wisdom to live His life through us?

Jesus told the woman at the well that there was a well that could spring up unto “everlasting life”. Where was this well? It certainly wasn’t the “fountain of youth” that Ponce de Leon was looking for. It must be an everlasting inner well of living water that is in us Christians who simply put our trust in Christ (John 7:38). If we already have this well in us, why don’t we draw from it for our sufficiency? Well, here we go again....It is because we falsely think that we are independent-selves, with a life of our own. No wonder we Christians are so defeated and powerless, we are drawing from the wrong well. We are trying to derive life from our vessel selves instead of Christ, whom the bible says, is our life (Col. 3:4).

Jesus knew this secret and powerfully walked in it all of his life. “Of my own self, I can do nothing” (John 5:19 & 30); “I live by the Father” (John 6:57); “I have not spoken of myself” (John 12:49); and “I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, He does the works” (John 14:10). Jesus didn’t have his own life (John 6:57); works (John 14:10); words (John 12:49-50); glory (John 8:50); teaching (John 7:16); will (John 6:38); name

(John 5:43); and witness (John 5:31-33). Jesus always functioned in union with His Father and never functioned independently.

Since we all know that Jesus never sinned, and then what would have been his sin, that is, if he had of sinned? Wouldn't it have been walking in rebellious independence, thinking he could have his own life, his own power, his own sufficiency, his own works, his own glory, his own teaching, his own will, and his own words? He would have played right into Satan's hands if he had trusted in himself in any way. His trust was completely in His Father who did the works through him. John 14:10 says, "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, he does the works" He never sinned simply because he never acted independently from His Father.

Boy, I think that we Christians have a lot to learn about independent-self. We need our minds renewed to the truth (Rom. 12:2). The first thing we need to know is that INDEPENDENT-SELF IS Satan disguised as us. It is the same rebellious religious spirit that the bible calls "the spirit of error," the spirit that we all inherited through Adam at the fall. The bible says that "Mr. Sin entered into the world and death came because of sin, therefore death passed upon all men, for all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Interesting, the bible scholars say that the word "SIN" in Romans 5:12 is a noun, or a person. Why hello, Mr. Satan, you are really Mr. Sin, and you entered mankind through deceit. Even Ephesians 2:1-3 tells us that before we were saved we all had a spirit in us, namely, "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, the prince of the power of the air."

WOW! WHO KNEW! I told you that this was hard to believe; however, the first century Christians didn't have trouble believing it, they knew it to be fact. It is only us educated, sophisticated, prim and proper folks who can't believe it. Ask, anyone in a third world country if they had Satan in them before they were saved? They would tell you. Yet, we in this culture are so wise in our own understanding, that we have become fools.

I'm not sure if anyone can really understand your union with Christ, if we can't believe that first Satan lived in us (Eph. 2:1-3). Our humanity was grossly misused as Satan's "slaves" before you were redeemed and enslaved by Christ, the Lover of your soul (Rom 6: 18-19).

So now where are we? Christ living His own everlasting life in me as if it were me. Hum! Christ AS ME! Well, that ought to get some hair raising reactions. Not Christ and a big performing independent me, but Christ in union with me forming "Christ AS ME". Wow! That is scary! Yes, it would be scary if I depended

on me, but I'm trusting Christ to be the real me! Doesn't Colossians 1:27 say it, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Yes, but "in you" isn't as scary as "as you." If you are reading "Christ in you" (Col. 1:27) from a separated consciousness, then there would be room for a performing ME. But, if you are reading "Christ in you" from a union consciousness, then you would see that it doesn't mean Christ and a performing me, it means that there is no independent me at all, it is Christ in union with me, forming Christ as me.

Then what part does the human play? Good question. All created forms were created to contain and express the Creator. We human beings are God's crowning creation with royal capacities such as choice or, free will. Free choice, but ironically when once the decision is made, then our will is mysteriously bound up to the thing that we have chosen (Rom. 6:16). So, we are free, but bound as soon as we choose. Once we decide to accept Christ, then Christ binds us up with Himself, and as the bible says, we are made "slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:18).

This seems like a contradiction or oxymoron, and I believe that it is and isn't at the same time. Now, I bet your mind is totally twisted. Well, paradoxes often do seem like contradiction. Jesus often spoke in riddles like that to the Pharisees', "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man, and if I judge my judgment is true" (John 8:15-16). Which is it Jesus, do you judge or not? Really,

He doesn't judge, and He also does judge, so both are true and it is not a contraction at all.

Now back to our original point, is there free will? Yes, God created out of Himself free sons with the capacity to refuse and reject Him (Rom. 3:9-18) which of course we all did. Or, accept Him, as the redeemed have (John 1:12). So humanity's one function is to simply receive and walk in, by faith, either Christ, or Satan.

The Apostle Paul was a union man, not western union, or electrical union, but union with Christ, union man. Paul's message was about being one with Christ. He says that you were one with Christ in His death, and in his burial (Rom. 6:4), he says that you were raised with Christ and now seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). Therefore, you are one with the Christ of history who is now the Lord of Lord's in a glorified universal sense, then the conclusion must be, as the bible says (I Cor. 6:17: Eph. 5:30), that He is one with you right now in your history. Living, being, walking, and speaking, in you as you.

Wait a minute, are you saying that we, Christians are Christ? No, no, we never become Him; He is uniquely the second person of the trinity. However, He unifies His self to us, and as it were becomes us, or should I say, expresses Himself as us. However, we never become Him. NEVER, NEVER! That would be taking His

place which Satan tried to do at his fall (Isa. 14 & Ezek. 28). So, Christ joins Himself to us, and becomes what we are, expressing Himself as us...What a privilege to contain and express the Lord of Lord's, and King of King's...We the little king, He the preeminent King, we the little Lord, He the preeminent Lord. Isn't it great to be redeemed humanity!

This is too much to take in. Well then, the next question that must follow is, "How, and do we sin?" Yes, we can sin, but it is far less than we think. But let me answer that question with a question, who or what is the root of sin? Here we go again, "Mr. independent-self." If we think that we are not dead as the Apostle Paul declares in Col. 3:3, and we then think that we live our own life with our own understanding, and our own sufficiency's, then when the devil shouts at us as he waves the law in our face, we respond by saying, "I will try to do good, I will keep myself from sin, I will be like the most high God and not sin." We have just signed our death sentence. That kind of response comes from the false idea that we are independent-selves with our own abilities to keep ourselves. What a lie we all fall for. As soon as we say we won't do something, then sin has dominion over us. If we say, it is impossible for me to keep myself nor can I help God keep me, then I am free to recognize that I am "dead to sin" (Rom. 6:2) as well as recognize that the Spirit is in control of my fleshly members. His keeping power in me is quite adequately sufficient for my keeping, thank you.

The bible says that “the power of sin is the law” (I Cor. 56:15). The outer law implies that we can respond to the law by our own flesh and should sufficiently be able to do it. What a catchy trick! That is impossible seeing that our flesh is powerless to perform godliness or holiness. But if we don’t know our human helplessness we fall for the trick in defeat every time. Christ did not come to do away with the outer law; He came to fulfill it inwardly in Himself. And now He has come to fulfill it inwardly in us as our law keeper. If we know that we are dead in Christ, then there is no self to respond to the outer law, and Christ fulfills it naturally and spontaneously as us.

Are we saying that we can’t sin? No, never, Christ could have sinned, he had to fulfill righteous perfectly without sin which he did. The bible wouldn’t say that He was without sin if it were impossible for him to sin. If it were possible for our elder brother Jesus to have sinned, but didn’t, then it is possible for us to sin too, but glory be, that also means that it is possible for us not to sin too. When we know and understand the no-independent-self truth, then we know that we live by the sinless One within (Christ) who fulfills all righteousness in us.

Does that mean that we can call all that we do or say Christ? Yes and no. Yes, it is Christ living as you, but be honest, if you slip and manifest sin, say so, and don’t call it Christ, that would be

blasphemy. Instead, praise God for the cleansing blood, and get up and keep on believing.

Satan's quest is to make us think that we are independent-beings apart from Christ. That is a lie, no, he is the deceived one who believes that lie, and his only quest is to try to make us believe it too. If we fall for his lie of independence and forget who we are joined to Christ, you better believe that you can sin. But thanks be to God, as we walk in the light, the blood cleanses us from all sin (I John 1:7).

However, as I eluded before, we sin "far less then we think" we do. How can I say that when most think that we sin all the time? I believe that we Christians don't know the difference between sin and temptation and therefore take all kinds of false guilt for temptation. Temptation says, "I want to do it," while sin says, "I will do it". Even Jesus did not want to go to the Cross, and that wasn't sin, was it? I decided not to call anything sin, except for the obvious of course, unless the Holy Spirit convicted me. That was pretty bold, but it got me off of confessing temptation as sin and freed me from false guilt.

Let us look at the Apostle Paul's dilemma in Roman 7. First let us get one thing clear, too many people think that Paul wasn't a Christian when he wrestled with his problem of coveting in Rom. 7. Although, he sounds like most of us Christian who don't know

who we really are, and don't understand that there is no such thing as an independent-self. Paul has tormented because he thought that he could overcome sin, by trying hard to do good. But the more he tried the more he failed which left him in a worse state than ever before.

Paul was a saved Christian who struggle with trying to keep the outer law just like we Christians do. And the reason that I know that he was not unsaved, is because Paul writes his own personal bio in Philippians 3:1-9 and as you can see, he is talking about his unsaved days. This is what he proclaims in verse 5-6, "circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touch the righteousness which is in the law, BLAMELESS". He confesses that he keep the law perfectly before he was a Christian, therefore this disproves any talk about Paul being unsaved and struggling with the law as in the Romans 7.

I like that, because I can identify with the great Apostle and I believe that he is identifying with me. We all struggle trying to be good and failing a lot of the times. Now what was Paul's discovery in Romans 7? Why, here we go again, he discovered that trying to do good by self-effort only made him sin more, then at his breaking point the Holy Spirit revealed to him, that he was not even doing the sinning. It was another power doing the

sinning (Rom. 7:17). He discovered that it was not flesh doing the sinning either. Then who was it? Oh my, I think the real culprit is being discovered. It was Satan, Mr. Independent-self who was deceiving him and making him believe that he needed to be strong enough to overcome his own temptations of lust.

So the real culprit was Satan, but there was even more discovery for Paul. He discovered that the human being was totally helpless to deliver itself (7:24); totally unable to help God deliver it; totally helpless to have enough will-power to change itself (7:18); and even totally helpless to have enough choosing power to choose his way out of this whirl wind dilemma. He discovered that the human is a neutral vessel and not the producer of good or evil (7:17-18). Christ, Mr. Righteousness produces the good that we do, (Gal. 2:20) and Mr. Sin produces the evil that we do, (Rom. 7:17&19). Therefore, the human vessel cannot produce anything of its own, but expresses the spirit that indwells it, or temporarily falsely takes possession of it, in the case of sin.

Did we get that? Or do you realize that there are not any problems that we might have as Christians that cannot be solved by the truth of No-Independent-Self? We are not independent like we think we are, and like the devil tell us. We are dependent beings joined to Christ, spirit to Spirit. He is our life, not a part of our life, NO; He IS our very essence and life.

Did you ever hear any other news that is so wonderful? If you still want to try it on your own, you can go ahead and try, but I promise you, you will not be free until you take a leap of faith and believe Jesus is your very life and the true you. Jesus so often identified Himself with His body, yet we find it so hard to identify ourselves as Him (Acts 9:4; Luke 10:16). It is hard because we still have independent separate thinking and somehow we judge ourselves in some unworthy manner. Oh, how much our minds have fallen into satanic thinking and need to be renewed to the truth (Rom. 12:2). We have too long believed the lie, yet the truth seems a million miles away.

What truth? We are the bodily forms of Jesus, or Christ in bodily form (Eph. 1:22-23 & Col. 1:18). Yet most of us act as if we are a body operating separate from the head. No, no the truth is that we are members of His body of His flesh and of His bones" and "the two become one flesh" (Eph 5:30-31) or one person, so we are joined to Him as one being. He is the vine and we are the branch, but I like to say that we are the branch form of the vine. We have exchanged lives with Christ. He was made sin on our behalf, in order for us to be made His righteousness (II Cor. 5:21). We are joined to Christ, our spirit joined to His Spirit and we are one. Only Jesus is Creator and God, yet I, the created form, have inherited His very nature, and now we are joined together in a union relationship.

Christ overcomes my temptations, He resists the devil when He torments me, He is the glory in my sufferings, He is my peace when trials come, He is my victory when I feel defeated, He is my love, when I can't love. He is our wisdom (I Cor. 30); He is my keeper (Jude 1:24; 1 Peter 1:5); He is the bishop of my soul (1 Peter 2:25); He is my victory over the power of sin (Rom. 6:2;14); He is my victory over the torment of trying to keep the law (Rom. 8:2); He is my health; He is my faith, and faithfulness (Gal. 2:20b; Gal 5:22); He is my indwelling life, and nature (2 Peter 1:4); He is my true identity (Gal 2:20); and Christ is the real me, for it is not I that lives, but it is Christ that lives **AS** me (Gal. 2:20).

Now do you think that you will always feel like you have Christ living as you? Not at all! We have all of Him by faith, not always by feelings, and not always by appearances, but by an affirmation of faith that boldly declares, we have Him all, and as we drive our stake of faith, God makes it more real to us every day.

Since Christ is our all, then what about me, the human me, that is? The answer is the same, we have never been independent-selves, we were joined to Satan in our unsaved days, and now through the cross we are joined to Christ, but never, ever been independent-selves. We humans are dependent derivative beings without our own life. If we falsely believe that we have our own life, we will think that we can respond to outer law, we will be defeated because it is impossible to try to live the Christian life.

When we live by our own efforts "sin is present with us" (Rom. 7: 21), and failure is around the corner.

Will Satan ever stop lying to us about independent-self? No, that is his job. The more he attacks and tempts us the more we are pushed into faith, and the more we are pushed into faith, the more we are fixed in the truth, and when truth has done its perfect work then our believing dissolves into Spirit knowing or oneness (James 1:2-4). I Peter says in 4:10 that, "The God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered awhile, make you perfect, established, strengthened, settle you."

Can we accept our humanity even though we don't always see the manifestation and outer evidence of Christ living His Life? Yes, as we put our total faith in "Christ, our life" (Col. 3:4) and stand there by faith, the Spirit will put to death any thing that is manifesting that is not Him (Rom. 8:13). Don't try to change your behavior! That is the Holy Spirit's job. Take it that Satan is out and has no rights to your fleshly members (Gal. 5:24) and fight the good fight of faith (2 Tim. 4:7). Seeing that our flesh is really an instrument of God's righteousness (Rom. 6:13).

Romans 8:1-4 tells it all, "There is therefore **NOW** no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life

in Christ Jesus **has made me free** from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin **condemned sin in the flesh**; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

These last paragraphs are some quotes from a 16th century Englishman, William Law. Law speaks to all as a writer of almost unique force, penetration, and insight. This segment is taken from his well known treatise called, “An Address to the Clergy.”

“Now if without Him we can do nothing, then all the love that a man can possibly have for Christ must be from the power and life of Christ in him, and from such a love, so begotten, man has the Father and the Son dwelling and making Their abode in him. What higher proof or fuller certainty can there be that the whole work of redemption in the soul of man is and can be nothing else but the inward, continual, immediate operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rising up again their own first life in the soul, to which our first father died? “

However, “The root of a dark fire-life within us, which is of the nature of hell, with all its elements of selfishness, envy, pride, and wrath, must be in some sort discovered to us, and felt by us, before we can

enough groan under the weight of our disorder. Repentance is but a kind of table-talk, till we see so much of the deformity of our inward nature as to be in some degree frightened and terrified at the sight of it. There must be some kind of earthquake within us something that must rend and shake us to the bottom before we can be enough sensible either of the state of death we are in or enough desirous of that Saviour, Who alone can raise us from it. A plausible form of an outward life, that has only learned rules and modes of religion by use and custom, often keeps the soul for some time at ease, though all its inward root and ground of sin has never been shaken or molested, though it has never tasted the bitter waters of repentance and has only known the want of a Saviour by hearsay. But things cannot pass thus: sooner or later repentance must have a broken and a contrite heart; we must with our blessed Lord go over the brook of Cedron, and with Him sweat great drops of sorrow before He can say for us, as He said for Himself: "It is finished."

Independent "Self is the root, the tree, and the branches of all the evils of our fallen state. We are without God, because we are in the life of self. Self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking are the very

essence and life of pride; and the devil, the first father of pride, is never absent from them nor without power in them. To die to these essential properties of self is to make the devil depart from us. But as soon as we would have self-abilities have a share in our good works, the satanic spirit of pride is in union with us, and we are working for the maintenance of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking.

All the vices of fallen angels and men have their birth and power in the pride of self, or I may better say, in the atheism and idolatry of self; for self is both atheist and idolater. It is atheist because it has rejected God; it is an idolater because it is its own idol. On the other hand, all the virtues of heavenly life are the virtues of humility. Not a joy, or glory, or praise in Heaven but is what is through humility. It is humility alone that makes the impassable gulf between Heaven and hell. No angels in Heaven but because humility is in all their breath; no devils in hell but because the fire of pride is their whole fire of life.

Pride and humility are the two master-powers, the two kingdoms in strife for the eternal possession of man....Satan, which is the same thing as self-exaltation, became the strong man that kept possession of the house till a stronger than he should come upon him. This is the full-born natural self that

must be pulled out of the heart and totally denied, or there can be no disciple of Christ; which only says this plain truth, the apostate, self-idolatrous nature of the old man must be put off, or there can be no new creature in Christ."

"What is it that above all other things strengthen and exalts the life of (independent) self and makes it the master and governor of all the powers of the heart and soul? It is the fancied riches: the glitter of genius, and flights of imagination, the glory of learning, and the self conceited strength of natural reason. These are the strong holds of fallen nature, the master of pride's temple in the heart of man, and which as so many priests, keep up the daily worship of idol-self...."

"Wherever pride is, there the devil is riding in his first fiery chariot; and wherever wrath is, there he has his first murdering sword at work. What is it the fallen wants to be redeemed from, but pride and wrath, envy and covetousness?" "These tempers constitute that, which whether you call it self or Satan in him, the meaning is the same. Now, suppose man not fallen into this self-Satan, and then there could be no more war or fighting in him that there was in the "Word made man", in our flesh. Or, suppose him redeemed from his fallen nature by a new birth of the Lamb of God born in his soul.

Love, goodness, and communication of good are the immutable glories and perfections of the divine nature, and nothing can have union with God but which partakes of this goodness. The Love that brought forth the existence of all things changes not through the fall of its creatures, but is continually at work to bring back all fallen nature and creature to their first state of goodness. All that passes for a time between God and His fallen creature is but one and the same thing, working for one and the same end; and though His is called wrath, it is all, from the beginning to the end nothing but the work of the first creating love, and means nothing else, does nothing else but those works of purifying fire which must and alone can burn away all that dark evil which separates the creature from its first created union with God. God's Providence, from the Fall to the restitution of all things, is doing the same thing as when He said to the dark chaos of fallen nature, "Let there be light;" He still says and will continue saying the same thing, till there is no evil of darkness left in all that is nature and creature. God creating, God illuminating, God sanctifying, God threatening and punishing, God forgiving and redeeming, is but one and the same essential, immutable, never-ceasing working of the "divine nature"...

Trust the Wisdom of the Father, trust the redeeming work of the Son, and trust the sanctifying and glorifying work of the Holy Spirit! AMEN!

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Published by Christ, Our Life Ministries, Inc.
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