

# Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

May 2009

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:2, 3). May God comfort you in all of your trials.

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**West Virginia Camp Meeting Reminder:** The West Virginia camp meeting will be held June 16-20 at Smyrna near Welch. We hope to see you there. For more information contact Smyrna Gospel Ministries at 304-732-9204.

## The Root of the Problem

by Lynnford Beachy

The biggest problem we have in this world is selfishness that stems from an unconverted heart. If that problem were overcome in every person, imagine what this world would be like! We know that this will never happen for everyone on this earth, but it will happen for God’s people before Christ comes to take us to heaven.

One result of having this problem overcome is that we will keep God’s commandments, which is a good thing, because Jesus said, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17).

John wrote, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Revelation 22:14, 15). We can see that keeping God’s commandments is very important. In fact this will be one of the identifying marks of God’s people right before Christ comes. Revelation speaks of the last days when it says, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

At this time God will triumphantly proclaim over His people, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

Notice what James says about the ten commandments:

If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty (James 2:8-12).

It is natural that obedience to God’s law would be a prerequisite for entrance into His kingdom, for we shall be judged by that law. To all those seeking entrance to His kingdom who are workers of iniquity, Jesus will say, “...depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:23).

There are many who think they are followers of Christ who cover corruption with a robe of self-righteousness. The words of Christ to the Pharisees applies to all those who would follow their practices. He said,

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Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith [“and the love of God” Luke 11:42]: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, *your house is left unto you desolate* (Matthew 23:23-38).

What a sad condition! The final statement is the key to their problem. Their house is left desolate or empty. Christ is not living inside, instead He is shut out knocking, seeking entrance. He says to this class, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). Jesus desperately wants to come in, but He cannot until the door is opened. As long as Christ is outside, there will be corruption inside. It doesn’t matter how clean the outside of the cup is, if the inside is corrupt, you are lost. Jesus said,

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits

ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:17-23).

We have seen that we must keep God’s commandments to enter into His kingdom, but this cannot come from cleansing only the outside of our lives. God’s law is “exceeding broad” (Psalm 119:96), and even deals with our motives. It detects the condition of our heart. If the heart is corrupt, and you try to make it produce good fruit, it is like trying to get apples from a lemon tree.

Suppose you paid a landscaper to plant apple trees in your yard. When the trees begin to bear fruit you notice that they are lemons, instead of apples. You call the landscaper to fix the problem, and he promptly arrives with a large basket of apples, saying, “I know how to fix the problem, take this basket of apples, and whenever you see a lemon come out, cut it off and attach an apple in its place.” Would you be happy with this solution? Certainly not! No matter how hard you try to make the lemon tree look like an apple tree, lemons will still come out somewhere, and the attached apples will start to rot. This is no different than trying to clean your life by dealing only with outward actions, and failing to deal with the root of the problem, the corrupt heart.

John the Baptist proclaimed, “...the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matthew 3:10). The only way to deal with the problem is to change trees down to the roots. Get rid of the old one and get a new tree. That is what God offers to do for us. He promised, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). Notice that God does not reform the old heart, but completely removes it.

### ***A New Creature***

Paul wrote, “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” (1 Corinthians 7:19). In another passage he wrote, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Galatians 6:15). There is an inseparable link between keeping the commandments and becoming a new

creature. The only way a person can truly keep God's commandments is if he is a new creature.

There is another key text that goes along with this. Paul wrote, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). The only way we can keep God's commandments is by becoming a new creature, and the only way we can be a new creature is by faith which worketh by love. You cannot make yourself a new creature. For that to take place you need a Creator. God is the only one who can make you a new creature, but He will only do it at your invitation. David asked God, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalms 51:10). At this invitation God delights to perform, "the operation of God" (Colossians 2:12).

The operation of God removes our old, corrupt heart and implants the Spirit of Christ into our hearts. "...because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6). This is an actual exchange that takes place, yet receiving it and maintaining it is dependent upon faith. As long as you believe God's promises, you have them, but when you doubt, you lose them. A graphic example of this is when Peter walked on the water at Christ's bidding. He took several steps on the water, "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30). As long as Peter had his eyes fixed on the Lord and His abilities he could walk on water, but when his attentions were turned to his circumstances and his own inabilities he sank. The same is true for us. Faith in God's abilities and "exceeding great and precious promises," enables us to escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

Faith works, grows, and stays strong, by love. This love is implanted by the Spirit of Christ and the natural result of that love is keeping God's commandments. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). In reality Jesus was saying, "If ye love me, ye *will* keep my commandments" as expressed in verse 23, "If a man love me, he *will* keep my words."

Paul wrote, "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). When the Spirit of God is given to us, we begin to see the love of God in places we have never seen it before. Paul prayed that "...the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God" (2 Thessalonians 3:5). When I first became a Christian I was amazed at how many tokens of God's love were all around me, even though I did not recognize them before. God's Spirit directed me to see His love in the sunset, in the stars, in the breeze, in the flowers, and a multitude of other places. This caused my faith and love to increase.

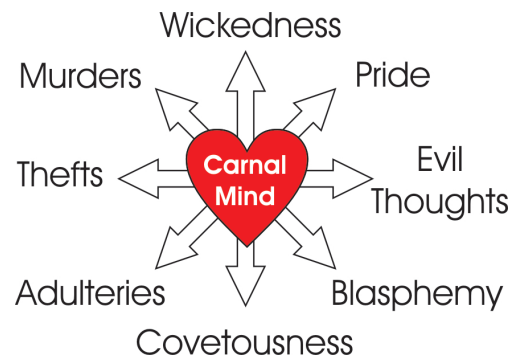
Paul explained some of the natural results of having the corrupt fleshly heart, and then compared them with the fruit of having the Spirit of God.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Galatians 5:19-24).

The primary difference between these two classes of people is one class has the Spirit of God ruling their lives, and the other does not. It is only natural for those who do not have the Spirit of God to have corrupt fruit manifested in their lives. A person may not have all of these negative symptoms, but it only takes one symptom to realize that there is a problem. The problem is the corrupt heart (also called the "carnal mind" Romans 8:7).

Jesus said, "...from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:21-22).

This could be illustrated like this:



What we see from these verses is that sinful actions are not the root of our problem, they are symptoms of a deeper problem. If you have sinful actions that are practiced in your life, it will do no good to only deal with those actions. There is a deeper problem that underlies those actions that causes you to do those things. Jesus said it comes from the corrupt heart. He said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45).

Suppose your car begins to have problems. Now suppose that you brought it to a mechanic, explaining, "My



car is making a loud noise and the 'Check Engine' light is on, and whenever I park it in my garage it makes a big puddle of oil on the floor. Please repair the problem." What would you think if he said, "I know just how to fix it. Here is a large basin, a pair of ear plugs and piece of black tape. Put the piece of tape over the 'Check Engine' light, put the ear plugs in your ears when you drive, and put this basin under your car when you park in your garage, and that will take care of all of your problems"? Would you be satisfied with solution? Of course not! That is the same as dealing with symptoms without getting to the root of the problem.

### ***Ye Must Be Born Again***

Jesus said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). This is not an optional process. As long as the old, corrupt heart remains, it does not matter how thoroughly we attempt to remove the symptoms, we will not go to heaven. The only way we can go to heaven is if we are born again by receiving the Spirit of God. This is something God is eager to give us, "...yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2). Jesus said, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:11-13).

All of this is available for the asking. "...all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). But if you do not ask and believe, you do not receive, and the most important thing to ask for is a new heart and God's Spirit to rule your life. If you do not have this then your life will be one of continual failure. Paul wrote of a man in this condition. He said, "...the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Romans 7:19, 20). The evil things that he does are the individual acts of sin, while the "sin that dwelleth in" him was a driving force that caused him to commit sin. This force is so inseparably linked to sinful actions that Paul even calls it "sin."\* In the next chapter this force is called, "the carnal mind" (Romans 8:7). "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be

spiritually minded is life and peace. Because *the carnal mind* is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:6, 7). This force is so strong that it can bring "...me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Romans 7:23).

In chapter 8 Paul explains that this power can be broken. He wrote, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). With the Spirit of Christ in us we no longer have to be in "captivity to the law of sin." Instead we can be "free from the law of sin." We do not have to be ruled by sin if Christ abides in our hearts. Praise God that He has provided a remedy for our root problem! Paul wrote,

***And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others (Ephesians 2:1-3).***

If we *were* by nature the children of wrath, then our natures must change. This refers to the carnal mind part of our nature as opposed to our sinful flesh. Until Christ returns we will have sinful flesh along with its lusts. The change that takes place is "the carnal mind" is exchanged for "the mind of Christ" (Romans 8:7; 1 Corinthians 2:16). With the mind of Christ we are no longer slaves to sin to fulfil the lusts of the flesh. We can be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), a nature that does not sin. Christ provided this remedy "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4).

John wrote, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him" (1 John 3:4-6). Here is the key to overcoming sin. Jesus Christ is well able to take away our sins. As long as we abide in Christ we will not sin. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). Abiding in Christ includes a constant awareness of the fact that Christ is living in you, and you are no longer living. "I am crucified with Christ:

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\* Paul used the word "sin" here in an out of the ordinary sense as a symbol to refer to the carnal mind. This is similar to how the word beast is used as a symbol of a kingdom in Daniel and Revelation. The definition of the word "beast" in Hebrew, Greek, and English, does not include anything about a kingdom, even though the word can be used as a symbol to refer to a kingdom. Paul did the same thing here. He was not trying to give a new definition for the word "sin," but rather used the word "sin" to symbolize a driving force behind the individual acts, that is, in fact, a bigger problem than the sins that a person commit. Sins in the Bible are often spoken of as being confessed, forgiven, and atoned for. It is obvious that the carnal mind could not fall into this category for there is no record of confession, forgiveness, or atonement for having a carnal mind.

nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

John wrote, “Little children, let no man deceive you...” Whenever we hear this type of warning, we must take heed to what follows. We can be sure that there will be people who will try to deceive us on this point. He wrote, “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:7, 8). There will be people coming to you to try to convince you that you can be righteous even though you continue to commit sin. John said do not be deceived by this lie. You cannot have corrupt fruit coming from a good tree, nor can you have good fruit coming from a corrupt tree.

John pointed out the remedy for our sin problem. He said, “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). Being born of God, and abiding in Christ is the remedy for our sin problem. This will take care of the root of our problem so that the unholy symptoms will no longer be manifested.

### ***Christ Deals with the Entire Sin Problem***

“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3). God provided a plan that “through faith in his blood” He could “declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past” (Romans 3:25). Jesus came to “...save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). In order to save us from our sins He has to be able to deal with the entire sin problem, including the root. It is not enough for Him to only forgive us of our past sins. He also must deal with the carnal mind that causes us to sin. The Bible says He was “...delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25). Christ died for our sins, and was raised again to live in us so that we can be justified. Justification is more than just declaring someone to be innocent, it actually makes the person innocent by removing both the record of sin and its root.

David recognized this two-fold problem. After his terrible sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, David repented, saying, “blot out my transgressions... Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalms 51:1, 9, 10). David realized that if all God did was forgive him of his past sins, then sin would arise again. He pleaded for God to remove his

wicked heart and give him a clean one so his problem would not come back.

John wrote, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Notice that there are two things that must be dealt with. God forgives us of our past sins, and He cleanses us from all unrighteousness by creating within us a clean heart. To receive this wonderful gift, we must ask and believe that God gives it to us because He promised, and then continue to believe this for the rest of our lives.

### ***A Simple Solution***

When I was in the world desiring to be free from sin, but not realizing how it could take place, my dad pointed me to a scripture that changed my life. God promised, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). My dad told me that I should ask God to give me a new heart and invite Jesus to live within me, and even though I would not feel any change, that I should continue to believe that God did it. He said that within a few days I would notice a change. I decided to try it, and it happened exactly as my dad explained. Soon I noticed that I responded to situations differently. No longer did I rattle off a list of curse words when I stubbed my toe, smashed my finger, or if something didn’t go the way I expected. God had truly performed a miracle in my life. This is how I received Christ.

The Bible says, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Colossians 2:6). Just as Christ is received, we are to maintain this experience by faith. Paul wrote, “...reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). This is something that can only be done by faith, and it is something that must constantly be maintained. “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Keep this awareness with you, and live like you believe it, and your abiding in Christ will produce the fruit of this experience. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God...” (2 Corinthians 5:17, 18).

I pray that you will have this rewarding experience. ✍

## The Gospel in Creation (Part 4)

by Ellet J. Waggoner

Continued from last month...

Now see how firm a foundation is given the believing one who knows that all things were created by the word of God, and that when God speaks, the thing named exists, full of life. The psalmist says, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints" (Psalm 85:8). "He speaks peace through the Divine Word, for He is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14). But peace means righteousness, for we read, "Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165), or cause them to stumble. And again, "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18). Then it must be that God speaks righteousness when He speaks peace. And so it is, for again we read:

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified [made righteous, or doers of the law] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set for to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Romans 3:21-26).

Notice that man is declared to have no righteousness: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12). No one has anything in him out of which righteousness can be made. Then the righteousness of God is put, literally, into and upon all that believe. Then they are both clothed with righteousness, and filled with it, according to the Scripture. In fact, they then become "the righteousness of God" in Christ. And how is this accomplished? God declares His righteousness upon the one who believes. To declare is to speak. So God speaks to the sinner, who is nothing, and who has nothing, and says, "You are righteous," and immediately that believing sinner ceases to be a sinner, and is the righteousness of God. The word of God which speaks righteousness has the righteousness itself in it, and as soon as the sinner believes, and receives that word into his own heart by faith, that moment he has the righteousness of God in his heart; and since out of the heart are the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23), it follows that a new life is thus begun in him; and that life is a life of obedience to the

commandments of God. Thus faith is indeed the substance of things hoped for; because faith appropriates the word of God, and the word of God is substance.

THE WORD A SURE FOUNDATION: The same word that created the earth also upholds it. We quote again the words concerning Christ: "For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions, principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16, 17, R.V.). To consist means to hold together. Therefore all things on the earth, and the earth itself, owe their continued existence to Christ. So Paul declared on Mars' Hill, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

This upholding is by His word. Thus: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:1-3). Christ is the Divine Word; He is in the spoken word; and so, since all things hold together in Him, they are upheld by His powerful word.

Read also the words written by the apostle Peter: "By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:5-7). The same word that made the earth caused its overflow by a flood, brought it transformed from the waters, and still upholds it. That word, therefore, must indeed be substantial. It is more real and solid than the earth itself, even as the foundation of a thing must be more substantial than the thing. That word "liveth and abideth forever" (1 Peter 1:23). Therefore the one who trusts it will never be at a loss.

There will come a time when "the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage" (Isaiah 24:19, 20); when every island shall flee away, and "the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." But even in that awful time the Christian can say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear" (Psalm 46:1, 2).

BUILDING ON THE WORD: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken



him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

Christ is a rock. Of the ancient Israelites we read that "they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed [went with] them; and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). The psalmist says, "He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him" (Psalm 92:15). To those who take Him as their peace, it is said: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:19, 20). We are not built upon the apostles and prophets, but upon the foundation which they have built upon; "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

According to the words of Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, we build upon the rock by hearing and doing His words. The word of God is "God breathed," and therefore full of His own life. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17), and Christ dwells in the heart by faith; therefore the word has Christ in it, because it brings Christ into the heart. The word of a man stands for the man himself. It is worth just as much as he is. If he is a worthless character, his word is worth nothing; but if he is an honorable man, and has promised a thing, his word is worth all that he is worth, or all that he can do. The word represents him. We say that a man does a thing which his servant does in obedience to his word. So the word of God stands for Himself. All that God is worth, His word is worth. It represents Him, because it is full of His life.

Abraham is a wonderful example of building on Christ by believing His word. God made a promise to Abraham, which, like all the promises of God, was in Christ. Then the record says of Abraham, "And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). There is something very peculiar about this expression "He believed in the Lord." The word rendered "believed" is from the Hebrew word "Amen." In the word "Amen" we have as nearly as possible the exact form of the Hebrew. The word is not translated, but simply transferred. It is a Hebrew word and appears in the different languages into which the Bible is translated. Greek, Latin, French, German, Spanish, Danish, English, etc.—All have the same word, "Amen."

The root idea of the word is firmness. The idea of solidity and stability attaches to it. It has a variety of definitions, all carrying this thought. One definition is "to build, or

depend, on." So, literally, Abraham built upon God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. This agrees with the idea that the word of the Lord is a foundation. The root idea of the word being that of something substantial, upon which one can build, is carried into our ordinary speech. We say of a certain man, "You can depend on his word." That means that you can rest your weight upon it. Now if this be true of a man, how much more so of God! We may rest upon His word, for it will always hold us up.

This gives a better idea of the Bible meaning of belief than is commonly held. People generally think that to believe is nothing more than to nod assent. But believing the Lord is much more than this. It is to count that word as the surest thing in the universe, since it is that which upholds the universe, and to rest the whole soul, and all the hopes, upon it, even though everything appears contrary to it. It is to walk where there seems to be nothing, provided the word of the Lord is there, knowing that it is a firm foundation. The poet Whittier has thus expressed it:

Nothing before, nothing behind:  
The steps of faith  
Fall on the seeming void, and find  
The rock beneath.

When the Lord said to Peter, "Come," as He walked on the water, Peter got out of the boat and started to his Lord. It is contrary to nature for a man to walk on the water. It is impossible that water should hold a man up. What did hold Peter up? It was that word, "Come." When the Lord utters a word, the thing described is in the word; and so when He said to Peter, "Come," the power to come was in the word. It was on that that Peter walked as long as he walked at all. When he looked around him at the boisterous waves, he began to sink. Why? Because he then forgot the word, and thought only of the water. As soon as he left the word he began to sink, because the water had no power to hold him up. It was only the word of the Lord that could keep him above the water. If the word of the Lord had told Peter to walk in the air; he could have done that just as easily as he could have walked on the water. The word of the Lord bore Elijah through the air, and so it will soon do for all who learn the power of it.

But note the fact, that when Abraham built on the Lord it was counted to him for righteousness. The Lord never makes any mistakes in His reckoning. When Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, it was because it was indeed righteousness. How so? Why, as Abraham built on God, he built on everlasting righteousness. "He is my Rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him." He became one with the Lord, and so God's righteousness was his own.

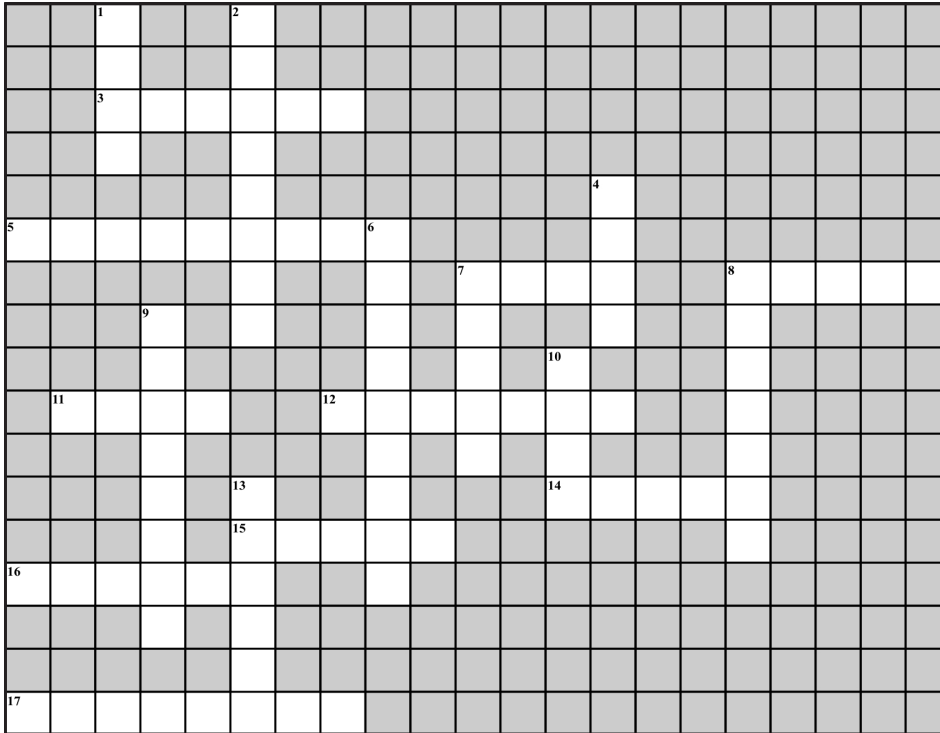
**To be Continued...**

(This article was taken from pages 26-36 of the book entitled, *The Gospel in Creation*, by Ellet J. Waggoner. Editor)

# Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies based on a series of Bible Lessons written by Lynnford Beachy, entitled, "God's Love on Trial," taken from 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 KJV is required.)

## The Death of the Son of God (Lesson 7)



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

➤ We were reconciled to God by the \_\_\_\_\_ of His Son. Romans 5:10—**7 Down**

**Note:** It was not the death of the Son of man (the human nature), but the death of the divine Son of God that reconciled us to God. God loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son into this world to die for wretched sinners like you and me. This is more than a cliché. The thought contained in these words demonstrates the immense sacrifice that God made in our behalf.

➤ If God was willing to give His Son, we know He will with Him also give us \_\_\_\_\_. Romans 8:32 (2 words)—**5 Across**

**Note:** If God was willing to give up His own Son for us, it proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that He is willing to give up all that He possesses for our benefit. We know this because His Son meant more to Him than anything in the universe, as indicated by this verse. When we understand what took place at

the cross, it will melt our hearts like nothing else can.

➤ To reconcile us, God laid upon His Son the \_\_\_\_\_ of us all. Isaiah 53:6—**2 Down**

➤ Because of this Christ was \_\_\_\_\_ with the transgressors. Isaiah 53:12—**17 Across**

➤ Christ was \_\_\_\_\_ with them that go down to the pit. Psalm 88:4—**8 Down**

**Note:** "The pit" is used here as a symbol for the grave of the lost. (For a thorough study on death and hell, please contact us and request pamphlets entitled, "What Happens After Death" and "God's Love Revealed in Hell.")

➤ Christ was laid in the \_\_\_\_\_ pit. Psalm 88:6—**16 Across**

**Note:** Christ suffered the worst death that anyone has ever, or will ever, suffer. Others have suffered equally or even greater if we limit His suffering to His physical pain alone. His death was the worst because His relationship with His Father was closer than anyone had

ever experienced. When our sins interfered with this relationship it caused Him the greatest anguish that anyone will ever suffer. Though He had not sinned, He was tempted to believe that He would suffer eternal death for our salvation. Christ made the conscious decision that if it meant He must die for eternity so you can live with God forever, then He was willing to do it.

➤ If He would have chosen to be rescued He would have had to pray to the \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 26:53—**13 Down**

➤ Christ refused to assert His \_\_\_\_\_ over His Father's. Mark 14:36—**1 Down**

**Note:** The Son of God was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Just before His dying breath, Christ said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

➤ Jesus said that His disciples would leave Him, but He would not be \_\_\_\_\_. John 16:32—**15 Across**

➤ On the cross Jesus cried out, asking why His Father had \_\_\_\_\_ Him. Matthew 27:46—**9 Down**

**Note:** The Son of God suffered a real and agonizing death when the sins of the whole world were placed upon Him. (See Isaiah 53:6 and 1 John 2:2.) It was not pretend, it was not an act, it was real. When His Father turned His back on Him (Psalm 88:14) it was something Christ had not anticipated, for He told His disciples that His Father would not leave Him alone.

➤ Jesus was made lower than the angels for the \_\_\_\_\_ of death. Hebrews 2:9—**6 Down**

**Note:** This verse would mean absolutely nothing if the Son of God did not die completely. There are some who claim that Christ came down from heaven and inhabited a human body and that, when it came time to die, only the human body died while the divine being who came down from heaven remained alive. With this view we would have to conclude that there was only a human sacrifice made for our redemption. No matter how exalted the pre-existent Son was, no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even



eternal, if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. It is contrary to reason to believe that a human sacrifice is sufficient to redeem mankind, and it is contrary to Scripture to say that only half of Christ died.

➤ Before coming to earth Christ was in the \_\_\_\_ of God. Philippians 2:6—**11 Across**

➤ Christ was obedient even unto the death of the \_\_\_\_\_. Philippians 2:8—**8 Across**

**Note:** The same identical Being who was in the form of God in verse six, died in verse eight.

➤ The glorified Son of God said that He was \_\_\_\_\_. Rev. 1:18—**7 Across**

➤ Jesus was cut off out of the land of the \_\_\_\_\_. Isaiah 53:8—**3 Across**

➤ Christ's \_\_\_\_ was made an offering for sin. Isaiah 53:10—**10 Down**

**Note:** According to the Scripture, the soul of Christ died; the soul of Christ was made the offering for sin. The soul of a person constitutes the entire being. If a soul dies, the entire being is dead. Yes, it is possible for a soul to die. God said, "...the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). The soul is more than just the body.

➤ Jesus said that we are not to fear him that can kill the \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 10:28—**4 Down**

➤ Instead, we are to fear Him who can \_\_\_\_ both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28—**12 Across**

**Note:** There is a clear distinction between the soul and the body. When only

the body is killed, the soul, though not conscious (Ecclesiastes 9:6), is not destroyed. It is preserved in an unconscious state awaiting the resurrection. When the soul is destroyed in the second death (Revelation 20:14), nothing is retained, for there is no resurrection from the second death.

➤ God did not \_\_\_\_ Christ's soul in hell. Acts 2:31—**14 Across**

**Note:** The word "hell" in the preceding verse was translated from the Greek word *hades*. This word means grave in every case. The soul of Christ rested with His body in the tomb.

Christ died completely for our sins. He made the conscious decision to lay down His life even if He would never come back to life again. He would rather die forever than live without you! ✍

## Pennsylvania Printing Machine

Just a note to let you know that we here at Seed of Truth Ministries enjoy reading articles in the *Present Truth*. We have been putting together books from a lot of different sources along with CD's and DVD's, and we want to make them available to those in the faith, especially for new believers who may not know where to find them. Also we found old out of print books that we thought should be reprinted for people to read.

We were starting to design a catalog and were wondering where to go and have all this printed. Then we read the article in *Present Truth* about the printer. When you challenged other ministries to get them for themselves and start to print, we went to the Lord in prayer about it and He answered. We also now have a Canon IRC 3200, and are working on putting everything together and learning how to use it. We ordered one with a duplexer and a saddle stitch finisher, so we can print small books, up to about 50 pages. Also we would like to thank you for helping us with it.

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## *The National Sunday Law (Part 7)*

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 that promoted a Sunday law. *Editor*)

**Mr. Jones:** I have cited the theocratical purpose of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The National Reform Association, whose secretary stood at this table to-day to plead for the passage of this bill, aims directly at the establishment of a theocracy in this Government. In their own words, they propose to make this republic "as truly and really a theocracy as the commonwealth of Israel."

The Sunday-law Association also holds much the same theory. In the Elgin Sunday-law convention, Dr. Mandeville, of Chicago, said:

"The merchants of Tyre insisted upon selling goods near the temple on the Sabbath, and Nehemiah compelled the officers of the law to do their duty, and stop it. So we can compel the officers of the law to do their duty."

Nehemiah was ruling there in a true theocracy, a government of God; the law of God was the law of the land, and God's will was made known by the written word, and by the prophets. Therefore, if Dr. Mandeville's argument is of any force at all, it is so only upon the claim of the establishment of a theocracy. With this idea the view of Dr. Crafts agrees precisely, and Dr. Crafts is general field secretary for the National Sunday-law Union. He claims, as expressed in his own words, that:

"The preachers are the successors of the prophets." — *Christian Statesman*, July 5, 1888.

Now put these things together. The government of Israel was a theocracy; the will of God was made known to the ruler by prophets; the ruler compelled the officers of the law to prevent the ungodly from selling goods on the Sabbath. This government is to be made a theocracy; the preachers are the successors of the prophets; and they are to compel the officers of the law to prevent all selling of goods and all manner of work on Sunday. This shows conclusively that these preachers intend to take the supremacy into their hands,

officially declare the will of God, and compel all men to conform to it. And this deduction is made certain by the words of Prof. Blanchard, in the Elgin convention:

"In this work we are undertaking for the Sabbath, we are the representatives of God."

And the chief of these representatives of God, will be but a pope again; because when preachers control the civil power as the representatives of God, a pope is inevitable.

These quotations prove, to a demonstration, that the whole theory upon which this religio-political movement is based, is identical with that of the fourth century, which established the papacy. They show also that the means employed — Sunday laws — by which to gain control of the civil power to make the wicked theory effective, are identical with the means which were employed in the fourth century for the same purpose. The next question is, Will they carry the theory into effect as they did in the fourth century and onward? In other words, when they get the power to oppress, will they use the power? A sufficient answer to this would seem to be the simple inquiry, If they do not intend to use the power, then why are they making such strenuous efforts to get it? If Congress lets them have the power, they will surely use it. Human nature is the same now as it was in the fourth century. Politics is the same now it was then. And as for religious bigotry, it knows no centuries; it knows no such thing as progress or enlightenment; it is ever the same. And in its control of civil power, the cruel results are also ever the same.

How appropriate, therefore, is it that Cardinal Gibbons should indorse the national Sunday bill! How natural, indeed, that he should gladly add his name to the number of petitioners in support of the movement to secure legislation in the interests of the church! He knows just how his brethren in the fourth century worked the same kind of scheme; he knows what the outcome of the movement was then; and he knows full well what the outcome of this movement will be now. He knows that the

theory underlying this movement is identical with the theory which was the basis of that; he knows the methods of working are the same now as they were then; he knows that the means employed to secure control of the civil power now, are identical with the means employed then; and he knows that the result must be the same. He knows that when religion shall have been established as an essential element in legislation in this Government, the experience of fifteen hundred eventful years, and "the ingenuity and patient care" of fifty generations of statesmen, will not be lost in the effort to make the papal power supreme over all here and now, as was done there and then. And in carrying out the instructions of Pope Leo XIII., that "all Catholics should do all in their power to cause the constitutions of States and legislation to be modeled upon the principles of the true church," the Cardinal assuredly is glad to have the opportunity to add his name to the more than six millions of Protestants who are set for the accomplishment of the same task.

To those Protestants who are so anxious to make religion a subject of legislation, it now appears very desirable; and it also appears a very pleasant thing to secure the alliance of the papacy. But when they shall have accomplished the feat, and find themselves in the midst of the continuous whirl of political strife and contention with the papacy, not alone for supremacy, but for existence, — then they will find it not nearly so desirable as it now appears to their vision, blinded by the lust for illegitimate power.

And when they find themselves compelled to pay more than they bargained to, they will have but themselves to blame; for when they make religion a subject of legislation, they therein confess that it is justly subject to the rule of majorities. And then, if the Romish Church secures the majority, and compels the Protestants to conform to Catholic forms and ordinances, the Protestants cannot justly complain. Knowing, as we do, the outcome of the same kind of movement before, we do not propose to allow this scheme to be worked out here without a decided protest.

**Senator Blair:** You are entirely logical, because you say there should be no



Sunday legislation by State or nation either.

**Mr. Jones:** Yes, sir, of course I am logical, all the way through. I want to show you the wicked principle upon which this whole system is founded, and the reason I do this is because the last step is involved in the first one. If you allow this principle and this movement to take the first step, those who get the power will see in the end that they take the last step. That is the danger. See how in the fourth century the logic of it ended only with the Inquisition.

**Senator Blair:** Was the Inquisition abolished by the abolition of the Sunday laws?

**Mr. Jones:** No; but the principle of it was established by Sunday laws.

**Senator Blair:** Then if the inquisition was established by the Sunday laws, how was it abolished, but by the abolition of the Sabbath? How can you remove an effect except by removing its cause?

**Mr. Jones:** The Sunday laws never have been abolished.

**Senator Blair:** Then the Sunday law could not have been the cause of the Inquisition.

**Mr. Jones:** The power which embodies the Inquisition still continues, and its emissaries have been in this country defending the Inquisition. That same power is now grasping for the control of the civil law, and the same causes generally produce the same effects.

**Senator Blair:** And the removal of the causes removes the effects with them.

**Mr. Jones:** Sometimes.

**Senator Blair:** Therefore the Sunday laws were not the cause of the Inquisition, unless the Inquisition still exists.

**Mr. Jones:** No, the Sunday laws did not cause the Inquisition.

**Senator Blair:** I understood you to say that it did.

**Mr. Jones:** I say, through that the church received the power to make the principle and the work of the Inquisition effective. A certain exercise of power may be forbidden, and yet the means by which the power was obtained may not be forbidden. In other words, the power which was obtained through the deception of Sunday laws, may be prohibited in certain things, and yet allowed in many other things.

**Senator Blair:** The Lord made the Sabbath, and governed the Jewish

nation for nearly three thousand years with a Sabbath. Do you think the Sabbath was for the good of the Jewish people, or for their injury?

**Mr. Jones:** It was established for the good of the human race.

**Senator Blair:** Including the Jewish people?

**Mr. Jones:** Yes, sir.

**Senator Blair:** It was established as a part of the civil administration.

**Mr. Jones:** But the church and the State were one.

**Senator Blair:** Therefore what we call the civil administration was included in that theocracy.

**Mr. Jones:** The church and the State were one. They were united, and it was a theocracy.

**Senator Blair:** If the administration of the Sabbath during these three thousand years, at least, was for the good of the Jews and the human race, why will not the Sabbath be good for the Jews and the human race since the time of Christ, as well as before?

**Mr. Jones:** It is for the good of the human race.

**Senator Blair:** The civil law must administer it if it is done. Then we will get no Sabbath now under our division of powers of government, unless we have the Sabbath recognized and enforced by the State authority?

**Mr. Jones:** Certainly we have a Sabbath.

**Senator Blair:** Your proposition is to strike out the Sabbath from the Constitution and condition of society in these modern times?

**Mr. Jones:** No, sir.

**Senator Blair:** Certainly so far as its existence and enactment and enforcement by law are concerned.

**Mr. Jones:** Yes, by civil law.

**Senator Blair:** It was enforced in what we call the civil conduct of men under that theocratic form of government for at least three thousand years.

**Mr. Jones:** Certainly.

**Senator Blair:** Now the observance of the Sabbath depends upon a compulsory observance of the law.

**Mr. Jones:** Not at all.

**Senator Blair:** It required the law of God which he enforced by death, by stoning men to death when they violated it, and we have the Sabbath day only by virtue of what we call the civil law, which is equally a part of God's law.

**Mr. Jones:** That government was not organized specially to enforce the Sabbath.

**Senator Blair:** They stoned men to death who violated the law.

**Mr. Jones:** Certainly; and likewise for the transgression of the other commandments.

**Senator Blair:** God enforced it, in other words, by human means.

**Mr. Jones:** Certainly; my answer to all that is that that was a theocracy, — a union of church and state. The church was the State, and the State was the church.

**Senator Blair:** You say now that there is no State to enforce it?

**Mr. Jones:** I say that no government can enforce the Sabbath, or those things which pertain to God, except a theocratic government — a union of church and state. Therefore I say that if you establish such a law as is here proposed, you lead directly to a union of church and state. The logic of the question demands it, and that is where it will end, because the law cannot be enforced otherwise. These gentlemen say they do not want a union of church and state. What they mean by church and state is, for the State to select one particular denomination, and make it the favorite above all other denominations. That is a union of church and state according to their idea. But a union of church and state was formed by Constantine when he recognized Christianity as the religion of the Roman empire. Everybody knows that that was a union of church and state, and that it ended in the papacy. A union of church and state is where the ecclesiastical power controls the civil power, and uses the civil power in its own interests. That is where this movement will end, and that is one of the reasons why we oppose it.

**Senator Blair:** You say the church and state separated shall not do those proper things which the church and state always did when united in the theocracy?

**Mr. Jones:** No, sir.

**Senator Blair:** Then why do you say that the state:

**Mr. Jones:** I did not mean to deny your proposition; I think the way you intended, I mean "Yes," because I certainly do say that the church and state separated shall do those proper things which were done when they were united in the theocracy.



## *Smyrna Gospel Ministries*

### **Present Truth Department**

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U.S.A.

**Senator Blair:** If in this division of the powers of government into church and state, you exclude from the powers of the church the establishment and enforcement and regulation of the Sabbath, why do you not necessarily, if the Sabbath is a good thing, pass it over to the control of the State?

**Mr. Jones:** Because if the church will not recognize it and preserve it, the State cannot compel people to do it. The State that attempts it is bound to fail.

**Senator Blair:** Then you necessarily take the ground that God did wrong in the enforcement of the Sabbath during those three thousand years when his government was both church and state.

**Mr. Jones:** No, sir. If God would come himself to govern, and make himself governor, as he did of Israel, he could enforce the law as he did there. But until God does that, we deny the right of all the churches or anybody else, to do it.

**Mr. Senator Blair:** Even if it is for the good of society?

**Mr. Jones:** What they say is for the good of society is for the ruin of society.

**Senator Blair:** Do you understand that it is the church or the State that is making this law?

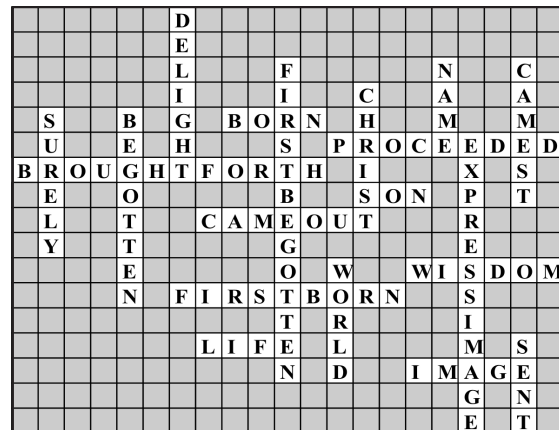
**Mr. Jones:** It is the State that is doing it, just as Constantine did it, to satisfy the churches.

**To be Continued...**

(This article was taken from pages 85-93 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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