

# Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

January 2009

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (2 Peter 1:2). It’s hard to believe that another year has gone by. I pray that as we enter this new year each of us will dedicate ourselves, without reserve, to serving God with our whole hearts. There is little time left in this old world, and it is high time to get serious with the Lord. Paul wrote, “...knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11). Since it was true in his time, it is even more true now.

**Florida Camp Meeting Reminder:** The brethren in Florida are planning a camp meeting for February 19-24, 2009, at a new and better location in the Ocala National Forest, about 30 miles southeast of Ocala. Contact Jerri Raymond, 407-291-9565.

## Saved by Hope

by Lynnford Beachy

It is well known that love is the most important virtue in the Christian life. One of the best illustrations of how love behaves is found in the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians. The last verse of this chapter makes a very interesting point. It says, “And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Corinthians 13:13). We hear a lot about love, and rightfully so, for it is of the utmost importance. We also hear a lot about faith, and again, this is good, for “without faith it is impossible to please” God (Hebrews 11:6). Yet, the remaining virtue in this verse, hope, is seldom given the importance it deserves, even though Paul placed it on an equality with faith.

In this study I would like to examine what the Bible says about hope, and how we can exercise it in our lives. Because of hope’s close relationship with faith, we must first learn precisely what faith is.

### What is Faith?

The Bible says “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Notice the connection faith has with hope; they go together. Faith is substance and evidence, a very real and solid virtue.

Jesus found something that He called “great faith.” If we can discover what He was referring to, we can be sure that we know what faith is. One day a Roman soldier came to Jesus petitioning Him to heal his servant. Jesus gladly accepted his plea and offered to come to his house and heal his servant. But, “the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but

speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed... When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (Matthew 8:8, 10).

This centurion had great faith, something Jesus never said about anyone else while upon this earth. More often than not, Jesus would rebuke people for not having enough faith, but in this case he commended the centurion for not only having faith, but “great faith.” Notice how the centurion responded to Jesus’ offer to come and heal his servant. He said, “speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” This centurion did not rely upon Jesus physically doing something to heal his servant, nor did he rely upon being able to see his servant healed. Rather, he depended wholly upon the word of Jesus, and His word “only,” to accomplish what he desired to be done.

Faith, then, is depending wholly upon the word of God only, to do what that word says. This agrees with God’s promise: “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10, 11).

Notice what God says will accomplish what He pleases. It is His word, and His word only, that will accomplish what He pleases. God used His word to create man in the beginning, and it is by His word that He recreates and

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maintains us in the new birth. “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Psalm 33:6).

Faith is not true faith unless it is firmly anchored to God’s word. You can have faith that it will rain tomorrow, but unless you have a “thus saith the Lord” to rest your faith upon, it is not biblical faith. When Moses told Pharaoh it was going to hail he knew it was going to happen because God said it would, even instructing Moses what to say to Pharaoh. This faith is certain. There is no true faith disconnected from the Word of God. You may have faith in the pastor’s words, but that faith will fail.

### *What is Hope?*

In the English language the word “hope” expresses a desire for something to happen, along with an uncertainty about its fulfillment. If a man says, “I hope you don’t fall off that ladder,” it indicates that there is some expectation that you might fall off the ladder. But if a man says, “I know that you will not fall off that ladder,” he is completely certain that you will not fall.

In the Bible, the word “hope” carries a stronger meaning. Hope in the biblical sense is expecting something to happen with eager anticipation. In the New Testament, the noun form of the word we translate “faith” is *elpis* (Strong’s Concordance #1680). The verb is *elpizo*, (Strong’s Concordance #1679). *Elpizo* is mostly translated, “trust.” There is one place in the Bible where the Greek word, *elpis*, is translated, “faith.” Hebrews 10:23, which says, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith [*elpis* - hope] without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).”

Paul explained, “We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Romans 8:24, 25). Hope is not optional, but necessary for salvation. The Bible says we must put on “for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

God promised Abraham that he and his wife would have a child in their old age. Though this seemed impossible, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3). Abraham “against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be” (Romans 4:18). Hope is powerful, it can help carry a person through very difficult times.

I read a story about Corrie ten Boom (a Christian who helped Jews escape the holocaust during World War II), who was thrust into a concentration camp where she was tortured and experienced many hardships. She expected to be released within a few days. She kept saying to herself, “Today is the day I am going to be released.” But she had to

wait almost a year before she was released. She wrote later, in her autobiography, that if she had known she would have to be there for so long she never would have endured as long as she did. Her continued hope for a soon release kept her going through unspeakable hardships. Hope can help sustain a person through severe circumstances.

The Bible says that “hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil” (Hebrews 6:19). An anchor can hold a ship securely, keeping it from being shattered against the rocks or carried out to sea. Hope is said to be that effective in protecting our spiritual lives.

### *The Results of Hope*

“The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Hebrews 7:19). Hope is capable of making us perfect. Friends, that is exactly what we need. Troublous times are coming soon, the mark of the beast crisis is just upon us, if ever we needed perfection, it is now. Without hope, it will never happen. One of the biggest road blocks in the path to perfection is the belief that it is not possible. This belief leaves a person with no hope of becoming perfect. If you are not expecting it, longing for it, and aiming toward it, you won’t reach it.

Please don’t get me wrong. We are perfect and complete in Christ at every stage of our development, as long as Christ is in us. Just as a new corn plant is perfect, at 1-inch tall, at 3-feet tall, and at full maturity, so a Christian is perfect at every stage. Yet there is a maturity, a completeness that is not reached in a moment. There is a growing process. This process can only happen by faith in Christ, through the indwelling of His Spirit.

Paul wrote, “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Galatians 5:5). This is the only place in the Bible where the phrase, “righteousness by faith” is used, and it is spoken of as something we are waiting for, hoping for. This goes contrary to what is widely understood by the term righteousness by faith. Many think that if you say the sinner’s prayer, asking Jesus to come into your life, then His righteousness covers your unrighteousness, and nothing more is expected. Yet, here Paul explains that he was still expecting righteousness by faith. Surely, He was righteous through accepting Christ’s righteousness by faith for “the remission of sins that are past” (Romans 3:25), but he expected more to come.

How can that be? How could he have righteousness by faith, and yet wait for righteousness by faith at the same time? He was expecting more righteousness to be revealed in His life. He was not content with the amount of righteousness that was shining through him to the world.

Paul wrote, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12-14). Paul knew there was more to come. He knew there was higher ground to be reached, and he earnestly expected to reach it, aiming for it, pressing toward it. He hoped for a purer life, for a deeper manifestation of Christ’s life in him.

Paul said, “my earnest expectation and my hope [are], that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death” (Philippians 1:20). Paul expected and hoped for more of Christ to be revealed in him. He also wrote of a time when, “we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

### *Perfect in Growth vs. Maturity*

Let me clarify something here. Paul spoke of himself and his brethren as perfect. (See 1 Corinthians 2:6; Philippians 3:15). Yet, he also said that he had not yet attained perfection. He is obviously speaking of the two different things. There is a difference between being perfect in Christ at any stage of development, and being perfect in the sense of being complete, reaching the full measure of the stature of Christ. Paul had completeness in Christ, but, according to his own testimony, he lacked reaching the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ. And even if he had reached that point, he would not have made such a claim himself. That very act would have proven that he was not measuring up to the fullness of the stature of Christ. Job said, “If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse” (Job 9:20).

When I first accepted Christ as my Saviour and asked Him into my heart, He accepted me as His child just as I was. At that point I surrendered to Christ everything I knew to be wrong, such as drinking, doing drugs, satanic music, etc. I was perfect in Christ at that stage, but I had a lot of growing to do. I had weeded out all of what I thought was my satanic music and held onto what I thought was neutral music, such as Ozzy Osborne, Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, etc. I still had hair down to the middle of my back and dressed like a rebel (or stoner, as I was called in school). If you would have seen me you would not have guessed that I was a born-again Christian, but I truly was. It took a few months before God convicted me to cut my hair and get rid of the rest of my music.

God is interested in our hearts. If we completely yield our hearts to Him, it is a small matter for Him to remove things from us that are offensive to Him. He will continue this process until there is nothing left to remove. Yet, all along the path, if we are completely surrendered to God, He sees us as perfect in Christ, even though we have not reached perfection in the sense of completely measuring up to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

There are many true, born-again Christians today who violate God’s fourth commandment every week by doing their own work on the Sabbath, unaware that this displeases God. God will lead these faithful souls to a fuller knowledge on this subject, and they will grow in Christ. At the same time, there are many Sabbath-keeping Christians who are not fully surrendered to God, who look with disdain upon these same Sunday-keepers. They say, “Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou” (Isaiah 65:5), not knowing that God views the fully-surrendered Sunday-keeper as righteous rather than the self-righteous Sabbath-keeper who is not fully surrendered. We cannot look at the outward appearance and know for certain who is fully surrendered to God, for we are all at different stages in our growth in Christ.

We are to continually maintain the hope that there is more to come in our Christian walk, and never rest satisfied with our current condition. David pleaded with God, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalms 139:23, 24). Elihu petitioned, “That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more” (Job 34:32). Neither of these prayers can truthfully be said by a half-surrendered Christian. What would be the point? If a person is already knowingly doing things contrary to God’s revealed will, why would He ask God to reveal more?

### *A Popular Misconception*

Some people have the misconception that they can continually practice known sins and sometime in the future God will pour out His Spirit in latter rain proportions and they will stop committing the sins they already know to be wrong. Friends, that is a dangerous delusion. When the Bible speaks of us coming to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ it is not speaking of some future time when we will miraculously stop practicing the sins we already know to be wrong. If you are in California and you hope to arrive in Florida, you don’t get there by waiting in California for some miraculous event that will beam you to Florida. No! You must begin heading towards Florida. Whenever we come to the point in our walk with the Lord that we stop progressing, and hang on to sins that we know to be wrong, we are putting a road block in our path, and we



will not move beyond that point until the known sins are dealt with. There is so much more ahead that God wants to reveal. We do not have time to wait behind a road block to be beamed to our destination. The road block must be removed and we must continue progressing, learning more of God's will for our lives. Only then can we rightfully expect to reach the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

### *The Blessed Hope*

We need to be "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3). If we have the blessed hope of Christ's soon return, then we will be cooperating with God to purify ourselves, even to the extent that Christ is pure.

It is sad to see Christians who have no hope of anything better in their Christian experience until Christ comes. I have knocked on doors distributing literature and found people who say, "I don't need that, I'm saved," as if there is nothing more in their Christian life to expect. They have no hope of overcoming sin in this life. Satan has taken their hope away from them. I have met others who, when handed a booklet on the mark of the beast, say, "I don't need that, I'm going to be raptured before it happens." They are not going to be raptured, before the time of trouble; nobody is! The whole idea of the secret rapture was invented by Satan to trick people into a false security, a false hope. It is not taught in the Bible. If you are going to have a hope make sure it is grounded in the Word of God.

We can't afford to lose hope of overcoming sin. Jesus promised, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7). To lose hope of overcoming would be to lose hope of eating the tree of life.

Paul explained that the "Lord Jesus Christ" "is our hope" (1 Timothy 1:1). Without Christ we have no hope of overcoming, but with Christ living in us, it is inevitable that we will overcome. "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" (1 John 3:9). This is a promise. What an amazing potential! With God's seed, which is Christ, in you, you cannot sin. And Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17). If you accept Christ into your heart, and you believe He abides there, then you can claim the promise that you cannot sin, and it will be fulfilled.

Now, don't fall into the delusion of Satan where he tricks you into thinking that since Christ is in you then everything you do must be holy. Some have followed that path before,


and ended up in a multitude of other delusions, thinking that all manner of sinful practices are not sin simply because they performed those sinful actions while they thought Christ was in them. No! The only way you can perform sinful actions is to push Christ off the throne of your life and take over. At such a time Christ will stand at the door and knock, wanting to be the king of your life again. During the time when Christ is off the throne of your heart many evil practices are bound to happen, but don't think for a minute that Christ is doing it. Christ does not sin. If you sin, you can be sure Christ is not ruling your life at that moment. You need to let Him in again. You can hope for something better.

I pray that God would make known to each of us "what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). With Christ in you, you have the hope of glory, the hope of reflecting God's character in your life. This is the blessed hope.

### *Summary*

Hope, along with faith and love, is a necessary virtue in the Christian life. Without it you cannot be saved. In order to be saved by hope, that hope must produce a change in your life. Hope that does not result in a positive change in your life is not a saving hope. Those who have the blessed hope of Christ's soon return will become purified by that hope. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). God's glory is His character. When Moses asked God, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory" (Exodus 33:18), God replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee" (Exodus 33:19). God's goodness is His glory, and to behold that goodness causes us to be changed into the same image. To have Christ in you, the hope of glory, is to be changed daily into the likeness of God's character, until we are "filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19).

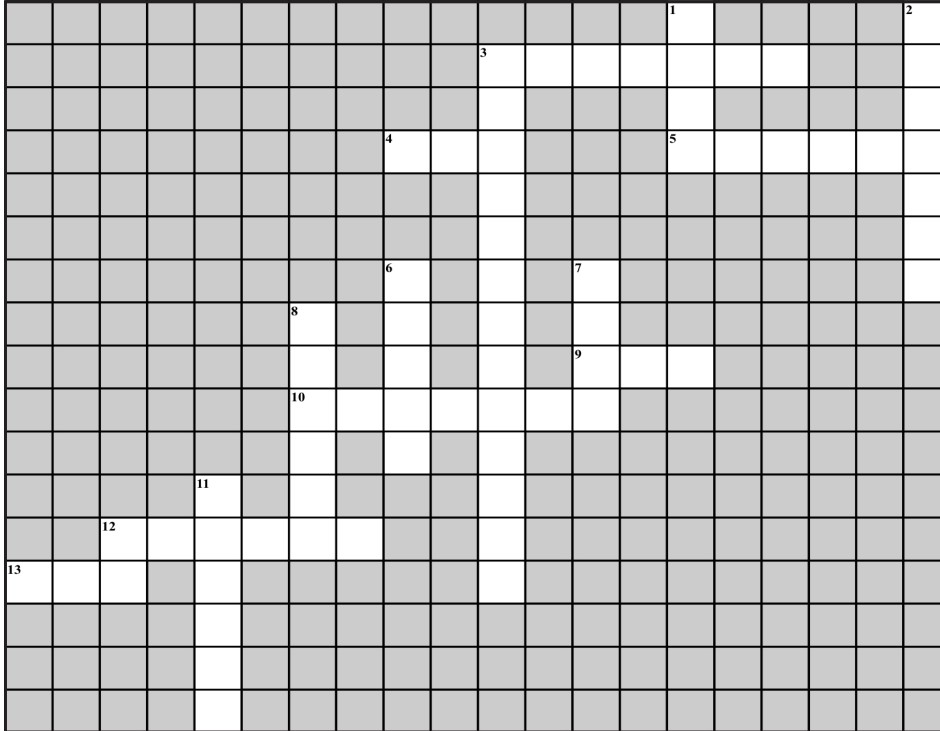
This is what the Bible says about hope. Now we can see why Paul placed hope on an equality with faith. Yet, if we have no hope of becoming like God in character, then hope is not purifying the soul as it is designed to do. So, do not give up hope of growing in your walk with the Lord, of becoming more conformed to the likeness of Christ. You can have hope to be transformed into the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ, and be filled with all the fulness of God. Don't let any man take that hope from you by telling you that you are doomed to sin until Christ comes. That is a lie of the devil.

Never be content with the level of righteousness that you have reached, always expect more. That way you too can have "the hope of righteousness by faith" (Galatians 5:5). May God bless you richly! 

# Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are beginning a series of crossword Bible studies based on a Bible Lesson written by Lynnford Beachy, entitled, "God's Love on Trial," based on the book by the same title. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line.

## The Identity of God - Part 1 (Lesson 3)



Answers will be printed on the last page of next month's issue

**Note:** If I asked you, "Do you know John Doe?" the first thing you would want to know is "Who is John Doe?" Until that question is answered you really could not say that you know John Doe. To understand God's love we must first be able to answer the question, "Who is God?"

- Jesus said to the woman at the well, "Ye \_\_\_\_ ye know not what." John 4:22—**2 Down**
- Paul found an altar with the inscription, "To The \_\_\_\_ God." Acts 17:23—**3 Across**
- We are not to \_\_\_\_ in wisdom, might or riches. Jeremiah 9:23—**6 Down**
- A man can rejoice in the fact that he \_\_\_\_ and knoweth God. Jeremiah 9:24—**3 Down**

**Note:** God desires us to love Him and worship Him because we know what He is like. He wants us to understand Who He is, and what His character is like so that when

we worship Him we know Whom we are worshiping.

- Those who offer sacrifices to idols are actually worshiping \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Corinthians 10:20—**5 Across**
- Sometimes, the Israelites worshiped \_\_\_\_ gods. Deuteronomy 32:16—**10 Across**
- They worshiped \_\_\_\_ gods whom their fathers feared not. Deuteronomy 32:17—**9 Across**

**Note:** The Bible teaches that if we worship idols or gods that we do not know, then we are actually worshiping devils. Friends, this is serious! We better make sure that we know Whom we are worshiping because, if not we are in danger of worshiping Satan and could be lost. If we worship a god whom we do not know, even if there is no outward idol for our eyes to look upon, we can be just as truly worshiping Satan as were the servants of Baal.


- God said, "\_\_\_\_ me there is no God." Isaiah 44:6—**8 Down**

**Note:** All of the pronouns in this verse are singular, indicating that only one person is speaking. Who is this one person? We shall see.

- There is none other God but \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Corinthians 8:4—**13 Across**
- This one God is the \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Corinthians 8:6—**11 Down**
- Paul said, "...there is \_\_\_\_ other God but one." 1 Corinthians 8:4—**7 Down**
- Jesus said, "The Lord our God is one \_\_\_\_." Mark 12:29—**1 Down**
- A scribe answered, "...there is one God; and there is none other but \_\_\_\_." Mark 12:32—**12 Down**
- Jesus said that when the Jews use the word \_\_\_\_ they were referring to His Father. John 8:54—**4 Across**

**Note:** When this scribe said, "There is one God; and there is none other but he," Jesus knew that he was talking about His Father.

- After the scribe spoke of Christ's Father as the only God, Jesus said that he was not far from the kingdom of \_\_\_\_\_. Mark 12:34—**12 Across**

**Note:** This was a compliment rather than a rebuke or correction. Both Paul and Jesus agreed that there is one God, and none other but He, and that this one God is God, the Father, and nobody else. 

*There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*  
(1 Corinthians 8:6)

## *The National Sunday Law (Part 3)* by Alonzo T. Jones

(The following is a portion of an argument of Alonzo T. Jones before The United States Senate, December 13, 1888, opposing the Blair Bill promoting a Sunday law. *Editor*)

**Mr. Jones:** All the powers of Congress are delegated powers. It has no other power; it cannot exercise any other. Article 10 of Amendments of the Constitution expressly declares that:

"The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, or prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

In all the powers thus delegated to Congress, there is no hint of any power to legislate upon any religious question, or in regard to the observance of any religious institution or rite. Therefore, this Sunday bill, being a religious bill, is unconstitutional; and any legislation with regard to it will be unconstitutional. Sunday being a religious institution, any legislation by Congress in regard to its observance, will be unconstitutional as long as the United States Constitution shall remain as it now is.

Nor is this all. The nation has not been left in doubt as to whether the failure to delegate this power was or was not intentional. The first amendment to the Constitution, in declaring that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," shows that the failure to delegate such power was intentional, and makes the intention emphatic by absolutely prohibiting Congress from exercising any power with regard to religion. It is impossible to frame a law on the subject of religion that will not prohibit the free exercise of religion. Therefore the first amendment to the Constitution absolutely prohibits Congress from ever making any law with regard to any religious subject, or the observance of any religious rite or institution.

More than this, the National Reform Association knows, and has been contending for twenty-five years, that for Congress to make any Sunday laws would be unconstitutional. Yet the National Reform Association is one of the most prominent agencies in urging forward this bill; and the Secretary of that Association stood at this table to-day to plead for its passage. And this only shows that they are willing knowingly to resort to unconstitutional means to secure their coveted power, and to accomplish their purposes. As for Dr. Crafts and his fellow-workers, whether or not they know it to be unconstitutional, we do not know. In the announcements of the national Sunday-law convention now (Dec. 11-13, 1888) being held in this city, it was stated that the church in which the convention was to meet would be festooned with the names of six millions of petitioners; but at the beginning of the first meeting it was stated that there were fourteen millions of them. A question was sent up asking how the number could have grown so much larger so suddenly. Mrs. Bateham was recalled to the platform to answer the question, and when she answered it, the cause of such a sudden and enormous growth was explained by the fact that Cardinal Gibbons had written a letter indorsing the bill, and solely upon the strength of his name, seven million two hundred thousand Catholics were counted as petitioners.

This was not a complete answer to the question, because the Cardinal's letter does not authorize any such use of it as

they have made, at least so much of it as was made public does not. The whole of the letter was not made public there, because, Dr. Crafts said, it was for the Senate Committee. It was laid on the table here to-day. But so much of it as was read merely referred to the action of the Baltimore Council in commanding a stricter observance of Sunday, and said:

"I am most happy to add my name to those of the millions of others who are laudably contending against the violation of the Christian Sabbath by unnecessary labor, and who are endeavoring to promote its decent and proper observance by judicious legislation."

This was all. He said, "I am happy to add my name," etc. He did not say that he added, or that he wished to add, seven million two hundred thousand others with his name, or in his name; yet this was done. But it was not so much to be wondered at, because the same principle had been acted upon before throughout the country, and when five hundred petitioners could be made out of one hundred, and two hundred and forty thousand out of two hundred and forty, it was perfectly easy and entirely consistent to make seven million two hundred thousand and one out of one.

This thing was perfectly consistent also with the principle in another point. The petition reads: "We, the undersigned, adult residents of the United States, twenty-one years of age or more, hereby petition," etc. In counting these seven million two hundred thousand petitioners in behalf of the Sunday law, they thereby certified that all these were Catholics "twenty-one years of age or more." But there was not a man in that convention, and there is not a woman in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, who does not know that there are not that many Catholics in the United States "twenty-one years of age or more." They virtually certified that all the Catholics in the United States are "twenty-one years of age or more," for they distinctly announced that "all the Roman Catholics" were petitioning for the Sunday law. But as they had virtually certified the same thing of the Protestant churches throughout the country, why should they not go on and swing in "all the Roman Catholics" in the same way? They could do the one just as honestly as they could do the other. When men and women professing themselves to be Protestant Christians will do such things as that to carry the Catholic Church with them, it is not to be wondered at if they should be willing to resort to unconstitutional means to make their religious zeal effective in national law.

**Senator Blair:** Then you assume that this bill and all Sunday laws concern only the relation of man to God, and not the relation of men to each other?

**Mr. Jones:** Yes, sir, that is the principle upon which we stand.

**Senator Blair:** Right there I find fault with your original proposition. You have got to establish, before you can defeat the ground of Sunday laws, that Sunday laws are not for the good of Caesar; that is, not for the good of society.

**Mr. Jones:** I have not had time to prove that yet. I will prove fully that Sunday laws are not for the good of anybody.

**Senator Blair:** Come to the point as soon as you can. That is the point in this case, as between you and the law proposed to be enacted.



**Mr. Jones:** Very good. For the State to compel men to do no work is to enforce idleness. Idleness is the root of unlimited evil. It is a true proverb that we learned in our boyhood, "Satan always finds something for idle hands to do." In this world, to compel men to be idle is to force them into a line of influences and temptations which in the very nature of things can end only in evil. It is well known, and it is one of the principal grounds of the complaints of those who are working for Sunday laws, that Sunday is, of all the week, the day of the most wickedness; that the record of crime and violence on Sunday exceeds that of any other day of the week, especially in large cities.

Dr. Crafts refers constantly to London as an exemplary city in the matter of enforced Sunday laws, but the fact was brought out last spring by a member of this Committee — Senator Payne — that the statement had lately been "made on authority, that London on Sunday is the most immoral and dissipated city in the world." Now why is this? They argue that it is because the saloons are open on Sunday. But the saloons are open every other day of the week. Then the saloons being open no more on Sunday than on any other day, why is it that there is so much more violence done on Sunday than on other days of the week? — It is because more men are idle on Sunday than on any other day of the week. Upon this point I quote an extract from the *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette* of March 10, 1888.

"They declare Sunday the moral ruin of the people. They prove it by alleged statistics of criminal prosecutions to show that more crimes of violence are committed on Sunday than on all other days of the week. Why is this? Because the saloons are open? — They are open on other days. This reduces them to the sole reason that it is because it is a day of idleness.

"Their argument is absolutely destructive to the beneficence of the custom of a rest day. They continually affirm that a Sabbath day is the very foundation of religion, morals, and society, and they incessantly declare that the custom of Sunday cessation from work in the cities had made it a day of moral ruin. What is their recourse from the destruction which they charge upon the day of idleness? — To make statutes more stringent to enforce idleness. Arguing that idleness on that day leads mankind to moral ruin, they call for a more rigid enforcement of idleness, to lead mankind to the ways of salvation.

"Surely there is need to revise their basis in season before they can proceed rationally in legislation. Selling beer is no more a sin on Sunday than on other days. The reason why more crimes of violence are done on Sunday than on other days — if that is a fact — is not that the saloons are open, but that the men are idle. The good of a day of rest for the toilers has to be taken with the drawback of this unavoidable evil from idleness and indulgences of appetites. The cause is the cessation of vocations."

This argument is entirely sound. We submit to the consideration of any candid mind that it would be far better to allow men to follow their honest occupations on Sunday as they do on other days of the week, than to compel them to be idle, and thus forcibly throw them into the way of all the temptations and evil that beset men in this world. No State, therefore, can ever afford for its own good to enact laws making idleness compulsory, as Sunday laws do.

More than this, to prohibit men from following their honest occupations at any time, under penalties of fine or imprisonment, or perhaps both, is for the State to relegate honest occupations to the realm of crime and put a premium upon idleness and recklessness. It is well known that in many localities if a man will only be idle on Sunday, he can run into all sorts of dissipation and wickedness to any extent, except that of down-right violence, without any fear of prosecution or penalty of any kind. But if any quiet, industrious citizen chooses to engage in his honest occupation, — going quietly about his own business on his own premises on Sunday, — he is subjected to prosecution, to a penalty of a heavy fine, and perhaps imprisonment. This is nothing else than to put a premium upon wickedness. No State can afford to make crimes of honest occupations. No State can afford to put such a premium upon idleness and all its attendant wickedness.

All these complaints of evil and violence and wickedness on Sunday, so enlarged upon by the people who are working for Sunday laws, is an open confession that wickedness is the effect of enforced idleness, and this in itself is the strongest argument that can be offered against the very things for which they plead. The States of the Union have all these years been sowing the wind in this very thing, and now they are reaping the whirlwind. And, worse than all, they propose to cure the evils of all this enforced idleness by more stringently enforcing more idleness throughout the whole nation, and by the national power.

It may be answered that this reflects upon the wisdom of God in appointing a day of rest; but it does not. God appointed the Sabbath for a purpose; and that purpose is that men should remember him in his works of creation, and worship him as Creator.

The intention of the commandment enjoining the observance of the Sabbath day, is the honor of God, and his worship as Creator. This worship and the religious sanctions which God has associated with the Sabbath, are considerations which will ever prevent the day from becoming a day of idleness of those who keep the Sabbath in obedience to him; and the worship of God and the religious sanctions which he has put upon the Sabbath, are the only things that ever can prevent the Sabbath from becoming a day of idleness. Those who advocate this Sunday bill well know this. This whole principle is embodied in that statement Dr. Crafts made to the Knights of Labor, that "if you take religion out of the day, you take the rest out." The same principle is also apparent in the words of Joseph Cook, before referred to, that you will in vain endeavor to secure the enforcement of a day of rest unless you enforce it as a day of worship; and unless it be founded on religious reasons, it cannot be long maintained.

Thus these men themselves confess the point which I here make: that it is only the religious sanctions and worship that can ever keep a day of rest from being a day of idleness, and of consequent wickedness. But it is only God who can furnish those sanctions; the State never can. Therefore, next step in the proceeding on the part of those who are calling for this law is to have the State attempt to supply the religious sanctions which belong with the day of rest, and which only can keep it from being a day of idleness and a day of evil. But they know that the State has none of those religious sanctions; and they know that these will have to be supplied to the State

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### **Present Truth Department**

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by the church, and then the church will call upon the State, by its power, to force them upon the citizen.

This is precisely what is proposed. Rev. Sam Small, in a sermon in Kansas City last winter, expressed the views of many more than himself, when he said:

"I want to see the day come when the church shall be the arbiter of all legislation, State, national, and municipal; when the great churches of the country can come together harmoniously, and issue their edict, and the legislative powers will respect it, and enact it into laws."

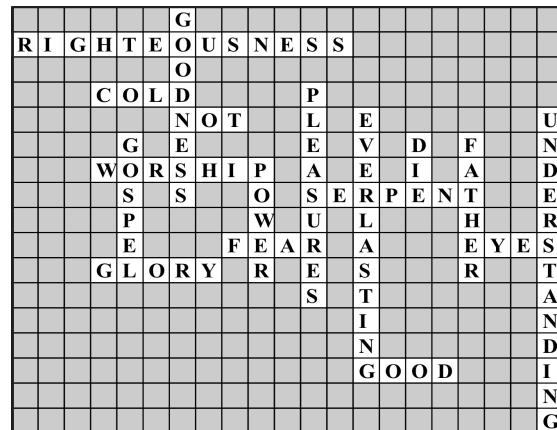
But any attempt to enforce religious observances only enforces hypocrisy and multiplies sin, because love for God is essential to every act of religious duty. For a man to tender obedience or homage to God when he has no love for God in his heart, only dishonors God, and does violence to his own nature. For anybody to obey God, or perform religious observances from interested motives, is sin; and for the State to exert its power in compelling men to act religiously, and pretend to honor God when they have in the heart no love for God, is only to force them into hypocrisy, and to compel them to commit sin, which, increased and multiplied by the exertion of national power, can end only in ruin, and that speedily.

**To be Continued...**

(This article was taken from pages 46-54 of the book entitled, *The National Sunday Law*, by Alonzo T. Jones. Some editing was done for this publication.

*Editor)*

### ***Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle***



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