

The Sabbath Watchman

2019

APRIL - JUNE

Vol. 94, No. 2 - Beacon of hope, faith, and truth in a confused world

Fullness of Joy

The Day of God's Rest
page 3

The Pursuit of Happiness
page 5

Global Crisis Imminent
page 9

What Is Love?
page 12

World in Brief
page 14

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Beacon of hope, faith, and truth in a confused world.

We believe:

- The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its Owner and Sustainer.
- He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh.
- The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth, convicts of sin, guides into truth, and, when abiding in man, overcomes all unrighteousness.
- The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine; the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform.
- His people, in harmony with God's Word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.
- Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

THE SABBATH WATCHMAN is the official publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, International Missionary Society, General Conference, 625 West Avenue, Cedartown, GA 30125. Phone 770-748-0077 / Fax 770-748-0095 / Email info@sda1844.org / Website www.sda1844.org.

Published four times per year by the General Conference Publishing Department. Printed and distributed by Religious Liberty Publishing Assn. Mail or email subscription orders to 9999 East Mississippi Avenue, Denver, CO 80247 / info@sda1888.org. Annual rate (U.S. funds only): U.S.A.—\$30; Foreign—\$45. Phone 916-765-3389 / Website www.sda1844.org.



Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psalm 16:11.

All Heaven is interested in the happiness of man. Our heavenly Father does not close the avenues of joy to any of His creatures. The divine requirements call upon us to shun those indulgences that would bring suffering and disappointment, that would close to us the door of happiness and heaven.... He [the world's Redeemer] requires us to perform only those duties that will lead our steps to heights of bliss to which the disobedient can never attain. The true, joyous life of the soul is to have Christ formed within, the hope of glory. —*Steps to Christ*, 46, 47.

Words cannot describe the peace and joy possessed by him who takes God at His word. Trials do not disturb him, slights do not vex him. Self is crucified. Day by day his duties may become more taxing, his temptations stronger, his trials more severe; but he does not falter; for he receives strength equal to his need. —*Messages to Young People*, 98.

In those who possess it, the religion of Christ will reveal itself as a vitalizing, pervading principle, a living, working, spiritual energy. There will be manifest the freshness and power and joyousness of perpetual youth. The heart that receives the Word of God is not as a pool that evaporates, not like a broken cistern that loses its treasure. It is like the mountain stream fed by unfailing springs, whose cool, sparkling waters leap from rock to rock, refreshing the weary, the thirsty, the heavy laden. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, 121.

Ellen G. White.

The Day of God's Rest

By Antonino Di Franca

Second part

While some people have difficulty understanding God's "rest," the Bible presents its deep implications. According to Genesis 2:2, the very next significant action was that on this day God "rested." After the Lord finished His miraculous work of creation, "on the seventh day God ... rested." Genesis 2:2.* We read the same thing in verse 3—that "God rested" on "the seventh day." Thus, the seventh day of the creation week is unique for being the day of God's rest. The fourth commandment in Exodus 20:11—in God's own words—says, "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day." And in chapter 31:17, God told Moses to say to the people: "It is a sign forever between Me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." The same message is given in the following words: "He has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.'" Hebrews 4:4. Therefore, the characteristic of the seventh day, above every other day, is rest, God's rest.

What does it mean that God "rested"?

Did He need to "rest"? Is He like men, who become tired? Is He not the Omnipotent One, who created the world with the word and breath of His mouth? Yes, He is. Psalm 33:6. The Scriptures confirm that He never grows faint or weary. "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable." "Ah, Lord God! It is You who have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for You." Isaiah 40:28; Jeremiah 32:17.

God created everything by His word without any physical stress, wear, or tear, such as humans go through when they work. We read, "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." "And God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so." "God said, 'Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth. And it was so.' " "For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm." Genesis 1:3, 9, 11; Psalm 33:9. Because of this, God's "rest" cannot have the meaning of physical

recovery or reinvigoration after becoming weary and exhausted. As many authors explain, when referring to God, the Biblical meaning of "rest" is completely different, denoting cessation of creation, satisfaction, being pleased, appreciation in completion, and joy in achievement.

Concerning such understanding, the scholar Frederic Godet stated: "'To rest' can only mean to cease creating, to contemplate the completed work." —Frédéric Godet, as quoted by Paul Nouan, *Le septième jour signe de Dieu pour l'homme d'aujourd'hui* (The Seventh-day Sign of God for Man Today), Dammarie Les Lys, Editions SDT, 1979, p. 17.

Continuing in this line, Dietrich Bonhöffer wrote, "In the Bible, 'rest' really means more than 'having rest.' It means rest after the work is accomplished, it means completion, it means the perfection and peace in which the world rests."

—Dietrich Bonhöffer, *Creation and Fall, A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1-3*, 1964, p. 40, as quoted in Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, Rome, The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1980, p. 67; online edition, p. 84. Accessed October 7, 2018, http://www.friendsofsabbath.org/Further_Research/Bacchiocchis%20Research/Divine%20Rest%20for%20Human%20Restlessness.pdf.

Some writers come to a similar conclusion, as seen in the following comments by Albert Barnes, John Gill, Norman R. Gulley, and others.

"The resting of God arises not from weariness, but from the completion of His task. He is refreshed, not by the recruiting of His strength, but by the satisfaction of having before Him a finished good. Exodus 31:17." —Barnes' Notes on the Bible, comments on Genesis 2:2. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-2.htm>.

"... God had ended,' or 'finished His work,' which He had done on the sixth day, then He rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made: not as though weary of working, for the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, nor is weary (Isaiah 40:28), but as having done all His work, and brought it to such perfection that He had no more to do...." —Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, comments on Genesis 2:2). <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-2.htm>.

"The word Sabbath is derived from the Hebrew word sabbat, meaning to 'cease' or 'desist' from a previous activity—in this case, to desist from creating. God finished His work of creation during the six days. He didn't cease because He was tired, but He ceased in order to celebrate with Adam and Eve what He had completed. So Sabbath is time to celebrate the finished work of Christ's creation."

—Norman R. Gulley, *Basic Issues between Science and Scripture: Theological Implications of Alternative Models and the Necessary Basis for the Sabbath in Genesis 1-2*, p. 221. Accessed June 6, 2018, http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file.php?pub_id=45&journal=1&type=pdf.

“God’s rest then means His ceasing the work of creation in order to be free for the fellowship with man, the object of His love, for the rejoicing and celebration of His completed work together with His son on earth, the *imago Dei*, His festive partner.” —Hans K. LaRondelle, *Perfection and Perfectionism*, Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1971, p. 72. Quoted by Á.M. Rodríguez in *The Biblical Sabbath: The Adventist Perspective*, p. 2. Accessed October 7, 2018, https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Sabbath-Catholic_2002.pdf.

“From creation—preceding and superseding every human decision of obedience or disobedience—there remains (*ἀπολείπεται* [*apoleipetai*]) for the people of God the Sabbath rest (*σαββατισμός* [*sabbatismós*]), the divinely willed and ordered fellowship, relationship and agreement between His own and human freedom as the goal and determination of the way to which this people continually have to be recalled....” —Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics Study Edition 13: The Doctrine of Creation*, vol. III.1 § 40-42, London, T.T. Clark, 1958, p. 226 (brackets supplied).

“He was well pleased with the beauty and perfection of His creative work of making our world, both as a product of His power, wisdom and goodness, and as manifestation of His glory. The creation of the earth was a joyous occasion....” —Robert Leo Odom, *Sabbath and Sunday in Early Christianity*, Washington, DC, 1977, p. 14.

“The rest here, it is to be remembered, is God’s rest. The refreshment is God’s refreshment, which arises rather from the joy of achievement than from the relief of fatigue.” —Albert Barnes’ *Notes on the whole Bible*, comments on Genesis 2:3. Accessed June 3, 2018, <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bnb/genesis-2.html>.

“God rested from His creative activity on the seventh day. This is not the rest that follows weariness but the rest of satisfaction and completion of a job well done.” —William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 2:1-3, Nashville, Tennessee, Thomas Nelson Publishers Inc., 1995, p. 34. Accessed June 6, 2018, https://books.google.it/books?id=qJF_24QKAflC&printsec=frontcover&hl=it&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

We can better understand the concept of “God’s rest” when we consider the sentence that the creative account repeats after the description of almost every day. For example, on the first day, after light was created, the inspired words state: “And God saw that the light was good.” Genesis 1:4. It is the same for the third day. After the creation of all kinds of vegetation, the observation is made: “And God saw that it was good.” Verse 12. Virtually the same phrase is repeated in verses 18, 21, and 25, up to the final observation about all of the creation in verse 31: “And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” In every phase of the creation there was observation, evaluation, and appreciation.

In the “rest” of Genesis 2:2, 3, as well as in Exodus 31:17, where it is said that “on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed,” the concept referred to is God’s “rest,” and the first implication is “cessation,” “stopping,” and “finalizing,” and then “appreciation,” “satisfaction,” “delight,” “enjoyment,” and “refreshment” because of the work that He had accomplished. He stood there, not as the potter described in Jeremiah, whose vessel of clay “was spoiled in the potter’s hand” (18:4) as he was working, but as one whose creation resulted in a masterpiece.

Having concluded His marvelous work, He looked at all the grandeur of creation, the wonders of the sidereal and natural world, and was delighted with it. He observed the plains full of vegetation and life, the different creatures, and especially the human beings reflecting His image of holiness and glory; and everything was “very good.” Genesis 1:31. At the end of the creation, God “rested” in satisfaction and great delight as He contemplated and appreciated the wonderful work that He had accomplished in the six days; and His wish was for man to be part of it.

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The Pursuit of Happiness

By José Vicente Giner

Since man's fall into sin, his most deeply rooted thought is the desire to be happy. In every age, people have sought for happiness; no one can deny this. Thousands of years ago, Adam, Abel, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, John, Peter, Paul, Mary, and all the other characters presented in the Bible wanted to be as happy, as we do today. In fact, we can say that the basic need of the people in our time is to be happy, and "there is no new thing under the sun." Ecclesiastes 1:9. No one wants to be sad or unhappy; everyone seeks to be happy and well, to enjoy life, and to be productive. The history of every civilization focuses on one fundamental objective—the search for happiness.

The human solution

Happiness is the state of mind that takes pleasure in the possession of a good. It also has the meaning of satisfaction and contentment, so it is not surprising that everyone wants to be in this state. That is why thousands of people in the past have written or taught philosophies, doctrines, and ways that lead to happiness and wellbeing. But unfortunately such teachings did always succeed in making people happy.

Euripides de Salamina, a Greek tragic poet who lived from B.C. 480 to 406, said: "Nobody is happy all his life." Juvenal Decimus Iunios, orator and Latin poet, who lived from A.D. 60-140, said: "The happy man is rarer than a white crow." Today most people have books and studies from psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, professors, philosophers, and experts who try to give good answers to the age-old question of human existence, "How does a person become happy?" What they produced served little, for our time is characterized by people who are not happy; there is a lot of misfortune, dissatisfaction, discontent, and unhappiness everywhere.

People seem to have everything, at least in the West: washing machines, dishwashers, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, nice cars, houses, computers, mobile phones, iPads, and other electronic devices that allow rapid communication with thousands of people all over the world. Although there are large supermarkets where one can find everything, people in general are not happy. The ancient search has not ended. The solution to the great desire of the human heart has not been found.

The divine solution

There is a different kind of teaching that God wants to give people—something that has been very effective in the pursuit of happiness. Who could be more qualified than He, our Designer, who created our brain and every muscle and fiber of our body, to tell us how to achieve happiness? God has something to tell us about this, for He created us and knows our nature, needs, and deepest longings. He has revealed in His word the key to being happy.

In the Bible, the words translated as "happy" are ones like "blessed" or "blissful." It designates a person who has reached a full degree of happiness, or satisfaction. That is, he has found and enjoys what all human beings desire. In the sacred pages is found a message that tells how to find happiness. The men and women of the Bible who were happy made their experiences and proved that God's ways are best, while human methods are frustrating and deceptive. The issue is that we must try for ourselves and prove the Biblical concept of happiness. Complete, seamless, permanent, immovable happiness is impossible in this world. Because of sin, perfect happiness will become a reality only when the Lord Jesus returns to this world.

Nevertheless God wants to give people real inner peace, which elevates and transforms the soul, comforts and edifies the heart and mind, gives one guidance and hope, makes him strong in pain, and teaches him to meet life's difficulties without losing the joy of loving Christ. Yes, true happiness is that which comes from God and is implanted in the hearts of those who love Him.

Two alternatives

God's method is simple. The Bible presents each person with two paths—the way of life and the way of death. They are God's way and Satan's path; the narrow gate and the wide; the way of Cain and that of Abel; the way of Jacob and that of Esau; the path of David and that of Saul; the way of Peter and that of Judas; the way of the wicked and that of the righteous; the path of good and the path of evil; the path of righteousness and that of sin. There are only two ways to travel through this life; we walk either in

the right way or the wrong way. The right path gives bliss, and the wrong path produces dissatisfaction, frustration, disappointment, and grief.

In fact, God always placed these two ways before His people: “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.” Deuteronomy 30:15. “See, today I have set before you life and prosperity, death and adversity” (Deuteronomy 30:15, Christian Standard Bible), meaning that the path of good leads to life (happiness) and the path of evil leads to misery. God asks everyone to choose, so whether or not one is happy depends on his choice. Everyone has been given the prerogative to choose; and that is very important, because otherwise one would end up accusing Him of arbitrarily “controlling” life and making decisions for him, when choice is the gift of God to the free beings whom He created.



Dear reader, it is a great blessing to be able to choose. Many people dislike the fact that God does not take the reins of this world and fix everything, preventing the wicked from continuing their evil and rebellion. This will happen in the future, when the judgment ends and the divine sentence is meted out to each according to his works. Romans 2:6. But for now, God has given each person the responsibility to use his free will to make decisions. No one can force someone to do evil; it is always one's own decision. It is true that, when we are threatened with death, we are able to do everything to get rid of evildoers; but it is also true that we have the examples of brave men and women who, although they were pressed to renounce their faith and do dishonorable things, they did not yield even a little bit and remained firm to their convictions by the grace of God.

The mind is our strength; no one can conquer it if we place ourselves under Christ's protection. We may be deprived of physical freedom, but no one can shackle another person's thinking; it is as free as the birds. God has given every person the freedom to decide for himself; that is the greatest guarantee that we are not robots but people with free will.

In fact, no one can accuse the devil of having caused him to be ruined, nor can anyone accuse God of forcing

him to obey His law! God desires His children's happiness and will do everything possible so that they know His will, fall at His feet, and are blessed through the work of the Holy Spirit; but He will never, ever, use coercive methods or force a person's mind. He uses the method of love; He calls, He invites, He woos one's spirit through the gentle influence of His kindness. If we accept and open our hearts, then we give Him permission to act in our behalf, giving us His peace that brings happiness and joy that do not depend on outward circumstances. Even in the midst of the storm the Christian can enjoy serenity.

Knowing how to hear and choose

Let's see what the Lord wants us to do. "... Choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Deuteronomy 30:19. God desires your happiness and mine, not only in the future life, but also here on this earth. But there is a condition: Choose well! Choose life! If you choose well, the Lord says that "all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee." Deuteronomy 28:2. The blessings of God produce true faith. Now, notice what the verse says at the end: "... If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." Remember! To choose well we must listen to God's voice—to what He tells us. Blessings of a material and spiritual nature will come and make one happy, for God is willing to bless all who make good choices.

But what does it mean to choose life?

What does the narrow road represent? What does the Lord ask of each one? The prophet Isaiah gives the answer: "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. David expressed it this way: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." Psalm 1:1, 2. Moses taught the same thing: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day,..." Deuteronomy 28:1. The key to happiness is bringing our lives into harmony with His divine law. The reason why millions of people are not happy is because they do not listen to God's voice; they cover their ears, refusing to accept the Biblical message as coming from heaven.



Yes, everyone wants to be happy but in his own way. He does not want to conform his life to God's law, because this means a change of behavior, a change in one's view of life and concept of what happiness is. It is sin that produces so much pain and misery. Sinful man lives in a permanent state of dissatisfaction, without peace and happiness in his heart. Soon all humanity will be divided into two groups: Those who walk the wide path, disobeying the commandments of God, and those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:12.

The Holy Spirit's work

We have discovered several things up to this point.

FIRST: God longs for everyone's happiness. It is not just our problem. God is very concerned, which is why He has created every means to make us happy.

SECOND: God gives man the key to being happy: Knowing how to listen and follow. God urges us to listen to Him and make the appropriate decisions: "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it,..." Isaiah 30:21.

THIRD: To walk in the Lord's way is to accept Him as one's personal Saviour, which implies obeying the commandments that He obeyed.

FOURTH: God does not leave anyone alone to make this decision. He gives him His power.

It is not possible for us to change ourselves. Here is where we need to talk about the Holy Spirit. He is in charge of guiding us so we make the right choice, of helping us to understand this whole issue, and of giving us the power to walk the right way. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth:..."



John 16:13. The Holy Spirit gives the knowledge one needs, as we have seen, as well as the willpower to obey God. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever;" "ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:16, 17. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:..." Acts 1:8. So, God does not leave us alone in the pursuit of happiness. He speaks to us, tells us what we should do, and gives us strength to do it. And the Bible tells us: "To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts,..." Hebrews 3:7, 8.

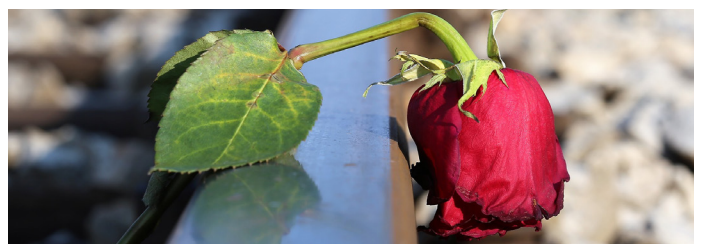
A universal error

The dominant idea that happiness comes from having material goods and from a state in which there are no conflicts is an error, and this error can also affect Christians. Happiness is not the absence of misfortune nor the possession of material goods.

A brother in a country where I visited told me that the unbelievers told him that there could be no God if He allowed the brother to suffer illness. At that time, he was bedridden with a swollen leg and about to undergo surgery. Sometimes we Christians think in this way. But true happiness is not like this. Rather, it gives the heart peace and stillness even in the midst of pain and misery. Jesus was the happiest human Being in the world, even though He was "a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief:..." Isaiah 53:3. Bad circumstances and difficulties are just as bad as we decide they are and will affect us as we decide they will. When God dwells in the heart through the Holy Spirit, even the worst circumstances can be sweetened by His divine influence. The Biblical promise is that God makes the crooked places straight; and, dry places springs of water. Isaiah 45:2; 41:18.

Problems come to everyone. We live in a world of great sadness; pain, suffering, and misfortune are everywhere, and the devil is going to continue making sure that this is so. The tests also come to believers, as Jesus said: "In the world ye shall have tribulation:..." John 16:33. But happiness is still possible in this world as we learn and redefine the concept of faith. True joy is peace in the soul, peace with God, and peace with one's neighbor. That happiness is obtained in Christ: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace." John 16:33.

An important principle we want to repeat is that happiness does not depend on circumstances; it is an



inner state. It is not a feeling or emotion; it is the result of fully living the principles of heaven, of making the right decisions at the right moments.

I met a man on a plane on one of my trips. I struck up a conversation with him, and it turned out that he was from a Spanish city where I had lived for almost five years. He told me his about his life. We talked about life existence and came to the conclusion that this life should be lived deeply without superficial and harmful things, such as vanity, pride, and animosity. We agreed that happiness does not come from material things but is an inner state.

To support this, he told me an interesting experience. All his life he had the plan to buy a Ferrari sports car to make himself happy. He worked very hard to get it. When he finally had it, he got in and did not get out of the car for three days, other than refueling and meeting his basic needs. On the third day, he stopped the car and thought, What is the point of being in this car for three days? Did my happiness increase one iota? He got out of the car and never again thought about focusing his happiness on something material.

Peter, Paul, and John were happy despite their many difficulties in life. The Christians of the first centuries suffered under terrible circumstances, but they maintained their inner joy through knowing the truth of Christ.

A second principle is that happiness should never be sought as an end in itself. It is the effect of doing or thinking something, particularly seeking the Lord first: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God,..." Matthew 6:33. It is nothing

material; it is not money. It is in keeping God's kingdom as one's primary objective, activity, and soul longing.

Two men looked out through the bars of a prison. One saw manure, and the other saw stars. What do you see in life? Focus on the blessings of God, on everything you have that is beautiful and good. Do not focus on negative things, but appreciate what you have, and give thanks. "The great souls are always ready to make a virtue of a disgrace." —Honoré de Balzac, French writer, 1799-1850.

"Our happiness is dependent on our faith in God—our confidence in Him." —*This Day with God*, p. 333.

"If there is anyone who should be continually grateful, it is the Christian. If there is anyone who enjoys happiness, even in this life, it is the faithful follower of Jesus Christ. It is the duty of God's children to be cheerful. They should encourage a happy frame of mind. God cannot be glorified by His children living continually under a cloud and casting a shadow wherever they go. The Christian should cast sunshine instead of a shadow.... He will bear a cheerful countenance." —*Child Guidance*, p. 147.

Dear reader, the Lord desires us to be happy now and in the future. To doubt this would be sin. Paul urged God's people to rejoice in the gospel: "For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me." Philippians 2:18. And Jesus tells us through Isaiah: "But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create:..." Isaiah 65:18. Being happy or not depends on us. It is a matter of personal choice. What will you decide? Decide to be happy according to God's plan, and this decision will keep you for all eternity. God bless you!



By Henry Dering

Global Crisis Imminent

Going back in time a half dozen centuries before the birth of Christ, a proud monarch named Nebuchadnezzar ordered a gigantic statue made all of gold to be erected on the plain of Dura in the kingdom of Babylon. It was 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide! To the heathen idol worshippers this golden image was unequalled in its dazzling beauty and magnificence.

On the appointed day, a vast multitude of the most distinguished people of the empire were to assemble to worship this metallic idol. At the specific command of the king, when the band began to play, the vast assemblage of people were to fall down and worship the golden god. The penalty for refusing to do so was death in the fiery furnace. It was not surprising, then, that no one violated the government orders—no one, that is, except three young Hebrew men. They did not bow down, for they would not transgress the Second Commandment: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.” Exodus 20:4, 5.

As a consequence of their unwavering faithfulness to God, they were cast into the furnace that had been heated seven times hotter than usual. But what happened? A miracle! The king said, “Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Daniel 3:25. What an amazing experience! God saved the young men from certain death. He was with them in the flames.

“Important are the lessons to be learned from the experience of the Hebrew youth on the plain of Dura. In this our day, many of God’s servants, though innocent of wrongdoing, will be given over to suffer humiliation and abuse at the hands of those who, inspired by Satan, are filled with envy and religious bigotry. Especially will the wrath of man be aroused against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; and at last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 512.

According to Bible prophecy, the greatest crisis in the history of this world is just ahead. A decree will be issued by the world’s governments threatening economic suspension and death to all who refuse to worship the image of the beast. The following prophetic words will soon become a reality: “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would

not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Revelation 13:15-17.

There is no getting around it. Every person living during this earth’s last hours will have to decide whether to obey God or another power. Those who pay homage to the beast and his image will be judged by God and receive the seven last plagues. In Revelation 14:9, 10, we read: “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation;...”

This is a matter of life and death. We must know exactly what this mark is and how to avoid it!

The mark of the beast is opposed to the seal of God. Revelation 7:2, 3, says that the seal of God is placed in the forehead, just as the mark of the beast is set in the forehead or right hand. Now we ask, what is God’s seal? If we can define and establish this point, it will help us identify the mark.



In His word, God tells what His sign or seal is: “Moreover also I gave them My sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.” Ezekiel 20:12. Here the Sabbath is called God’s sign. Is that the same as His seal? Romans 4:11 reveals that “seal” and “sign” are often used synonymously in the Scripture: “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet uncircumcised:...”

God said that the Sabbath is His sign or mark of authority. What does the beast say is the mark of its authority? Consider the words of C.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons, in answer to a letter regarding the change of the Sabbath. "Of course, the Catholic church claims that the change was her act. And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters."

It is incredible that the majority of Christendom accepts and follows the tradition of a manmade institution!

Does anyone today have the mark of the beast? No! But the mark of the beast will be enforced soon.

Therefore, in mercy, God sends a final warning to prepare people for the coming crisis. The issue of the conflict will be whether to obey God or a manmade law. In Revelation 14:9-11 is the most solemn warning ever given to mankind: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

The mark of the beast will not be received until it is enforced by the two-horned beast of Revelation 13—America. The United States will become a persecuting power that will pass a national Sunday law. This act will incite other nations to follow suit. The Bible says, "... And all the world wondered after the beast." Revelation 13:3. The whole world, with the exception of a tiny minority of faithful people, will observe Sunday, the child of the papacy. Those who refuse to obey the Sunday law will be accused of law breaking and of working against the state.

For this situation to develop, the Constitution of the United States must be altered or completely abandoned. How is this possible in a land of freedom? One way is to call for a Constitutional Convention. It takes 34 states to request such a convention. As of now, 33 states are in favor of it. In addition to the movement to bring about specific changes in the Constitution, there are groups such as the Moral Majority Coalition, the New Liberty Federation, and the Lord's Day Alliance that have been advocating Sunday laws. The undercurrent of these voices is moving rapidly to achieve a desired goal—to get people into church on Sunday.

Such a law will be seen by many to be the solution to the moral problems facing the world. "It will be declared that the nation is offending God by the violation of the Sunday-Sabbath, that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced, and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence

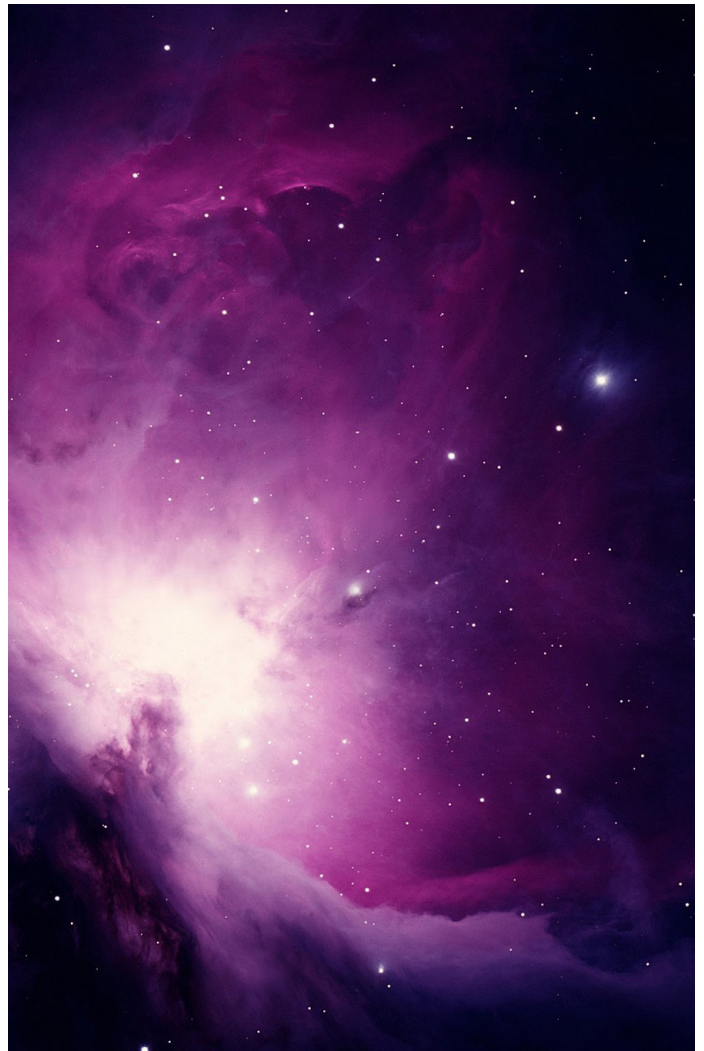
for Sunday, are troublers of the nation, preventing its restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity."


—*The Great Controversy*, p. 408 (1844 ed.).

According to Revelation 13:11 -16, the Protestant churches of America will be instrumental in exalting the papal sabbath (Sunday) and waging war against those who keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath.

Yes, religious freedom will be taken away. Persecution will raise its ugly head again. "The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 588.

The ecumenical movement is taking giant steps to achieve full unity among the churches. Consider for a moment the historic event that occurred in October 1986. "Carrying olive branches and offering prayers, Pope John Paul II and the representatives of the world's religions, including a Crow Indian medicine man from Montana and an African animist witch doctor, pledged Monday to work for peace.





"As 60 religious leaders joined the Pope in this picturesque medieval hill town, where St. Francis preached 700 years ago, governments and rebels throughout the world put down their arms briefly in response to a papal call for a cease-fire and a day of prayer. Reflections were also offered at the retreat center by representatives of the Buddhist, Jewish, Islamic, Baha'i, Sikh, Christian and native American faiths, Mormon and Quaker leaders were also involved in the day's events." —*Los Angeles Times*, October 26, 1986.

Once again, we read the words of Revelation 13:3: "... And all the world wondered after the beast." This unity of the churches will lead to persecution, the mark of the beast, and a stupendous crisis in the world.

Another article appeared in the New York Post on Monday, April 14, 1986. The headline read: "N.Y. Jews, Catholics, Hail Pope's Synagogue Visit." The article said that Cardinal John O'Connor called the Pope's action "an historic move of indescribable importance."

And Pope Benedict XVI reaffirmed the papal priority for a commitment to ecumenism that calls for "not only words but concrete gestures." In the Italian city of Bari, celebrating Mass to close the 24th Eucharistic Congress before 200,000 faithful, the Pope defined Sunday as a necessary instrument to leave the desert of 'frenetic consumerism, religious indifference and secularism which is closed to transcendence.'" —*AsiaNews.it*, May 29, 2005.

Should not these events open our eyes and alert us to what will soon come upon the world? No matter which way you look, a great crisis is building around the world. This global conflict will be like nothing anyone has ever experienced before.

According to Bible prophecy, the United States will be the primary force pushing for legislation that will cause everyone to worship the beast. Then the world will unite against all who refuse to comply with such laws.

The world is rapidly confederating under one of two masters. While ecumenism draws one bloc to Satan, the other group unites those who "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. With this in mind, let us determine to obey God and keep His holy Sabbath now and in the coming crisis!

What Is Love?

By Teresa Corti

Much has been written about love, and this word is used so liberally today that it has almost lost its real meaning. Man needs and seeks love, makes, any experiences, and also makes many mistakes. Many crimes have been committed in the name of love, and emotional blackmail is often committed using love as an excuse. In this world, love is something very fragile; with the slightest pressure, it can break, change shape, die or even turn into revenge or hatred.



In general, we love people who are similar to us, who think in the same way, who are interested in the same things, and who have the same tastes and weaknesses. But this can be a kind of narcissism in which a person is attracted to traits in someone else that he likes in himself. Unfortunately, if the other person changes and becomes different from us we become disillusioned, do not love her as much, and may even consider her a traitor, regardless of whether the change is good or not. Why? Because we do not want to be left alone, we do not want to lose the approval we had, or we do not want to have to examine our values.

There is another way of loving—having a strong feeling toward someone we admire, someone who has virtues (according to what we believe) that we do not possess and would like to acquire. For example, we love a model, an idol; but if that idol makes a mistake, manifests weakness, or reveals his own humanity, our love collapses right along with the clay feet of our idol.

We may also love people who do not resemble us, whom we do not admire but offer us something, give us

attention, admire us, or provide us with their protection; in exchange for this, we give them tenderness or patience. This is the most obvious form of selfish love, because if that person, for some incomprehensible reason, cannot continue to offer us the attention we want, that is the end of the love.

There is still another kind of love that seems to be altruistic, and that is when we love a weak person, who permanently or temporarily has a disadvantage, can offer us nothing but needs us, and depends on our love. In this case, we open up ourselves and give with joy, because we like feeling useful, good, and generous. But we do not want that person to demand more than we are willing to give, which is usually our leftovers. We also do not want the person to become totally independent and not need us any more, because that would deprive us of the opportunity to feel good, generous, and capable of loving.

All of these explanations seem quite cynical and even confusing, but virtually everyone is or has been on one side or the other of this thing that we call love. It all seems to work as long as we receive what we expect, otherwise love is in danger of getting unbalanced. We all say that we love. Parents love their children and vice versa, couples love each other, and so do friends. But then we sometimes wonder, If there is so much love in the world that each of us is a generator of love, why, when we look around us, do we see so much misery?

What is love really? The Scriptures tell us: “God is love.” 1 John 4:16. He is identified with love. But what does this mean? How does His love manifest itself? “For God so loved the world, that He gave...” John 3:16. That



is love. It is expressed with a verb—to give. To love is to give. God gave man a beautiful planet to live on, a world of flowers, trees, and streams of water. He still gives man life, health, a home, and friends; but the greatest expression of His love was when He gave His Son to die on Calvary. Jesus is the incarnation of God's love. Love was made flesh and walked on earth, blessing all with whom it came in contact, and ended up dying on the cross for man's sin.

"God so loved the world, that He gave...." John 3:16, Here is a key. We can make the decision to love, that is, to give. We begin by giving our children what they ask for, filling our houses with books, toys, and clothes. Then we see that, instead of being happy and grateful, these children become capricious and demanding. Or, we give our spouses attention and affection; we offer the best of our culinary arts, a warm and peaceful home; we are patient and endure their bad moods; and we admire and treasure every word that they say. Then what can happen? A woman who is apparently more independent, who may not have even half of our virtues, appears on the scene, and the husband's attention is focused on her.

Or, this scenario can turn the other way. A husband gives his wife a beautiful house, all of his salary to manage, his continual attention, fidelity, and affection; and then his wife is cold and indifferent and seems bored in his company.

"God so loved the world, that He gave...." We give our adult son, who perhaps since childhood dreamed of being a globetrotter and traveling the world in search of experiences, the company that we founded with so much effort, a flourishing business in a time of financial crisis. Instead of accepting it with gratitude, he feels frustrated considers it a burden, and is unhappy.

"God so loved the world, that He gave...." Why does our giving end in disappointment most of the time? Because we keep waiting for something in return, because behind our act of giving is a selfish motive, because we want recognition, gratitude, and love. The apostle Paul wrote: "... The more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved," 2 Corinthians 12:15. We also read: "Love suffers long," "... love never fails." 1 Corinthians 13:4, 8, New King James Version. No matter what is done to love, it is always there. True love, which has its origin in heaven, is not generated in the human heart but is a divine gift. As Solomon says, "... Love is strong as death;" and is eternal. "Many waters cannot quench love...." Song of Solomon 8:6, 7.

True love is patient with the things that are done to it and "seeketh not her own" (1 Corinthians 13:5); but it cries, as Jesus did over Jerusalem, when souls are lost. The love described in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, the love that "beareth all things" (verse 7), was incarnated in Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,..." Hebrews 12:2. For that love to dwell in our hearts, we must have God Himself in our hearts, because only "God is love." Then the promise

that we can accept and claim by faith is: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3:17-19.

Let us, like Paul, bow our knees before the Father, pleading with Him to give us "according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." Ephesians 3:16.





World in Brief

REQUEST FOR PRAYER AND SUPPORT FOR THE VICTIMS OF CYCLONE IDAI IN MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE, AND ZIMBABWE



Dear brethren of the General Conference, Divisions, Unions, and Fields around the world,

We greet you with Matthew 24:7, 8 and Luke 21:25, 26: “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”

It is with great sorrow that I received the news of the terrible desolation and deaths caused by the tropical cyclone Idai that struck southern Africa—Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi—on Thursday and Friday, March 14, 15, 2019.

With profound grief, we heard that Brother Nicolás Murema, his wife, and their three children lost their lives in the powerful floods caused by the cyclone in eastern Zimbabwe on March 15. Brother Murema was a member of Elder Alfred Ngwenya’s family. Elder Ngwenya is the president of the African Division. Please pray for him and his family.

The latest information received from Elder David Gwina, president of the Zimbabwe Field, is that the funeral was held for Brother Murema and his wife on March 18, while search continued for the bodies of the three missing children. The believers in Zimbabwe are in mourning. The situation in Zimbabwe and Mozambique is extremely serious. Brother Gwina reports that estimates are that more than 800 people died from the cyclone in Zimbabwe.

In Mozambique, the government estimates that more than 1,000 people died in the terrible storm. We have not yet received information about fatalities and injuries among the church members in Mozambique and Malawi.

In the name of the Good Samaritan Department and the General Conference Help Ministry, we appeal to all the

believers of the International Missionary Society around the world to pray for our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi, and to help with funds that the Good Samaritan Department can send to help our brethren in those countries.

The leader of the Good Samaritan department, Brother Stefano La Corte, and I have consulted about the best way to deal with this natural disaster by sending funds immediately to our dear believers who have suffered from the storm. We will keep the General Conference and the Divisions informed as we receive more information from the leaders in the three countries.

For the General Conference Help Ministry,
Elder Morris Lowe, RN, BScN

In addition to the above, we would like to inform you that the Good Samaritan Department has set aside funds for the disaster in the three countries impacted by the cyclone. As the Department leader, I have planned a trip to the African continent from May 16 to 30, 2019, to monitor the situation personally and provide assistance. We ask you to give generously for this purpose on Sabbath, April 20, 2019, or as soon as you are able to give donations for our brethren in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi.

Your contributions can be sent through the bank at the following address with the notation “Zimbabwe”:

OPERA SOCIALE IL BUON SAMARITANO ONLUS

Bank account number:
IBAN IT98 P062 6013 8001 0000 0003 737 BIC: CRFIEP

We will give a detailed report of the entire operation as soon as possible.

—Stefano La Corte

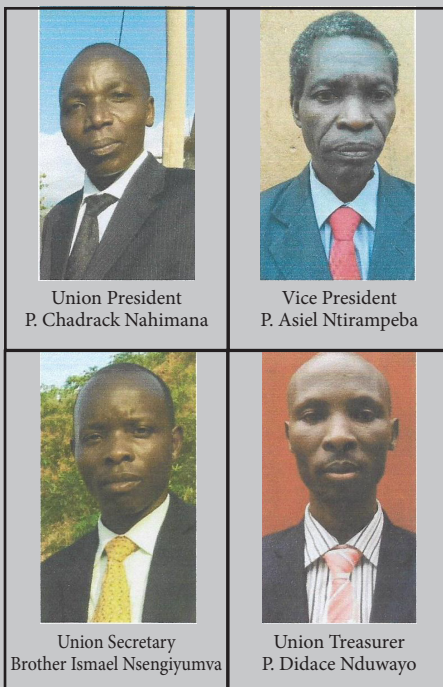


INFORM REPORT

In Burundi Union we greet you in Jesus name. We want to show you how the work of Gad is going in the union of Burundi. from 7th December 2018, we have a new organization in the Union and fields. Last time we had with 3 fields, but now we have 4 fields.



this es the leaders: This is the Union Executive Committee



This is the department leaders



The leaders of Fields:



In the missionary department, we wish to support the new Field (North East Field)
And the field Central East Field, in the time so that the numbers of members can be increased.



World in Brief

Missionary: In Burundi Union, the missionary work, is going on.



This is the opening of a new church in the North West Field, and meeting in the North East Field.



Ordaining of two Pastor Didace Nduwayo and Ferdinand Riyazimana

Two ordained of the church elders Elias Bahwanije, Edison Nzeyimana.



The work of Lord supper



Missionary works

This is some papers we use in the missionary work



This is some material we are using in the work of God

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Acts 2:37"

In the Union Burundi, we thank God because He helps us so much in His work. We beg you to help us to pray for this work of God. We are going again to preparing camp meeting August in this year.

Yours in Christ

*Ismael Nsengiyumva
Burundi Union Secretary*