

THE STRUGGLE FOR  
RELIGIOUS  
LIBERTY





## In This Edition

- 2 Struggle for Liberty
- 16 The Three Hebrews
- 17 A Marine's Testimony
- 25 The Four Boxes
- 27 Recipe for a Free Nation
- 28 Liberty Threatened
- 32 Daniel Was a Man of Prayer

*“And I will walk at  
liberty: for I seek  
Thy precepts”  
Psalms 119:45.*

Written and published by New Life Mission (NLM) unless otherwise stated; bold or red print is our supplied emphasis; © 2024, our ministry is and has been dedicated to sharing Bible topics, current events, prophecy, family, health, temperance, and moral issues since 1986. Subscriptions are free.

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## The Struggle for Religious Liberty

The struggle for religious liberty will be the focus in this magazine. Some may question the need to discuss this topic at all, thinking that everything in America is going just fine. We do have liberty, so why do we need to give it any special attention? The reality is, there is much more happening in this world than the news outlets are telling us, and each one of us will be affected.

### Persecution

Over ten years ago, it was reported that over 100,000 people are killed for their faith every year.<sup>[1]</sup> That is 274 people per day—nearly twelve individuals every hour. Can you imagine it? A hundred thousand Christians killed annually because of their faith? We are not living in the Dark Ages. It seems the science and politics of our day would have advanced beyond such intolerance. How can this be? God's Word tells us Jesus will come at midnight, which is the darkest hour of the night. This means, things are going to get much worse before they get better.

According to the article, “Two hundred fifty million Christians currently live under persecution. It's absolutely on the rise,” Jeff King, the group's president, told [Fox-News.com](https://www.foxnews.com).” The article mentions many parts of the world, including Islamic countries in Africa, the Middle East, China, North Korea, Indonesia, and places in the West.

## Some 100,000 Christians Killed Per Year Over Faith

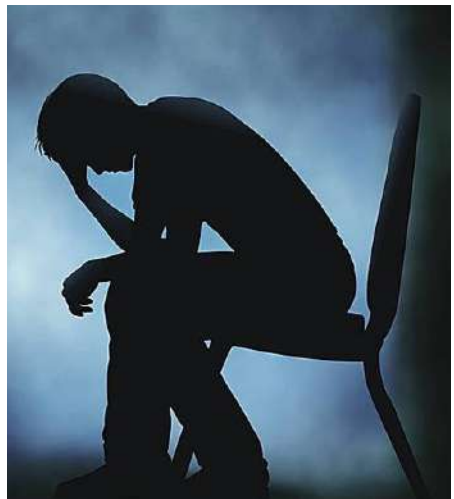
December 9, 2015

**A staggering 100,000 Christians are killed annually because of their faith, and several human rights groups claim such anti-Christian violence is on the rise in countries like Pakistan, Nigeria and Egypt. Two-hundred million Christians currently live under persecution. It's absolutely on the rise.**

Remember this fact the next time the devil tempts you to be unfaithful to Christ. The next time Satan tries to seduce you to disobey and betray the name of Jesus, think about these faithful brothers and sisters who chose to remain faithful, even when facing death. These facts bring new meaning to the promises of God's Word: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" Revelation 2:10.

Remember also that the United States is not immune to persecution. It is spreading in our world and will come to us sooner than we think. That is why this topic of religious liberty is so important. We need freedom to worship God in spirit and truth. Jesus told us, "And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" Matthew 10:22.

Persecution for truth's sake is inevitable, but if we endure unto the end, Christ promises we shall be saved. May we hold fast to God's Word and pray for our brothers and sisters and Christians worldwide who are going through hardship right now. We should pray, not only that they will be faithful and hold fast to their faith, but also that Christians in America will be faithful when persecution reaches our shores. Pray for



those who think they are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. Pray that we will stand faithful in times of prosperity, because prosperity is the most dangerous time for Christians. It is easy to let down our guard when things are going well.

However, when the church suffers persecution, it grows the best; adversity purifies and cleanses. God is not concerned about numbers; He is all about faithfulness; so pray that God keeps us faithful!

## Truth Under Attack

It is not just Christians and Christianity that are under attack; God's Word, His truth, His laws, and the principles of His kingdom are also under attack..

Today, truth is being distorted. Some people do not believe truth is universal and unchanging. The popular view on truth is that it is based on one's own personal feelings, beliefs, and emotions—that each person has his or her own truth.

Truth, according to many is whatever one wants it to be, and it will vary from person to person.

The fact that the truth of God's Word is under attack means we have a work to do. "The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God's witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands."

*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 68. We need both the banner of truth and religious liberty. We need religious liberty so we can proclaim the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12.

During the last conflict, that solemn, sacred mission will be committed to our hands. A great

responsibility, the most solemn work that has sustained the Christian church throughout the ages, has been given to us; and we have a sacred duty to uphold the truth during times of great wickedness and darkness. May we never take the freedoms and rights we enjoy today for granted.



## Nothing Has Changed

There has been a struggle for religious liberty and freedom from tyranny and oppression ever since the Garden of Eden. The fight for the right to worship, to glorify God, and to be freed from persecution, has existed from the beginning. Yes, from the very beginning of time, we needed religious liberty.

This is true because religious persecution has existed since Cain slew Able. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his



brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" 1 John 3:12. There is nothing new under the sun: "But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" Galatians 4:29.

So it is, human nature has not changed. Unless God intervenes and we allow Jesus to subdue all those tendencies and feelings of bitterness, anger, hate, and jealousy, nothing will ever change. That is the reason we still live in a culture of violence. Even thousands of years after Cain, we are still dealing with the same violence and wars.

One might be tempted to think that after 6,000 years, humanity would have figured out how to do things better. The truth is, we cannot change our fallen sinful human nature. Only God can change our hearts.

According to the Bible, acts of war, terrorism, economic injustice, greed, and racial tensions, are just symptoms; they are not the cause. They are symptoms of something broken inside of us. "For 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: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" Mark 7:21-23. Here, Jesus tells us problems come from inside of us. As much as society may wish, we cannot hope to solve problems by throwing money at them. That only makes things worse; it does nothing to change the source of all the evil in the world. What is in our hearts is the problem. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9.

We tend to call a person with no sympathy, compassion, mercy, or love, a coldhearted person. No one would want to live with such a per-

son, and Jesus does not want to live with such a person either. This is



why the Bible promises He will give us a new heart and a new spirit. “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” Ezekiel 36:26.

This is good news! It means we can get an attitude adjustment.

God changes our bad attitudes by changing our motives from the inside out. This is what the world needs. If the world could only experience what He wants to give us, all the problems we see in the world today would be eliminated. If everyone kept God’s Ten Commandments, there would be no need for prison systems, attorneys, the criminal justice system, national defense systems, or any of the other things on which countries spend trillions of dollars.

### **The Solution: The Love of God**

God has something better for us. We can have perfect peace right now, not just in heaven. When we open our hearts to Christ, we never have to feel abandoned. We no longer have to carry all the heavy burdens in life alone. Whenever we lay it all at the cross of Christ, tremendous joy, peace, and freedom follow. The grace of God and the work of His Holy Spirit are the only means He can use to constrain, change, and direct us. This is the only way we can receive a new heart, new desires, and new feelings. With a new heart, we can begin to love people the way God loves us.

When this happens, it solves a lot of the problems in our homes and churches. The world is waiting for the manifestation of God’s thoughts and feelings in the hearts and minds of His people. That manifestation gives power to our message. We have the truth; what we need is the experience. A changed life is the greatest evidence to demonstrate that God is real. When someone who had a cold, hard heart begins to passionately love their family and enemies like Jesus did, you know God has changed their heart. It is evidence that a miracle has taken place in one’s life—a miracle only God can accomplish.

### **Why We Need Religious Liberty**

This is what we need today. That is the kind of witness we need to give to the world. We need religious liberty this very day because peo-

ple have rejected the Holy Spirit and the life-changing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we reject the Spirit, our hearts continue to degrade, following after carnal, sinful passions. Evil begins to reign, not just in society but also in our homes and schools.

We see this in the world. When I was in school, students used to try to break up any fights that occurred. Today, they pull out their smart phones, record the fight, and post it online to get views and likes. We live in a culture similar to that of the antediluvians before the flood. This indicates that Jesus is coming soon.

Evil is in charge today. We live in a period of earth's history that is characterized by constant war, terror, bloodshed, and tyranny. The world today reflects the condition described by Paul, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents" Romans 1:28-30.



God has given each person freedom to choose between goodness, mercy, love, and justice; or oppression, evil, intolerance, control, and manipulation. Our heavenly Father has given us a conscience as our moral guide. He never uses force. Jesus did not come to earth wearing a military uniform with a sidearm and handcuffs, telling sinners He was going to take them to heaven against their will. Rather than force, God attracts us with His everlasting love. "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" Jeremiah 31:3.

God's church can preach, teach, sing, pray, and plead with sinners, but they cannot force any person to give their heart to Jesus. Each individual must make that choice for themselves. Each person must get on

their knees and ask Christ to come into his or her life.

God is a God of freedom; He wants to give each person peace, joy, love, and freedom to worship. He told Moses to “proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof” Leviticus 25:10. God is the author of liberty in the fullest sense. Thanks to the gospel of Jesus Christ, we can be free today—right now. Jesus came to break the power of sin and Satan. That is what the gospel can do for us. It can free us from pain, misery, heartache, suicidal thoughts, and addictions. We do not have to live with any of that anymore. God’s Word promises, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” John 8:36.

### **Jesus Died to Give Us Freedom**

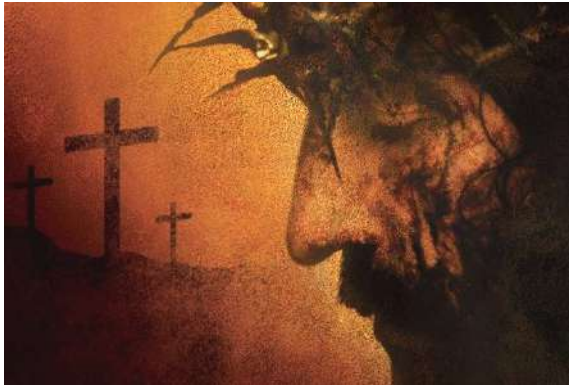
The God we serve is a God of freedom, and if we become His children, we will reflect His character, His thoughts, and His feelings. We will be just like He is in those thoughts and feelings, which will result in acting as He acted.

Notice what Jesus endured for us: “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” Isaiah 53:4, 5.

Jesus did not just bear our sins; He also carried everything else associated with sin, including our grief, our sorrows, our shame, our misery, and our disgrace. This means we don’t have to carry any hate, vengeance, anger, or bitterness. We can lay all these feelings at the foot of the cross. There is tremendous peace and freedom whenever we turn everything over to Christ. He paid for all our sins and the mental pain associated with them.

Why would anyone want to serve Satan? What has he done for us? We have a loving, compassionate Saviour who can give us healing today—right now. Satan will attempt to make our burdens, pain, and misery greater. He tempts us to sin, then tells us there is nothing wrong with transgressing God’s Word. Satan encourages us to drink, smoke, and cheat; then the very moment we listen to his voice and yield to temptation, he immediately tells us God will never forgive us. He accuses us before God and tells us we are not worth saving. The devil will



then try to make us believe God can never forgive us. Like Job's wife, he tries to convince us to "curse God, and die" Job 2:9.

Let us remember, Jesus defeated Satan in the wilderness, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and again on the cross. In fact, Jesus defeated Satan every day of his life, over and over again **through the power of the Holy Spirit**. Satan lost again on the morning of the resurrection. The final knockout blow will be when Christ comes the second time. After the second coming, when He appears in the clouds of glory to take His children home to heaven, Satan will not be able to tempt them ever again. What a glorious day that will be!



## History of Religious Oppression

Jesus is the author of liberty, but Satan is the author of tyranny, hate, and oppression. For thousands of years, this world has lived in tyranny. We would have had no hope if it were not for Christ. In the very first civilization after the flood, Nimrod created a system of governance where one man had all power, both religious and civil. And to defy his order was not just treason; he considered it blasphemy. That is the kind of kingdom Satan wants. Unfortunately, certain persons today regard themselves as absolute, complete with supreme power and authority, while the rest of the people have no rights or freedoms.

It was not just Nimrod's ancient Babylonian Empire that was oppressive. The ancient Egyptian Empire established the same system principles.



They set up their own gods and established a universal system of worship in which the state became god. Pharaoh was deified, praised, and worshipped. Whatever he commanded, whatever he dictated, was law. One could either submit or die. That is tyranny.

Moving down through

history, we come to Nebuchadnezzar and the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The three Hebrew boys were cast into the fiery furnace because they defied the king of Babylon. The king demanded obedience, not just in civil matters but also in matters of faith. It made no difference whether the law was just or unjust, whether it was in conflict with God or not;



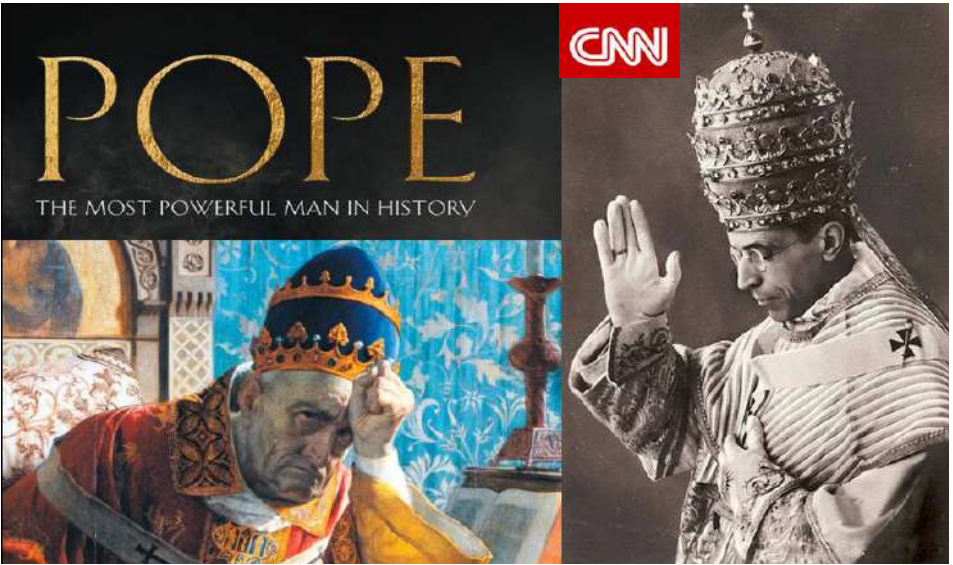
they were expected to give unreserved obedience and allegiance to that one person who claimed to have all the power.

Many times throughout human history, when civil authorities have come into conflict with God's commandments, the God of heaven has intervened on behalf of religious liberty. Often, by a miraculous demonstration of His power, He has preserved those who love Him and keep His commandments. That has always been the way God intervenes.

Tyranny did not end in ancient history. The same principle of tyranny and oppression existed during the Middle Ages. The entire world was ruled by tyrannical governments throughout Europe. All the European nations had monarchs that ruled by what was termed the "divine right of kings." That means they ruled without the consent of anyone else. They ruled by their own consent and called it "God's will."

During the Middle Ages, everything belonged to the king: all the gold, the land, and even the people. They were considered to be subjects of the king. That meant they were his property and he could do with them as he pleased. If someone fell out of favor with the king, there was no jury of peers to cast a vote for that person. There was no court of appeal. There was no freedom to speak or travel. Whatever the king decreed was law, and whatever faith he professed was the established faith for all of society.

CNN recently called the pope the most powerful man in history. [2] During the Dark Ages, one man dictated what was truth and what was error. There was no higher authority to whom anyone could appeal. Whatever the pope said was final. If a person fell out of favor with papal authorities, or worshiped in a different manner on a different day, there was no one to whom they could turn for vindication except to the God of heaven. The papacy could take everything away from a heretic. They established what they called the Holy Inquisition—even though there was nothing holy about it—to punish dissenters and force their conversion or enact the sentence of death.



**A look inside Vatican—how popes used their power to shape the course of world history—this info no longer available on CNN. [2]**

### **The Roots of Freedom and Liberty**

This is what the world lived through for so many years. Then slowly, the world began to change. It was a process; it didn't happen overnight. The Founding Fathers did not get everything right at the beginning, but God was still working. He has helped us get where we are today. They had fled the same papal-type oppression by the British crown. They were convinced that the British throne had devised a system to strip men and women of all their properties and liberties, so they established a nation based on liberty of conscience and freedom from oppression. The Declaration of Independence stated, "These United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown."

For the first time in history, the state was not absolute. And thanks to their example, the world began to change. Today, democracy, not monarchy, is the predominant government in the world.

Martin Luther chose to stand against the most powerful church in his day and the greatest empire of his time. Rome and Emperor Charles V were attempting to revive the Holy Roman Empire. Why would Luther even dare to stand up to both the



church and the state?

Emperor Charles V passed a law that said all of Luther's books had to be burned, because he was an enemy of the state. The Roman Catholic Church excommunicated him, along with anyone who listened or supported him. When people were excommunicated, their properties



and all possessions were taken over by the church. They lost everything, their freedom and often, their lives.

Yet one man was willing to lose everything on earth—even his life—because he understood that mankind's authority is not absolute. It is only God and His Word that are absolute. During his trial, when he was asked by church and state authorities to renounce his beliefs, Martin Luther replied, "I am bound by the Scriptures...and my conscience is captive to the Word of God...I

cannot and will not recant anything; for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God."

In the same way, our Founding Fathers were willing to declare publicly that they were absolved of their relationship with the British Crown. They were willing to break that allegiance because they believed in a limited government with few powers; not in a form of government that had all power.

Some believe the rights we receive from God are not absolute while teaching that human commands are completely absolute, but this is the same message given in Babylon during the prophet Daniel's time and in every tyrannical system this world has ever seen.

### **Modern Threats to Liberty**

Some may say, "Well, that was a long time ago; we don't have to worry about such tyranny today." Think for a moment what happened to religious freedom back in 2020-2022. The freedom to preach and worship publicly was rescinded; the freedom to travel was restricted; the freedom of speech was repressed. The word, "mandate" was common speech. When mandates shut down the churches but allowed marijuana dispensaries, bars, and liquor stores to remain open, it became obvious that these mandates were not of God. There were efforts to erase any opportunity to have a fair and honest public discussion, but it was much worse than that. There was a politician who said, "If the

churches disobey me, I will close their doors permanently. Those who deviate from the accepted narrative risk losing their jobs, and even risk losing their voice by being deplatformed or cancelled.”

Yes, politicians were threatening to close churches permanently, but God intervened at a time when people exceeded their limits of authority. Instead, the politician who made the threat had his career closed permanently. His career came to an end, and the churches are still here.

## De Blasio Threatens to Permanently Close Places of Worship that Resist Shutdown Order



### God Is the Highest Authority

“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh” Jeremiah 32:27. God is the one who ultimately holds everything in check, not the kings, the priests, the rulers, or the common man. He is the God of everyone. When people exceed the limits of their authority and infringe on God’s authority, He reveals Himself. When King David sinned against God, He

sent a prophet by the name of Nathan to remind him that there is a God in heaven who rules over even the highest authority in the land.

When King Herod began to exceed the limits of his authority, John the Baptist came and told him he was acting outside the will of God. John called Herod to repentance, (see Matthew 14:3-4). God has always had faithful people on earth to be the moral conscience for their generation and speak on His behalf.

When the disciples of Christ were forbidden by those in authority to preach in His name, they responded, “We ought to obey



God rather than men” Acts 5:29. They preached in Jesus’ name because Jesus is the King of all kings, and His name is above all names.

Notice how our Founding Fathers expressed this same truth in the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Who is it that gave us our rights? The government has not given us anything. The government's job is to protect what God has given to us. It was God who granted us certain unalienable rights. His authority is



absolute, because He is our creator. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” Genesis 1:1.

Right at the beginning, God was there. Not the mayor, the governor, the president, or the county commissioners; not even the local dog catcher was there. And long after this world comes to its end, and every earthly government has disappeared, God will still be there. He has absolute authority and has given us the right to life, liberty, and freedom. This means God’s promises are likewise absolute. If our faith is founded on His infallible Word, then our faith is also absolute.

There are those who possess authority on this earth. For example, we believe in church authority, the authority of the government, and the authority of parents. We must always remember the authority of mankind, the church, and the government; that they are underneath the authority of the Word of God. How can any created human being be above the One who created them?


“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. For He spake, and it was done; He

commanded, and it stood fast” Psalm 33:6, 9.

It is God’s Word that called is calling us all out of Babylon and into the remnant church. The Bible says, “And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities,” Revelation 18:1-5.

Whenever there is a conflict between what God commands and what fallen, sinful human beings command, we need to remember: our very breath and life, including that of the president, or the king, are in the hands of our Creator. He is the sustainer of all life and breath and all things. Job 12:9-10 says, “Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.”

By aligning ourselves in obedience to God and His eternal, unchanging laws, we acknowledge His sovereignty, which supersedes the temporal authority of any human leader.

God’s authority has given us the freedom to choose. We can submit to follow God or choose our own selfish way, the ways of evil. Mankind has been given the responsibility of helping others know God. We are called to lead those in the world to choose God’s way. As long as probation endures, may we fight for the religious freedom that will make this sharing possible. 



Sources:

- [1] <https://www.persecution.org/2013/05/30/vatican-claims-100,000-christians-are-killed-every-year/>
- [2] <https://www.cnn/creativemarketing.com/project/pope/> (no longer available)

# Roger Williams

Founder of Religious Freedom

- was born in London, England in 1603
- was an English colonist in New England
- was a Puritan minister who was forced out of Massachusetts
- felt that people should not be persecuted for religious practices, beliefs, or ideas
- believed that no government had the right to force people to worship a certain way
- was the pioneer of religious liberty
- believed it was wrong to take land away from the Native Americans without just compensation
- took refuge with the Narraganset Native Americans when banished in 1635
- purchased land from the Narraganset and founded the city of Providence
- received a charter in 1644 and founded the state of Rhode Island, the fourth colony, which later became the United States of America
- established plantations throughout this chartered land



- the main policy of the colony was religious tolerance
- Rhode Island became a safe place for dissenters
- this was the first colony in America where people of all faiths were given the God-given right to worship freely
- Died at the age of 80 in 1683

## A Marine Soldier's Testimony

I was drafted into the Marine Corps during the Vietnam crisis. Exactly six months to the day after my wife and I were married in July 1965, I got a letter from the draft board. I well-knew what it meant. To be honest, I cried because I knew what was coming. My wife, Michelle, was very supportive. She said, "It's all right, Keith; you'll come home."

Normally, Seventh-day Adventist conscientious objectors are drafted into the Army and become medics. I knew of other men, such as Desmond Doss, who were medics. The Doss story had made a big impression on me growing up. However, my story happened quite differently.

The day came when I had to leave for the draft board in Seattle for my physical. On that Monday morning, my wife and I drove into town so I could get on the bus with other young men who were being drafted. At the stoplight, two or three blocks from the bus depot, I laid my hand on Michelle's knee and said, "Michelle, I don't know where I'm going to be come Friday night, but one thing you can be assured: I won't be working." I had no idea what was going to happen, but my mind was made up. I would serve the Lord, regardless.

About 90 of us went to Seattle that day to report for the draft. By the time we arrived, it was Tuesday, and they gave us our physical.

Come Wednesday, they put us all in a room, and an army first sergeant got up and said, "We don't have our quota for the Marine Corp this month; does anybody want to join?" I had already learned from my dad, brother-in-law, and older brother that had been in the service before me that you don't volunteer for anything, so I said nothing. One fel-



low raised his hand, and the sergeant said, “We still don’t have enough,” so they went down the list, calling every third name. Their quota was still not met, so they went down the list again. This time, my name was called. And that is how I, a conscientious objector, ended up in the Marine Corps!

They told all of us who had been called to go to a certain room, and there we raised our right hands, while another first marine sergeant swore us in. Then we became marines.

Right after the swearing in, I went to the sergeant and said, “Sir, I’m a Seventh-day Adventist, a conscientious objector. What are they going to do with me at the base in San Diego?” He just shrugged his shoulders and said, “I don’t know; ask them when you get there.”

Later on, while in the restroom, one of the other fellows, Poley, who had been inducted into the Marine Corps the same time I was, came up to me. “So, you’re a Seventh-day Adventist?” he asked.

“Yes,” I assured him.

“Well, I am too, supposedly. I attended Auburn Adventist Academy. But I dropped out; I smoke and I drink.” He paused, then asked me seriously, “Are you going to stand up?”

“Yes,” I said, returning his gaze, “I’m going to stand up.”

“Well, I’m not,” Poley responded. I shrugged and let it go, and didn’t think anymore about it.

We flew out of Seattle Wednesday evening. Once we landed in San Diego, we all got our first military haircut, and boy, was that an experience! By Friday morning, our drill instructor had gone over our records. He saw that he had one conscientious objector: me! That was a shock for him. What was a Marine instructor going to do with a soldier that wouldn’t carry a gun?



Our drill instructor ran us all into one of the quonset buildings on the base and lined us up. I'll never forget the look on his face. He paced around, looking at every guy. Finally, he announced, "I've got one conscientious objector in here, and I want to know who it is." I knew who he was talking about, so I stepped forward.

"What religion are you?" he demanded.

I'd already learned that the first word out of your mouth must always be, "Sir," and the last word of every sentence must also be "Sir." So I replied, "Sir, I'm a Seventh-day Adventist, Sir."

He looked around and asked, "Are there any more of you in here?" Two more fellows came forward: one of them, Poley, and another young fellow from Salt Lake. He turned to them and asked, "Will you take a rifle?"

"Sir, yes, sir!" they both shouted.

He turned back to me. "They'll take a rifle. Why won't you?"

I had never dreamed of having to answer a question like that, but God promises we should not worry about what we are going to say when we are brought before judges; He has promised that He will give us the words to say (see Matthew 10:18–20). I didn't know what to say, but the answer came to my mind just as I opened my mouth to speak. "Sir, I can't answer for them; I can only answer for me, sir."

The sergeant's face was red with anger. He yelled, "You're a slimy puke!" And from then on, when he wanted my specific attention, he just hollered, "Where's my Puke?" and that became my nickname.

We went on through the morning, the afternoon, and finally, Friday evening arrived. When we left the mess hall after supper, we were sent to the drill field to learn how to march. I could see the sun sinking in the west. Finally, as the sun began to drop behind the horizon, I hollered out, "Sir, Private Browning requests permission to speak to the platoon commander, sir!" He didn't say a word, but kept on marching. I called out the second time, and he didn't respond. I knew I had to do something, so I finally just stopped, while the rest of the platoon continued marching, leaving me standing there all alone. At this he looked back, and hollered, "Browning, fall in!" I just stood there. So he turned the platoon over to the other drill instructor and marched over to where I stood. "Follow me," he ordered, and I did.

We went to see the captain. The captain came out and tried to reason with me, but all I could do was share with him, "Sir, I'm a Seventh-day Adventist, sir. I can't go against my religious convictions, sir." I had never thought of saying that, but I soon learned that when you frame an objection as a religious conviction, they cannot argue with it. We live in




America, the land of religious freedom. God was once again influencing my choice of words.

Since they couldn't change my mind, they filled out a lot of paperwork. By the time they finished the paperwork, it was past 9:30 p.m. Then the drill instructor took me to the brig and signed me in. It was the first time I'd ever been in any kind of jail. The officers took me down a series of narrow hallways. On each side of the hall were little cells, eight feet by eight feet square. Each cell had solid metal walls and one bunk. A mesh of some kind covered the top of the cell. I walked in to this tiny square, and they slid the heavy mesh screen door shut. I heard it go "click" as it locked behind me. I was now in solitary confinement.

In that tiny square cell, there was nothing to look at, so I sat down on the cot and tried to sort out just how I had ended up there. A few minutes later, I heard a clock strike 10, and the lights went out.

Suddenly, it dawned on me: Here I was, all alone in this tiny room, with no one to harass me. I could kneel beside my cot and pray. My mother always knelt beside her bed before she climbed in at night, then again, first thing in the morning when she got up. I had learned to pray from her, but for the last two or three days, I hadn't had that quiet privilege. Here I could kneel down by that tiny cot and pour out my heart to Jesus and talk to Him about everything that was going on in my life.

Let me tell you, it was a shock to my system, being in boot camp! It felt so refreshing to kneel there in that lonely cell and open my heart to the One who understood what I was going through. The room was cool, and there was only one thin blanket, but to me it was a very comfortable temperature in that tiny cell. It was just so relaxing, and I felt so good in



## THE MARINE'S PRAYER

*Almighty Father, whose command is over all and whose love never fails, make me aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will.*

*Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping me to live so that I can face my fellow Marines, my loved ones and Thee without shame or fear.*

*Protect my family. Give me the will to do the work of a Marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance.*

*Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my country and the Marine Corps have entrusted to me. Make me considerate of those committed to my leadership. Help me to wear my uniform with dignity, and let it remind me daily of the traditions which I must uphold.*

*If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me courage to try again. Guide me with the light of truth and grant me the wisdom by which I may understand the answer to my prayer.*

that quiet place.

About five a.m. the lights came on, and the door was unlocked. I was taken out for morning exercise, served breakfast, then returned to my cell. A little later, one of my drill instructors came and picked me up and took me to see the civilian chaplain at



the chaplain's office, Hollis Anderson. He came every Sabbath morning for about an hour, because there were more and more Adventist boys being drafted into the Marine Corps at that time. Chaplain Anderson was like an angel. It was so wonderful to see a smiling face! That was my first Sabbath in the Marines. We only had one hour, and then I had to go back to my cell. After that first Sabbath in the brig, the authorities worked it out so I would spend my Sabbath hours out on the runner's bench in front of my company office. I would just sit there all day, except when I went for meals, until the sun set.

It would take too long to tell everything that happened while I was in boot camp; over the course of the two months I was there, my drill instructor began to realize I wasn't going to budge. At different times while my platoon was in rifle class, one of the instructors would take me back to the office, and I would be what he called their "house mouse," doing little jobs around the office for them. The instructor would ask me different questions, and over time, life began to get better. They realized I wasn't just trying to get out of things, but really did have deep, serious religious convictions. Before boot camp was over, their attitude toward me totally changed.

I remember the last night when we graduated from boot camp. The drill instructor was reading our Military Occupational Specialty [MOS], the job we were being assigned. My MOS was listed as a grunt, because I did not carry a rifle. When he came to my name, he said, "Browning, a grunt," glanced at me, then went on to the next name without anymore comment. [1]

The next morning, before everybody got on the buses to go to the Infantry Training Regiment [ITR], he read off our MOS's again. When he came to my name, he said, "Browning, a grunt." Then he added, "Browning, you're not going to ITR. I've already put in for new orders for you. You will go to casual and wait for new orders. I know if you went to ITR, you would mess up their whole program!" Somehow, I could tell the drill instructor was sticking up for me, and that made me feel good.

[2]

While I was at casual, I often ran errands for the company office.

One day, as I was walking out across the parade deck, I met my old platoon commander. He had a bunch of brand-new recruits following him. He must have just picked them up, because they were in tennis shoes and yellow sweatshirts that said "Marine Corp" on the back. They were learning how to march, hooked arm to arm, the same way I had started. The commander recognized me, and called out, "Browning." He turned his new platoon over to the other commander and came over to me. "Browning," he said, "see my new recruits?"



"Yes sir, they look wonderful, sir" I replied. We stood there and talked a little, the commander asking me how things were going. As we turned to leave, each walking our separate ways, he turned back and said, "Browning, just stand up! Keep standing up for what you believe! You'll come out all right." Those were the last words I ever heard from Staff Sergeant Bowser. He was the instructor that had locked me up, and now he was telling me to stand up. I'll never forget those words. They ring in the back of my mind to this day.

One day, another staff sergeant called me over to his desk. "Browning," he said, "What in the world am I going to do with you?"

"Sir, I don't know, sir." I replied, "I know my brother was in the Army during the Korean Conflict, and they made a cook out of him, sir."

"Hmm," he mused; "alright! You know, I just might be your guardian angel." And that was the end of our conversation.

It wasn't three days later I got my new MOS: a cook!

I left boot camp after that. They flew me home for two weeks. My MOS said Westpac ground forces. It turned out I wasn't going to cooking school. When I got back to staging where they reviewed the soldiers' paperwork and shipped them off to their assignments, I learned

that I would be going overseas.

On the papers we filled out, there was one little box with the question, "Is there any reason why you should not go to Vietnam?" I really didn't know why I had checked that box. The next day, the lieutenant called me into his office. "Browning," he said, "I see you have checked this one little box. What's the reason you think you shouldn't go to Vietnam?"



I replied, "Sir, I'm a conscientious objector, sir."

"O really?" He grabbed my record and shuffled through the papers. Sure enough, there it was on my record. He looked up. "Let me do a little checking. I'll call you tomorrow. Dismissed."

He called me back the next day and said, "Browning, I've been doing some checking. There's an ordinance in the Marine Corps that says we cannot send a conscientious objector into a combat zone. We'll just find a place for you here on this base; you'll serve your time out right here, and that's it."

"Okay," I replied. Outwardly, I appeared calm, but inside I was relieved. I had been there three weeks before they had finally figured out what I was going to do. I sat around a lot, doing nothing important. I would sweep the barracks or do small odd jobs, but the days went slowly by. Eventually, they found me a job in the mess hall. [3]

A lot of the guys that came through the mess hall were going to staging [4], and every now and then, I would see some of the fellows with whom I went through boot camp. One day, I was working in the mess hall serving chow, when two guys called me over to their table. "Browning, come over here!" I recognized them as two of the guys I had gone through boot camp with.

"What are you doing?" they asked as they greeted me.

"Oh, man," I told them, "I've been working here on the base, waiting for orders for like three months."

Then we got to talking about the different soldiers in our platoon at boot camp, discussing this guy or that with whom we had trained. Finally, one of them asked, "Oh, do you remember Poley?"

"I sure do. What about him?" I questioned.

"Do you remember he was assigned to a tank battalion?"

“Yes, I remember; his MOS was tank battalion.”

“Well, Poley was sent to Vietnam. He was walking beside a tank and stepped on a mine. Now he’s coming home, paralyzed from the neck down.”

I was stunned. “Really?” Then I thought to myself, *Poley, oh Poley, if only you had decided to be a conscientious objector, if only you had decided to stand up. Now you are coming home, and you can’t stand up!* These were my thoughts. I felt so sad for Poley.

As I think back about my time in the Marines, I ask myself, *was it worth it—all the harassment, all the demeaning names they called me, and everything they did to harass me in boot camp—was it worth it? Oh, yes, it was well worth it.* I am still alive; I can stand up, and my instructors grew to respect me in spite of my firm beliefs.

That was 50-plus years ago. I don’t know whatever happened to Poley. I always hope he recommitted his life to the Lord as he lay in his bed. He certainly had a lot of time to think.

Let me tell you, serving the Lord and standing up for what He asks of us is worth everything we may have to go through. The Lord remembers the promises He has given us.

I’m here today because of His blessing, and I want to share my story with as many young people as I can, to encourage them to stand up for truth and righteousness. You’ll never go wrong if you stand up. You may get some harassment, and you may be called names, but you will always be glad you stood up for Jesus. [5]



[1] Marine Rifleman 0311 is the quintessential military occupational specialty [MOS] for the United States Marine Corps. It is the specialty, most people envision when they think of a U.S. Marine. It is the MOS that has changed the course of history for countless wars dating back to 1775. It is the designation for the Marine Corps infantryman.

[2] Casual duty is a temporary assignment someone might have while waiting for a permanent assignment.

[3] Later, he was sent overseas to the Marine base in Okinawa.

[4] Marine Staging is when a platoon has orders to go for an assignment; they must prepare all their equipment, and the soldiers who will be needed to participate, ahead of time in readiness for departure.

[5] This story is authored by Keith Browning, Patti Heinrich’s uncle. Keith has been a very loved and respected member of the family since he was four years old. That is when he met Patti’s father who owned timber land and built his own sawmill in the Cascade mountain range in the state of Washington. (This was after WWII.) As soon as Keith graduated from the 8th grade, he became foreman for the whole operation and remained so for many years. This is a very small portion of Keith’s story.



## Liberty Threatened in America The Four Boxes

Our Founding Fathers sacrificed their lives and fortunes to bequeath to us the freedoms we have enjoyed in America for over 200 years. Over the years we have lost, to a greater or lesser degree, much of that freedom, largely because the American people have allowed it to happen. We were given four boxes, enshrined in our constitution, to protect our liberties. And we must use all our resources to maintain them or we shall lose those God-given liberties.

### Box #1

The first box is **our soap box—our freedom of speech**, specified in the First Amendment. Whenever our freedoms are threatened or the government passes laws that restrict our liberties, the citizens of the United States have the opportunity and obligation to cry out to the world the injustices we are suffering. Unfortunately today, there are private organizations that are engaged in a coordinated effort to shut down our freedom of speech. On many college and university campuses, conservative speech is not allowed. On public media — Facebook, Twitter—until purchased by Elon Musk, YouTube—speech that disagrees with those who control these platforms is restricted. This needs to end!

### Box #2

The second box is **the ballot box**. The citizens of America were given the right to vote in what should be free and fair elections. However, in the most recent presidential election, November 3, 2020, there was massive evidence of significant fraud in some states to change the outcome of the election. Legal votes were not properly validated, the votes of some citizens were altered by the voting machinery, and massive amounts of fraudulent votes were accepted and counted. If this kind of election is allowed to determine the next US presi-

dent, we will no longer be able to use our second box.

On January 6, 2021, our elected representatives and senators had opportunity to protect the legitimate right to vote, deny fraudulent activities, and allow the lawfully elected president to serve four more years; but that did not happen. Not all efforts were taken to look into voter irregularities, and many additional complaints have come since then. In order to protect the right to vote, citizens of the USA must demand legitimate election results in all states. Neither dead people nor noncitizens should have their votes counted. To guarantee fair elections, strict measures, such as voter ID with signature verification, ballot tampering (duplicate, absentee, mail-in) must be taken seriously.

### Box #3

The third box is **the jury box**. The Sixth Amendment gives us the opportunity to sit on a jury to hear the charges against a fellow citizen. We, the jury, have the final word to decide whether to acquit or convict. **The constitution does not limit the information a jury can use to reach its conclusion to only that which is offered in the courtroom**, a forum controlled by the judge and the attorneys. Our decision can be based not only on the facts of the case, but also on the constitutionality of the law.


Sometimes, executive orders, mandates, and laws must first be judged whether they are fair or not. **A judge may try to tell you that he or she alone gets to decide the constitutionality of the law, but I have never seen any clause in the Constitution that grants the judge that exclusive right.** They can indeed dismiss a case based on a law being unconstitutional, but that is not their sole prerogative. Every government official elected or employed is sworn to uphold the Constitution and must not enforce any law that does not have constitutional muster. **A juror has the constitutional right to do his or her own research on the case and bring it to the court.**

### Box #4

The fourth box is the cartridge box. The Second Amendment grants the right to keep and bear arms to every **lawful citizen** of the United States. There are currently powerful politicians and government agencies that are trying to restrict and/or eliminate this right. Once again, we, the American people must at all cost protect our right to keep and bear arms. **Every tyrant and dictator in the world, in order to be successful, has first disarmed their citizens. This cannot happen in America.**

### Summary

In summary, we the people, the citizens of the United States, and every freedom-loving patriot, must effectively use the first three boxes we have been given in the United States Constitution. Tragically, these first three rights are eroding before our eyes. We pray to God that our society does not continue to deteriorate and reach a place similar to the oppression that existed in the days of the American Revolution and the Civil War. Let us pray that our nation will never have to return to the fourth box to protect its freedoms.

May God grant us all peace and good health in the coming years. 

[Authored by the late Rodney Heinrich. He was an engineer, farmer, and former employee of a US Military Defense company and the Viking Orbiter space project, with secret level clearance. He directed NLM from 1986 until his death in 2023.](#)



## Recipe for a Free and Happy Nation

Take one nation full of “We the People”  
Who respect and obey God;  
Founded upon liberty of individuals’  
rights as the supreme authority.  
Use the “Citizens” brand;  
Reject all “Subject” and “Illegal” brands.

Add generous servings of  
the Bill of Rights.

Take one cup each in the order given:  
legislative powers,  
executive powers,  
judiciary powers,  
mixing well with states rights.

Season with the inspiration of our  
forefathers and all soldiers who  
have been willing to give the  
supreme gift of life for our freedoms.

**Sprinkle all with Rights by Jury,  
giving it the freedom to search for  
itself for all evidence needed to  
declare a verdict of  
GUILTY or NOT GUILTY.**

Decorate lavishly with the privilege to vote,  
exercising all rights as a citizen;  
speaking freely, heart-felt convictions;  
standing firm against any infringement of  
the Constitution of the United States!

Bake until firm with the pride for which  
our nation has stood for more than 200 years.

Serve with God’s blessings to all America!

By Patti Heinrich,  
inspired by the disastrous 9/11/2001 event.



## Liberty of Conscience Threatened

America's precious freedom of religious belief and practice is in danger of being destroyed by those who would force the conscience of the minority to conform to the wishes of the majority.

In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World. And that which gives greater significance to this movement is the fact that the principal object contemplated is the enforcement of Sunday observance—a custom which originated with Rome, and which she claims as the sign of her authority. It is the spirit of the papacy—the spirit of conformity to worldly customs, the veneration for human traditions above the commandments of God—that is permeating the Protestant churches and leading them on to do the same work of Sunday exaltation which the papacy has done before them.

If the reader would understand the agencies to be employed in the soon-coming contest, he has but to trace the record of the means which Rome employed for the same object in ages past. If he would know how papists and Protestants united will deal with those who reject their dogmas, let him see the spirit which Rome manifested toward the Sabbath and its defenders.

Royal edicts, general councils, and church ordinances sustained by

secular power were the steps by which the pagan festival attained its position of honor in the Christian world. The first public measure enforcing Sunday observance was the law enacted by Constantine in A.D. 321. This edict required townspeople to rest on “the venerable day of the sun,” but permitted countrymen to continue their agricultural pursuits. Though virtually a heathen statute, it was enforced by the emperor after his nominal acceptance of Christianity.

The royal mandate not proving a sufficient substitute for divine authority, Eusebius, [260 to 340 A.D.], a bishop who sought the favor of princes, and who was the special friend and flatterer of Constantine, advanced the claim that Christ had transferred the Sabbath to Sunday. Not a single testimony of the Scriptures was produced in proof of the new doctrine. Eusebius himself unwittingly acknowledges its falsity and points to the real authors of the change. “All things,” he says, “whatever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord’s Day.”[1] [2] But the Sunday argument, groundless as it was, served to embolden men in trampling upon the Sabbath of the Lord. All who desired to be honored by the world accepted the popular festival.



### **Sunday Laws and Their Effect**

As the papacy became firmly established, the work of Sunday exaltation was continued. For a time the people engaged in agricultural labor when not attending church, and the seventh day was still regarded as the Sabbath. But steadily a change was effected. Those in holy office were forbidden to pass judgment in any civil controversy on the Sunday. Soon after, all persons, of whatever rank, were commanded to refrain from common labor on pain of a fine for freemen and stripes in the case of servants. Later it was decreed that rich men should be punished with the loss of half of their estates; and finally, that if still obstinate they should be made slaves. The lower classes were to suffer perpetual banishment.

Miracles also were called into requisition. Among other wonders it was reported that as a husbandman who was about to plow his field on Sunday cleaned his plow with an iron, the iron stuck fast in his hand, and for two years he carried it about with him, “to his exceeding great pain and shame.”[3]

Later the pope gave directions that the parish priest should admonish the violators of Sunday and wish them to go to church and say their prayers, lest they bring some great calamity on themselves and

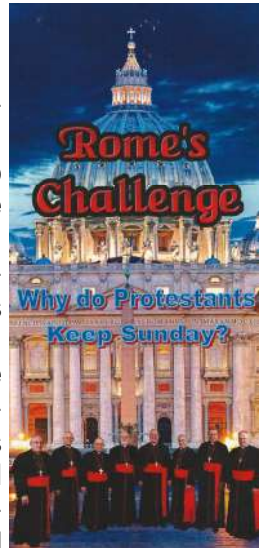
neighbors....

The decrees of councils proving insufficient, the secular authorities were besought to issue an edict that would strike terror to the hearts of the people and force them to refrain from labor on the Sunday. At a synod held in Rome, all previous decisions were reaffirmed with greater force and solemnity. They were also incorporated into the ecclesiastical law and enforced by the civil authorities throughout nearly all Christendom.[4]

### **The Authority for Sundaykeeping**

Still the absence of Scriptural authority for Sundaykeeping occasioned no little embarrassment. The people questioned the right of their teachers to set aside the positive declaration of Jehovah, “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God” [Ex. 20:10], in order to honor the day of the sun. To supply the lack of Bible testimony, other expedients were necessary. A zealous advocate of Sunday, who about the close of the twelfth century visited the churches of England, was resisted by faithful witnesses for the truth; and so fruitless were his efforts that he departed from the country for a season and cast about him for some means to enforce his teachings. When he returned, the lack was supplied, and in his after labors he met with greater success. He brought with him a roll purporting to be from God Himself, which contained the needed command for Sunday observance, with awful threats to terrify the disobedient. This precious document—as base a counterfeit as the institution it supported—was said to have fallen from heaven and to have been found in Jerusalem, upon the altar of St. Simeon, in Golgotha. But, in fact, the pontifical palace at Rome was the source whence it proceeded. Frauds and forgeries to advance the power and prosperity of the church have in all ages been esteemed lawful by the papal hierarchy... .

But notwithstanding all the efforts to establish Sunday sacredness, papists themselves publicly confessed the divine authority of the Sabbath and the human origin of the institution by which it had been supplanted. In the sixteenth century a papal council plainly declared: “Let all Christians remember that the seventh day was consecrated by God, and hath been received and observed, not only by the Jews, but by all others who pretend to worship God; though we Christians have changed their Sabbath into the Lord’s Day.”[5] Those who were tampering with the divine law were not ignorant of the character of their work. They were deliberately setting themselves above God... .



## The Healing of the “Wound”

The prophecy of Revelation 13 declares that the power represented by the beast with lamblike horns shall cause “the earth and them which dwell therein” to worship the papacy—there symbolized by the beast “like unto a leopard.” The beast with two horns is also to say “to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast;” and, furthermore, it is to command all, “both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,” to receive the mark of the beast. Revelation 13:11-16. It has been shown that the United States is the power represented by the beast with lamblike horns, and that this prophecy will be fulfilled when the United States shall enforce Sunday observance, which Rome claims as the special acknowledgment of her supremacy. But in this homage to the papacy the United States will not be alone. The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion is still far from being destroyed. And prophecy foretells a restoration of her power. “I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” Verse 3. The infliction of the deadly wound points to the downfall of the papacy in 1798. After this, says the prophet, “his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” Paul states plainly that the “man of sin” will continue until the second advent. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8. To the very close of time he will carry forward the work of deception. And the revelator declares, also referring to the papacy: “All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life” Revelation 13:8. In both the Old and the New World, the papacy will receive homage in the honor paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman Church.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, students of prophecy in the United States have presented this testimony to the world. In the events now taking place is seen a rapid advance toward the fulfillment of the prediction. With Protestant teachers there is the same claim of divine authority for Sundaykeeping, and the same lack of Scriptural evidence, as with the papal leaders who fabricated miracles to supply the place of a command from God. The assertion that God’s judgments are visited upon men for their violation of the Sunday-Sabbath, will be repeated; already it is beginning to be urged. And a movement to enforce Sunday observance is fast gaining ground.[6]

[1] Robert Cox, *Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties*, p. 538.

[2] Nowhere in Scripture is there any verse that refers to Sunday as the Lord’s Day. The Lord’s Day is clearly the seventh-day Sabbath. (See Mark 2:27-28; Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:10; Deuteronomy 5:14; Leviticus 23:3).

[3] Francis West, *Historical and Practical Discourse on the Lord’s Day*, p. 174.

[4] See Heylyn, *History of the Sabbath*, pt. 2, ch. 5, sec. 7.

[5] *The Great Controversy*, pp. 281-282.

[6] *Darkness Before Dawn*, pp. 24-27.



# Daniel Was a Man of Prayer

By Alfred B. Smith

Bold Daniel was a man of prayer,  
He prayed three times a day;  
For this they took and threw him in  
The lions den to stay.  
Even then, in the den,  
Fears could not alarm him;  
For God had shut the lion's mouths,  
And so they could not harm him.

(See the full story in Daniel 6.)