

THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

Philanthropic and humanitarian paper
for moral and social uplift. Published monthly

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Subscriptions
Switzerland, 1 year . Fr. 5.00
Other countries . . . US\$ 7.00
IBAN: CH83 0900 0000 1200 0656 7

The pull that is a blessing, and the pull that destroys

VERY powerful is the influence that people exert on one another. Some people possess a power of attraction, while others are cursed with a power of repulsion. Moreover, this applies in every domain. Certain elements are drawn together, while others fly apart. As a proverb says: "Birds of a feather flock together." There are things that mix and bind together, and others that avoid and combat one another. For another thing, it is not an axiom that every power that pulls invariably leads to happiness and blessing.

For instance, on Earth are exerted two influences which pull in diametrically opposite directions: that of the Kingdom of God, and that of Satan, the Adversary. The pull of the Kingdom of God leads all who submit to its laws to joy, life and felicity; whereas that of the Adversary's kingdom of lawlessness, leads the people who yield to it to disappointment and woe. All people are, at present, in the grip of that devilish pull, and that is why their lives are strewn with pain and troubles, and why their end is death, utter destruction.

The pull of the Kingdom of God, at present, has little effect on people because they have not been educated at a school that would attune them to that influence of blessing, but to one that creates affinities with the influence of "the god of this world". The basis of the Kingdom of God, is entirely different from that of the Adversary's realm where there flourishes the poisonous growth of selfishness, the source of every sort of evil. The offshoots of that loathsome weed are animosity, dissension, jealousy, quarrelling, envy, falsehood, dissembling, excess in eating and drinking, pride and so forth. These things — being a repellent to God's Holy Spirit, which is able to exert no influence on those who give way to them — are so many obstacles to the Kingdom of God, preventing it from taking shape amidst mankind.

The hearts of all people, in general, are infested with that horrid growth. However, we know that all throughout the Gospel Age — opened by the glorious message proclaimed by our beloved Saviour at the time of his earthly mission and constantly till today — some people have come to feel how wretched they were. Some still do today. They are not satisfied with the devilish influence pulling on their hearts. They have a predilection for real kindness and affection, which are lacking from that field of influence. They observe the absence of all rectitude and justice from the Adversary's

kingdom. They feel the ground is giving way beneath their feet when the ties which bind them to members of their families or to their friends, are broken either by departures or by death.

So, those people are in search of something permanent, something that will not disintegrate, because they hunger and thirst after real and lasting happiness. This being so, they can then come into the field of attraction of the Kingdom of God with the Almighty's kind assistance. He lets them feel his kindness through this ineffable invitation voiced by his dearly beloved Son, our Saviour: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

In the long distant past already, the Lord sent prophets, of whom Abraham was. To Abraham, He promised: "In you and your seed, all the families of the Earth will be blessed." Others, Joseph and David for instance, had the experience of being forsaken by men. They took the Lord for their Shepherd, and the Lord watched over them and protected them. He let them feel his grace and kindness, and also lavished, on them, a magnificent portion of his blessing and of his treasures, which never pass away. It became possible to grant them these things because the Kingdom of God exerted a powerful pull on those prophets, and because, in the end, the principles of the Kingdom became exceedingly dear to their hearts.

David said: "I delight in your law," and: "The precepts of LORD are right and rejoice the heart." In magnificent bursts of enthusiasm, the prophets have displayed their joy in the Kingdom of God, and expressed the comfort it was to them. Isaiah, in particular, sang the Kingdom of God and its glorious hopes. He said: "It shall come to pass, in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all the nations shall flow to it. And many people shall come and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He shall teach us of his ways, so that we may walk in his paths,' ... They shall beat their swords into plowshares... and never again shall they learn war."

Those wonderful pictures give an idea of the peace that one day will come all over the world. Isaiah felt unutterable joy over being able to describe them and thus to give real hope to future generations. Later, when the Son of God came to Earth as an unprecedented draw-

ing power of the Kingdom of God, all those prophecies became more living than ever before, far, far more than when they were uttered by the prophets themselves. The prophets gave very beautiful descriptions of the power of attraction of the Kingdom of God. As for the Saviour, he described the conditions for exerting that attraction that is to be felt like the pull of a magnet, drawing to it everything that is accessible to its influence, and he lived up to them himself.

The Lord Jesus delivered the message of divine grace with such power that, so to speak, he was an irresistible magnet. Therefore, when he delivered his first testimony on the shore of the Lake of Gennesaret, he immediately found three disciples who dropped their nets and followed him. Although they had duties to perform, they felt, in their hearts, that irresistible pull and were impelled to follow the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, and who is the central Core of the divine field of attraction.

What we find particularly admirable in our dear Saviour is the stand he adopted in his heart with regard to his disciples. He protected them and constantly encouraged them and vivified and sustained them with the beneficial influence of blessing he gave out. So that, after many trials, many difficulties and rectifications necessitated by the defects in their characters, the disciples responded to him with magnificent resonance of faith. When he asked them whether they also would go away, they answered out of the mouth of the Apostle Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

In the days of our Lord Jesus, the Kingdom of God was illustrated as an intense beam of light, of joy and of felicity. The rich young man who wished to get into touch with the Kingdom of God, felt this. He asked the Lord Jesus: "What must I do...?" The Lord then pointed out to him the principles of the divine law. The youth answered that he was already doing those things, but he had a distinct feeling that there was something lacking. The Lord then put his finger on the sore spot, the one thing that was holding him back. He was relying on his wealth, but to get rid of it by distributing it to the poor, was a repellent to him. Such abnegation, such a big sacrifice, was something he could not contemplate, for the Adversary's selfish kingdom exerted too powerful a drawing power on the young man, and besides too powerful a power of repulsion towards God's ways. That is why we are told that he went away sorrowful, for he possessed great wealth.

Our beloved Saviour illustrated the kindness and the love that prevail in the Kingdom of God. For love's

The Lord is faithful

ALICE has been serving the Lord in a region of France for two years, and has been very happy indeed in her work. Now, her mission in that region is drawing to a close, for the time has come again when all the beloved evangelists are being transferred around. When she receives the letter informing her of the place where it is proposed to send her, before she opens it, she kneels down. As she has always done when these occasions have arisen before, she prays to the Lord, saying: "Lord, be so good as to help me to joyfully agree and with all my heart, to the place where You are leading me."

After her prayer, Alice opens the letter. Well, who would have thought it? The proposal is for her to go and collaborate in a French border region where people speak German, and there is not a soul she knows there. She feels no little perturbed, particu-

larly over the matter of the language, but she thinks to herself: "The Lord will help me. I'm going to accept." And, putting her trust in divine grace, she writes to the administration of the Work, that she accepts the proposal made to her.

The day of departure comes around. She has many miles to go, but Alice is very happy. She has quite an agreeable journey and has no difficulty in finding her new residence: it is a pretty little dwelling with everything shipshape, bright and clean. It is all very wonderful, except for the stove, which is exceedingly decrepit.

Next day, Alice takes stock of things in greater detail, and also of the work to be done in the surrounding area. Everything is thoroughly in order. The rent and taxes are paid up to date, and there is a stock of coal in the cellar. There are no outdated papers or any soiled literature, except for some printed in German, which is not as fresh as when

new. The thought crosses Alice's mind, that the Lord will surely give her the opportunity to place it.

Then, she writes a little note of thanks to the dear sister who was here before her, thinking: "How pleasant it is to set up the divine family with beloved ones who apply their whole heart to serving the Lord and hastening 'the day of God!'"

Next day, having unpacked and put her things away, Alice prepares her midday meal. She is alone and intends to pray. Suddenly, however, a painful feeling of anguish comes over her, causing a lump in her throat that almost chokes her. She struggles, in vain, to throw off that depressing influence. It is beyond her strength and maintains its tenacious hold. A call for help rises from her heart, as it did from the hearts of the disciples on the storm-swept lake: "Help, Lord!"

At that moment, the doorbell rings, and Alice hastens to answer.

A very young man introduces himself: "I'm Brother Gilbert, and I've come to get acquainted."

They are immediately on terms of brother and sister, and her anguish is dispelled. Alice's joy returns, and she thinks: "How truly good the Lord is!"

And then Brother Andrew also turns up and says: "I give all my spare time to the Lord. I have a car, and I shall be happy to place it and myself at your disposal as often as I can. I'm quite familiar with this region, and I speak German. So, you won't be by yourself. My wife comes with me to the meetings, and does all she can to help."

Alice is again inspired to think: "How faithful the Lord is, and how one can count on Him on all occasions!"

Now, she is quite happy. She goes to visit the brothers and sisters in the region, and all who are friends of the Work. There are some who, in time past, have had the honour of

sake, he left the glory he had with the Father. For love's sake, he came forward to the Baptism by immersion. For love's sake, he constantly and indefatigably lavished benefits on those around him, so that the Truth was heard, seen and felt, and would draw people to itself. He comforted the sorrowful, and before the eyes of large multitudes, he healed the sick and raised the dead. And this always for love's sake, being desirous of showing compassion in spite of the fact that all these things cost him pain and even his life. The Truth, which is love, was concentrated in him to such a degree that he exposed every mystery with the wisdom of love. He overcame every obstacle with the power of love, and, with the Spirit of Truth, established contact with the harmony, the justice and the wisdom which, in association with divine love, create power. In this way, he provided a sublime demonstration of the setting up of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Thus, our beloved Saviour was the supreme Drawing Power of the Kingdom of God. He used to raise the dead, heal the sick, walk on water and to perform all sorts of miracles. We can be sure that it is no exaggeration to say, in such conditions, that crowds would follow him around, and would still follow him today. He did not perform all these demonstrations for the sake of being admired, but to make the wonderfully beneficial, comforting and healing power of the Kingdom of God, felt by all, and he illustrated it thus in a manner that was prodigiously expressive. He spent himself without counting and without shrinking from the greatest difficulties that came his way.

Then, in the course of the Gospel Age, he called those who wished to follow and to imitate him, being seized by the inexpressible influence of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of light, of peace and of divine kindness and love. The Lord taught them. He is still teaching the last of them who are making their calling sure, so that they, in turn, may become a glorious power of attraction of the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom will stand for ever and will for ever annihilate the Adversary's realm with its deadly and poisonous drawing power, which drags people into error, misfortune, sorrow, pain and destruction.

Let us then docilely permit ourselves to be taught and educated by our dear Saviour, so that we, in turn, may become that irresistible power of good in the living, by cultivating sentiments similar to his. The whole world today must be flooded with the magnetic fluid of divine love, revealed in Christ, our Saviour. The drawing power of the kingdom of darkness, of evil and death, must be dispelled from it for ever, for the deliverance, the joy and the happiness of all mankind, who, without knowing it, are expecting the Revealing of the Sons of God.

Let us then embody ourselves utterly in our mission. For that purpose, each of us must become perfectly true by ardently cultivating the sentiments of the Kingdom of God, so that our testimony is eloquent, both through our words and through the life we live, and may also be convincing, to the glory of God. We should be able to take on the appearance of refreshing dew, able to quench the thirst for justice and truth of the hearts that are longing to receive the delightful vibrations of divine grace. Let us then have nothing else in view but this ministry, so that we may be true magnets, attractive and captivating, to those around us because they feel the blessing resting on us.

Let us do our duty in full, by making every effort now to become the prodigious drawing power for good of the Kingdom of love and tenderness, the Kingdom of God, and by hastening the presence of "the day of deliverance" for mankind with true holy conduct and

godliness. In this way, we shall give glory to God's Work, and we shall make God's holy Name known to mankind who, in anguish and storm-ridden, are now trembling in fear for the future. Through the difficulties and terrible tribulations of the coming days, mankind will be glad to have the assistance and blessing of the Kingdom of God, for it provides peace, consolation and deliverance from the Adversary's yoke, from his wretched and destructive attractions.

May the worldly spirit then be completely banished from our midst, so that God's Holy Spirit may influence our hearts unhindered. All mankind, assured and convinced by the goodness and the grace of God, will then gladly hail the King of Glory as their Liberator and their Saviour.

The Sun: the star of life

From Swiss French newspaper *Tribune de Genève*, from the 8th and 9th of July 2023, we partly quote the following article written by Emmanuel Borloz, titled:

The Sun, an ordinary but wonderful star

This is the story of a small star, a simple yellow dwarf, located in the Orion Arm, one of the minor spiral arms of the Milky Way Galaxy. A star among the hundreds of billions of other stars in the galaxy, which itself is among the hundreds of billions of galaxies in the observable Universe, and which is a "nanocrumb" in the big picture, without which, we wouldn't exist.

*"An ordinary star, but a miracle," says Frédéric Clette — a solar physicist [and astronomer] at the Royal Observatory of Belgium, where he manages SILSO, a world centre for sunspots — and the author of the French book *Le Soleil et nous* [a book about the Sun and us]. To find out everything about that ball of plasma with its molten core, which fascinates us so much, it's hard to find a better person to talk to. Follow the guide. ...*

What powers our star?

The Sun runs on hydrogen. It burns approximately 600 million tonnes of it per second, in a physical process that is self-sustaining (through gravity) and that releases gigantic quantities of energy, and radiates the entire spectrum of radiation. In practical terms, stars are monstrous nuclear reactors. In their cores, fusion reactions take place: hydrogen nuclei fuse to form helium atoms. In the case of the Sun, this is a 15-million-degree boiler.

"The Sun represents 99% of the total mass of the Solar system. It's gigantic compared to our little planet, whose diameter is over 100 times smaller. And yet the Sun is a very average star. ...

What effect does the Sun have on Earth?

The Sun is directly or indirectly linked to almost all terrestrial weather phenomena. "And in many energy resources, except geothermal energy," continues Frédéric Clette, citing, in no particular order "wind power, hydroelectricity, tidal energy to a lesser extent, and even biomass in which the recovered energy is solar energy accumulated by plants in chemical form".

And what about climate change? This is the hot topic at the moment, says Frédéric Clette. "The Sun is variable. It goes through 11-year cycles of activity (magnetic-field intensity, sunspots, radiation, etc.). It has a minimum threshold of activity, below which it cannot go. Conversely, the maximum amplitude of solar activity is also unchanging. The Sun is in a very stable phase, its intensity varies by only a few percent per billion years. The rising trend of temperatures on Earth, which has been observed for several decades, disqualifies the Sun, and we have to look elsewhere for the culprit. If we look at the amplitude of activity cycles over the last 70 years, the trend is actually downwards. This is going in the opposite direction to temperatures on Earth."

He continues: "The last peak, in 2014, is the lowest in

a century. While in the past, there were indications that temperatures on Earth followed the solar cycle, there has been a decoupling in the last 150 years. The Sun's influence on the climate, which has always existed, is still present, but it is a minor fraction. The human factor has become dominant."

What is the Sun still hiding from us?

The Sun is revealing itself, but is still jealously guarding a number of mysteries that probes are trying to unravel.

"There are three big remaining puzzles," summarizes Frédéric Clette. "We still don't know what causes solar flares. The second concerns the Sun's cycles. We are beginning to understand that the Sun is a fantastic recycling factory for its own magnetic field. The Sun recovers and amplifies its magnetic field by transferring it from the surface to the poles. This circular dimension probably explains why the Sun's activity is periodic, with 11-year cycles, but we don't know any more than that. To unravel this mystery, we need to observe the Sun's poles, which has not been done yet. The last unknown concerns the solar wind, the stream of particles that bombards Space and that is responsible for the northern lights [the aurora borealis]. Little is known about this source."

The Sun is the star of our Solar System, which we follow on its path through Space. We are so used to seeing it, that we don't always think a lot about it. That is why it seems "ordinary" to us, to use the word expressed by Emmanuel Borloz, and for this reason, it is useful to remember, as he does, that we cannot exist without it.

And on that point, we become aware of what the Sun actually is. In fact, it is far enough away from the Earth, an average of 150 million kilometres, to not burn us and to not impede all life on Earth, but also close enough to give us the light and warmth that we need.

The temperature of the Sun's surface is 6,000 °C, the Sun's corona is over 1 million °C, and the Sun's centre is 15 million °C. The centre of the Sun is also where nuclear fusion takes place. The Sun has an average diameter of 1.4 million kilometres (109 times bigger than the Earth). It weighs 1.9891 x 10³⁰ kilograms (333,00 times the mass of the Earth). It consists of hydrogen (73%), helium (25%), oxygen, carbon, iron, neon, nitrogen, silicon, magnesium and sulfur. The Sun rotates about every 28 days (24 days at the equator, and 38 days at the poles). It travels around the Milky Way at a speed of 251 kilometres per second.

Scientists have naturally tried to determine the age of the Sun. They estimate it to be 4.5 billion years old. Frédéric Clette has also further reported about the origin of the Sun: "A cloud of rarified gas and dust orbits the disk of the Milky Way. Under the effect of rotation, matter is compressed and the cloud contracts. It reaches the famous threshold of 'gravitational instability', a tipping point. The cloud then collapses under the weight of its own gravity. The contraction and pressure increase, and temperatures rise. The central nuclear reactions begin, and the sphere of gas turns into a luminous ball. Our star is born."

Let's face it, we don't give too much credence to such a scenario. On the other hand, we are sure that the Sun — like all the celestial bodies in the Universe, and everything else in existence — was created. From this point of view, the Earth's distance from the Sun is no coincidence, and neither is its size nor are any of its physical characteristics. It is God Who willed it to be so, by virtue of the law that He established, that He Himself abides by and that is called the Universal Law, because it is found everywhere, from the infinitely small to the infinitely large. Thus, the Sun gives service to the Earth by giving it light and heat.

Scientists have also put a figure on the life expectancy of the Sun, estimating it to be about 10 billion years. Here too, it is appropriate to come to terms with God's sovereignty, and to say that not only did He create eve-

putting up the dear Messenger and also dear Sister Marie (his secretary). Those two have left traces of blessing in their hearts, and they show great esteem towards the Lord's Work and towards all the beloved collaborators who have spent time in this region. Alice never hears a word of criticism concerning anybody. How agreeable this is, and even though the divine family in this region is small, she is greatly cheered by this pleasant atmosphere!

One day, she visits a subscriber who used to know the Work before World War Two (1939–1945), and, in those days, used to attend the meetings from time to time. During the war, he was a prisoner and had had occasion to perceive that the Lord's kind hand gave him protection. When he came back, he did not go on attending the meetings, but kept up his subscriptions to the literature, and always appreciated the friendship of the evangelists who regularly came to visit him.

Alice invites him to resume his attendance, saying: "With such sentiments, you must return into our midst to make up the family. There are so few of us. Do come to the meetings!"

"I'll see," our friend replies.

The following Sunday, he turns up, shy but smiling, and from then on is faithfully present at all the meetings and courageously engages in the fight against self.

One day, Alice receives a letter from headquarters. Enclosed is a letter from the son of a subscriber to *The Monitor*. Feeling frustrated and disappointed in life, he has read some of the publications of the Lord's faithful Messenger, and has felt their beneficial influence. The thought has come to him that there, he might find some real friends, and so he has written to the head office of the Work. Alice goes to visit this young man who is expecting her. A friendly understanding is set up at once, and after they have been conversing

some time, the young man says: "I shall come to your meeting on Sunday."

Since then, he has been present at every meeting. He is becoming a brother, Brother Jack, who is the joy of the whole family. He also has a car, and he offers to collaborate. So, Alice has the assistance of two brothers, sometimes of Brother Andrew and sometimes of Brother Jack.

Alice has great love for her mission, and she applies her whole heart to it. One day, while evangelizing, she enters a shop selling household machines. The shopkeeper is busy with a customer, so she waits till he is free. As her gaze wanders round the shop, her eyes come to rest on a neat gas stove displayed in a prominent position. She has an idea that this would advantageously replace the ancient stove at her residence. She remembers she has a little money and thinks she could very well buy it. However, a small inward voice speaks up: "You are here to deliver

the message and for no other purpose. True enough, your stove is old and dilapidated, but the brethren before you were able to make do with it, and so can you. So, you'd better put that thought out of your mind and get on with the Lord's Work, and not wish for anything besides."

Some days later, Alice calls on a good lady who has long been a subscriber to *The Monitor*. She has been having a deal of trouble lately, and tells Alice all about it, so glad is she to have a talk with someone who understands. Alice is very much affected by her distress and says: "Set your mind at rest, my dear. I'm going to help you in every way I can and as long as I'm granted the possibility."

Alice keeps her word, giving her the support of her prayers, and also lending her a much-needed helping hand. The good lady's heart is filled with gratitude, and she feels she must express it in a practical way. So, one day, she says: "You have helped me so much and

rything, but that He also maintains everything through the power of his Spirit. We can well understand that a marvel, such as our Solar System, was not created to disappear in 10 billion years. Matter has no will of its own, and "obeys", so to speak, the divine will automatically. The same is not true of humankind, who were given free will at the time of their creation, and who rebelled against their Creator by falling into sin. That is why they became mortal beings, no longer able to be supplied by the Source of life: the Almighty.

All of that shows us that the Sun is not ordinary, but miraculous. The origin of the miracle is to be found in God. He is the Giver of life, both for intelligent beings and for the countless celestial bodies in the Universe, whose secrets we are still far from understanding. We admire the persevering work of scientists who seek to understand the world we live in, but we are assured that the key to understanding all this science lies with God, Who gives it to whom He will.

We are only at the beginning of knowledge, because before we know — as we have been known, as Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13: 12 — there are other steps to take, particularly that of obedience, submission to God. Let us not be like Eve, who wanted to know before obeying! We seen what the result of her error was.

In the next dispensation, which will soon be introduced on Earth, all people will learn to know and love the Lord God, thanks to the Sacrifice of his beloved Son, our dear Saviour, and of his faithful ones who followed him on the path of sacrifice. In that way, everyone will be able to reach their destiny: eternal life, on the restored Earth.

What does the future have in store for us?

In the "Letters from readers" section of the French newspaper *Ouest-France* on the 5th of December 2022, there was an article by Maëlle Prost, titled:

Citizenship "Our planet might not have a future"

"I am an 18-year-old female student who participated in the Defence and Citizenship Day event [in France] on the 1st of December 2022. I was shocked by some of what our speakers had to say, both during their speeches and during the afternoon break...

Like many young people, I'm concerned about the future of our planet. There is nothing that I feel more strongly about, and I've already had the opportunity to 'march with signs' to defend this cause.

Firstly, for me to hear it said that there is no global warming caused by human activity, that commitment is pointless and that it's too late, sounds like an insult, not only to me, but to my whole generation, especially coming from someone who prides themself on teaching us about citizenship...

I'm sorry, but today's values are not the same as they were in the 20th century. We might not have experienced the world wars and all the wars of the last century, but today's adults have not experienced the constant anxiety of not having a future, no matter how hard we try to study and learn, because our planet might not have a future.

Today, whether we like it or not, taking responsibility for our environmental practices is a fundamental aspect of citizenship. I expect adults to show solidarity with young people, whose future is so uncertain, and not to laugh in our faces when we defend environmental causes."

That is a moving appeal from a young person who is sensitive to the environmental cause and who is seeking a better future! We greatly understand this young lady! It is true that many things have changed in our society, and we can feel, in her text, the difficulty that

adults have in understanding young people.

To understand one's fellow person, one has to put oneself in their place. The future of the younger generation is indeed bleak. In addition to the spectre of unemployment, there are now the problems of climate change, pollution, deforestation, the disappearance of animal species, and so on. As Maëlle Prost says, we might well ask ourselves whether the Earth itself still has a future. At an age when one has the right to be carefree, our young people have concerns that their predecessors did not have, at least those who think and are sensitive to what is happening around them.

We are happy to respond to that concern, and to reassure all those who are worried about the future. In fact, the Earth will be restored as part of God's plan for humanity. We know that our planet was originally Paradise, with ideal climatic and environmental conditions, as described in the Book of Genesis, the first book in the Bible. The appearance of sin brought the curse, not only for our first parents and their descendants, but also for animals, plants and the entire planet.

God's will is that everything will be restored to perfection. It's a plan whose scope we find difficult to imagine, as so much wisdom is needed to restore everything without imposing anything on anyone, and without overstepping the threshold of invitation. It is with that spirit that the Lord issued this call: "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" (Revelation 5: 2). The Logos, the beloved Son of God, responded to that call with: "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God." Hebrews 10: 7.

We are struck by the conciseness of those words. Such a programme is set up with so few words. But what precision! If we were to analyze those two proposals, we would find a whole world of feelings. It is God's Spirit that communicates what we feel is missing from those words.

The Son of God came to Earth to become our Saviour, Jesus Christ. In three and a half years, he fulfilled a ministry of such magnitude that the Apostle John declares, at the end of his Gospel: "Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose that the whole world would not have enough room for the books that would be written" (John 21: 25). Our dear Saviour has also chosen, during the 2,000 years of the Gospel Age, the Little Flock, his faithful Church. It is made up of true priests who give their lives for their fellow people.

Today, another call is issued. *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance), which contains the constitution and the law of the Reign of Justice, invites well-disposed hearts to leave the path of selfishness and to commit to living altruistically, by observing the Universal Law, which means, to exist for the good of their fellow people and to become benefactors. The New World is already in preparation, and everyone is invited to collaborate on the Lord's Work. This collaboration fills us with joy and will ensure eternal life on the restored Earth for those who are faithful.

Saved from a hell of snow

Following is an article that appeared in the German-language weekly *Neue Revue* magazine, No. 6.

One unfortunate winter's day, a seven-year-old boy, named Gaspare Navicella, wanted to get home as quickly as possible. As a result, he almost froze to death in the snow.

On his way home from school, the child decided not to take the usual route, but to take a shortcut through the fields to get to his home in the town of Ovada, near the city of Genoa [in northern Italy]. As he set off, a snowstorm blew up, and Gaspare undoubtedly lost his bearings in the whirlwinds.

The little man bravely set about treading the snow,

which kept piling up. His school bag became heavier and heavier on his shoulders, and his steps shorter and shorter. Feeling exhausted, he finally let himself fall into a pile of snow.

He said later: "I wanted to get some sleep. I was so tired." He didn't know that if you fall asleep in the snow, you can definitely freeze to death.

Help came at the last moment. "Till", Gaspare's hunting dog, was waiting as usual for his young master to return home. When he didn't see him coming, he ran outside in the storm and found the child two kilometres from their house.

And this is what the child said: "I can still remember Till licking my face with his long warm tongue. Then, he started to trot a few steps. I had to follow him, but I was too weak for it. And my brave Till realized that straight away. He grabbed the collar of my coat, with his mouth and simply pulled me out of the pile of snow."

When Gaspare tried to get up, he fell back to the ground. But Till did not give up. He grabbed his young master again and dragged him for six hours through the deep snow, to their house. And when Gaspare was finally rescued, it was Till, the faithful dog, that collapsed.

We always like to read such touching stories, where animals, as creatures of God, show themselves capable of a devotion that confounds us.

The impressive behaviour of this dog shows that it has followed, in a moving way, the Universal Law of neighbourly love, which requires that we exist for the good of our neighbours. If animals are capable of such devotion, how much more should we humans, who have even greater possibilities, use them as an example to put an end to the growing misery on Earth!

That is not just a question of serious material difficulties, such as increasing famine, but also of much more serious dangers, such as the moral decay that results from material affluence if it is not balanced by corresponding gratefulness.

So, we see the vital importance of gratitude, which should correspond to the magnitude of the benefit received, in order to ensure balance, the indispensable equilibrium. This is precisely what leads to respect for life, and for the Source of life, which is God, the Almighty.

Where is artificial intelligence leading us?

The Swiss-French-language internet newspaper *20Minutes.ch*, from the 30th of March 2023, provides interesting information about the development of artificial intelligence (AI). Its author, Laurent Favre, reports the following:

People demand an urgent pause in the development of AI

Technologies: In a petition, one thousand prominent personalities [tech leaders] point out the dangers linked to artificial intelligence.

The ability of ChatGPT — a conversation tool, managed by artificial intelligence (AI) — has come as a surprise. Technology specialists are concerned about the dangers that such high-performance systems could pose to humanity. A thousand people have signed an online open letter, calling for a pause, of at least six months, in the development of AI.

"Advanced AI could represent a profound change in the history of life on Earth, and should be planned for and managed with commensurate care and resources," the letter says. It continues: "Should we risk loss of control of our civilization? ... Powerful AI systems should be developed only once we are confident that their effects will be positive and their risks will be manageable."

Even Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, which devel-

done me so much good, that I would like to give you a gas stove that's in my cellar. It's brand new and isn't even unpacked."

Alice is deeply touched by this kind thought, but thinking the good lady might have said this on the impulse of a moment, she replies: "But why do you want to give me that gas stove?"

"It's to thank you, and besides, it might deteriorate in the cellar. That would be a great pity. The one in my kitchen is quite new, and I've no use for the other one."

"Well, I'll tell you what," Alice responds, "you carefully think it over for a fortnight! Then, when I come again to see you, if you're still of the same mind, I shall accept it very gratefully."

After a fortnight, when, in the course of her rounds, the time has come to visit her friend again, she has put the matter out of her head, and filled her mind only with thoughts of her mission, for it is her great desire to put into

practice the teachings of the Master, who said: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you [and He shall give you everything you need]."

However, hardly has she set foot in her friend's place, when the good lady says: "My dear, I'm still of the same mind: I'd like to give you the gas stove I promised you."

So, Alice willingly accepts that gift which gives her so much pleasure. She is very grateful for it. Then, to cap it all off, the lady's nephew happens to be a fitter, and he will be able to come and fit the gas stove. Brother Jack undertakes to transport it with the assistance of a neighbour who has a car with plenty of room for it.

Now, the gas stove is in place. It works wonderfully. Once her voluntary assistants have gone, Alice thanks the Lord with all the ardour of her heart, for watching over his children with so much kindness and care. "How

faithful He is!" she thinks once more. In the middle of the night, she wakes up and thinks of her gas stove. She gets up to go and look at it, and contemplates: "No, it's not a dream! It's there, all right, and even more splendid than the one in the shop! How true are the words of our Lord when he says: 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you!'"

★

Later, when she is doing one of her rounds near the border of Luxembourg, Alice thinks she would like to evangelize in that country. She writes to the head office of the Work to ask for permission, and it is granted. There are three subscribers in that country, but no one to visit them. So, one Sunday, with Brother Jack, Alice sets out to make the acquaintance of these people. The journey is very pleasant, taking them through a forest of majestic trees. The day flies by, being filled with divine blessing. On the way back, Alice says: "We

should go back there to evangelize. Our dear Sister Josephine, who speaks German, could come with us, too."

The very next week, our three evangelists set out to carry out this plan. They have brought with them all the soiled German literature and several fresh copies.

Alice evangelizes on her own. Brother Jack and Sister Josephine go in another direction. Alice comes across some receptive hearts. When someone buys a booklet in German, she throws one of the soiled ones in with it. This is the favourable time for placing it. Soon, Alice is brimming over with joy. As she turns away from a door at which she has had no answer, she perceives her fellow workers coming to seek her. They have just met a policeman who told them that door-to-door canvassing is forbidden. Being intimidated, they decide to stop, but Alice thinks she will go on, and see what happens.

She tells them to go for a walk while they

oped ChatGPT, admitted that he is "a little bit scared" of the effects his creation could have if it were used for "large-scale disinformation" or "cyber-attacks". "Society needs time to adapt," he recently said to ABC News [USA].

Among the signatories of the open letter are well-known people in technology, such as Elon Musk and Steven Wozniak (from Apple), and academics and experts in the field, such as the CEO of Stability AI (an OpenAI competitor) and employees at DeepMind, an artificial intelligence laboratory at Google.

This is may well be a first in the history of technological development since the mid-19th century. In fact, we have always sought progress and contributed a great deal to it, often also with large amounts of money, but this time, it seems as though the situation has changed. Technology is in danger of outstripping our own capabilities, or rather, we might no longer be able to control our own inventions.

In its edition from the 3rd of May, 20Minutes.ch reports that Geoffrey Hinton has left Google so that he can freely talk about the dangers of AI. Furthermore, in the French newspaper *Ouest-France*, on the 1st of June 2023, we find a report, by Jean-Marc Bureau, arguing along the same lines:

Artificial intelligence: "Limit or ban research"

"In the newspaper *Ouest-France*, from the 21st and 22nd of May, [Ms] Laurence Devillers says nothing surprising as a researcher in artificial intelligence, except when she says: 'It's up to us to decide what we do with it.' She contradicts herself when she goes on to say that 'above all, we must not prohibit research'. Yes, there

are areas where we should limit or ban research.

History teaches us that a discovery, even a harmful one, always ends up being used one day. Secondly, as a private citizen, I have no power to influence political decisions on the use of artificial intelligence. The decision makers are the bosses of web giants. Unfortunately, governments have let them get away with it. Laurence Devillers clearly refers to the risk of 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice seizing discoveries to do business'. It's astonishing to see how much effort and funding, people put into making a substitute for their brains, when, with their own, they have a complete and effective tool."

That is also a very edifying and fair testimony. Indeed, however marvellous artificial intelligence may seem, we need to come back down to Earth and realize that it will not surpass the capabilities of the human brain, because a creation is not greater than its creator. If we firmly stick to that basic truth, then we won't be fooled by all the errors that people would have us believe. That applies to the computer and other discoveries which are, in reality, just what they are and nothing more, namely, machines, and they will never take the place of those who designed them.

However, the use that can be made of using artificial intelligence varies depending on the objectives of those who manipulate it. In the hands of the wrong people, it could cause real harm. The same was true of nuclear fission, which was used to make the atom bomb.

Human beings are endowed with brilliant intelligence. They have designed and developed countless technical achievements. However, it is very difficult for them to realize their true situation and that of the world

around them. To illustrate our point, we will quote the writer Arthur C. Clarke: "It may be that our role on this planet is not to worship God, but to create him." That speaks for itself, insofar as humankind do not create, they transform. To create means to produce something out of nothing, which humankind are incapable of doing. God creates, humankind transform. That is why the creation can never take the place of the Creator, any more than a machine can supplant a human. Any assertion to the contrary is a figment of the imagination of humankind who like to think that they will one day be able to develop a robot that can replace them. What could happen, however, is that technology harms or destroys humankind, given that all of these devices have not been developed with the primary aim of benefiting their users.

And therein lies the flaw in our whole system: it ignores the Universal Law, which requires every thing and every being to exist for the good of those around them. Humankind will have to learn to know this law and put it into practice if they want to survive on Earth, which will soon be restored, according to the plan that God Himself has for them, which is to restore all things to perfection. It was with the view to achieve this plan that God's beloved Son gave his life to pay the Ransom for humankind's sins, to satisfy justice. From now on, the precious merits of Christ are at the disposal of those who wish to begin a new life in which sin is combatted and must give way to virtue, which is love for one's neighbour, which assures peace, happiness and ultimately eternal life, for those who practise it.

wait for her. She continues in her mission and has reason to be immensely encouraged by people who take an interest in the message, and subscribe to the publications.

Seeing how wonderfully kind the Lord is, Alice decides she must come the following week. And once again, she is able to sow the divine seed in abundance.

One man says: "Did you know that door-to-door canvassing is prohibited here, especially evangelizing?"

"It is always permitted to sow good things," Alice responds. "It was the Lord Who sent me."

"In that case, carry on, and God be with you."

At the close of a day which has been all joy, the question is to find a night's lodging. Alice enquires about a small hotel. There are three in this little town: one is shut down for the summer holidays; for another, it is closing day; and the third is full up. She is advised to go to the police, where she can obtain addresses of people letting rooms.

Alice decides to follow this advice and applies at the police station, where she is very kindly received by the sergeant in charge, who asks her her business. In a few words, Alice tells him her needs.

"So, you're a traveller?" asks the sergeant.

"Yes, I'm a traveller," Alice answers without going into details.

The sergeant consults a notebook. He says: "There's no availability, unless you're willing to go eight kilometres further on. I'll ring up the police over there."

He dials a number and has a conversation in his own language, of which Alice cannot understand a word. Then, turning to her, he says: "Follow that road. Eight kilometres along it, on a plateau, there'll be a police car waiting for you. Follow it, and it will guide you to a hotel where you'll find something."

Alice thanks him and follows his directions, and all goes well. The police car is there, as the sergeant told her. She follows it and is very obligingly guided to a comfortable hotel. She thanks her guides warmly and goes into the hotel. Here, she is shown into the room the Lord has allotted to her so kindly for the night. She kneels and gives thanks to the Lord for his faithfulness. "When the Lord watches, He confounds his enemies; when He opens a door, no one can shut it," is her last thought before going to sleep.

Next day, she goes on evangelizing with renewed zeal and with much success. She finds a hotel keeper sensitive to the Truth, who lets her have a room at a reduced charge. Across the way is a restaurant where, every evening, Alice is able to have a good meal. So that, at the end of the week, she is glad to be able to tell the joys she has had to the little Family of Faith awaiting her return.

Her two-year period in the Lord's service in this French border region, draws to a close.

Alice's heart is full of gratitude for all the tender care lavished on her. All throughout the two winters, on Sundays, after the midday meal, Brothers Jack and Andrew chopped the kindling wood and brought in the coal, sufficient to last the week out. And there has been a lot of others willing help in every domain.

Before the transfer comes, Alice prepares her last round of visits. As they go, she says to Brother Andrew: "It's too late now, but I would so much have liked to go to the nearby adjoining German border region to express what I feel in my heart, which is to say that there will be no more borders, since the Lord has paid the Ransom for all people."

"It is by no means too late," answers Brother Andrew. "We can organise our round right away, so as to go to the city of Saarbrücken. I know the address of the Work, and the sister who lives there."

Almost at once, Alice's wish comes true. They are welcomed with warm affection, which warms Alice's heart. Although she cannot understand German, the influence she is able to feel makes it possible for her to follow the conversation. She is impressed by the way everything is in order and clean in the small dwelling, which, in spite of being modest, is truly charming. After a meal taken unceremoniously, the dear sister who received them gives Alice a souvenir to remind her of her visit. Afterwards, they must part, and Alice feels deeply moved. Thanking Brother Andrew on the return journey, she says: "When I think that 30 years ago, I was longing for a day when there would be no more borders and no more wars, and when all men would be reconciled, and that here we are now, and my longings are on the way to being fulfilled, the way to reconciliation, open to men of goodwill, I can't help the tears of joy that come to my eyes. The Lord hears the hearts that long for his Kingdom, and all good things come in due course."

When they get home, thinking of their visit to the beloved Family of Faith in Saarbrücken, Alice says to Brother Andrew: "Our little place is perfectly clean except for the kitchen. The chimney sweep made the ceiling very dirty, and it leaves much to be desired. What if we were to do it up on Saturday?"

Brother Andrew thinks it's a good idea, and Brothers John, Jack and Gilbert are going to help him to put up the wallpaper, whitewash the ceiling and paint the woodwork.

And there we are: the kitchen is as neat as a pin. Alice realizes that the way the small premises in Saarbrücken are kept clean and tidy, gave her the idea of setting their own premises in perfect order, so that they might deliver a good testimony that will give honour to the Lord. She appreciates the devotion of her brothers, and feels what happiness it is to build the Kingdom of God together.

Then, there is further proof of the devotion of her brothers. The engine of Alice's car has

been burning too much oil, so just before her departure, Brother Andrew offers to change it. This is done with great skill and kindness, with the assistance of two other brothers.

The car runs very smoothly, and Alice is able to set off in the direction of her new field of action, in the service of the Best of Masters.

She leaves her beloved French region of Lorraine, in which she has had so much divine joy, and she thinks: "Even if the climate is cold here, what does it matter? The hearts are warm, and the Family of Faith is charming. I would have been quite willing to remain here for another two years. But since the Lord invites me to serve elsewhere, it is: 'Your will be done, Lord!'"

"I am carrying away with me, in my heart, the remembrance of the many blessings received, and can sing like David: 'How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me?' And I can also answer: 'By being much more faithful in the noble mission He has entrusted me with in his blessed Work.'"

News in brief of the Reign of Justice

As announced in our previous "News in brief...", we present here a summary of the second day of the recent Sternberg Castle congress in Germany.

The *Heavenly Dew* Bible text was: "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10: 16). Following are some of the passages from the Faithful and Wise Servant's commentary on this text:

"What the Lord meant by these words: 'Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves,' is quite simply that we should live altruistically. He used the very significant images of the serpent and the dove, which complement each other in this precious teaching..."

If we are careful in God's ways in all our ways of thinking, saying and doing, we will save ourselves a lot of difficulties. The greatest wisdom of all is to change our selfish character into an altruistic character. To do this, we should only occupy ourselves with beautiful things, with those that are divine. It is unwise to listen to the Adversary, who hides the beautiful things and shows us the bad ones..."

To have true faith, we need the heart of a child, with a simple and trusting soul that completely puts itself into the Lord's hands. It is through simplicity of heart, and childlike obedience, that we can be protected from many difficulties, automatically, because they create an atmosphere that is very favourable to the influence of God's Spirit. On the other hand, if we want to assert our personal wisdom, our so-called intelligence, it leads us to suspicions, doubts and quibbles, and to always see evil rather than good..."

To do that, we need to have basic wisdom, to not mistrust our fellow person and to carefully watch over our own heart at all times.

Our dear Saviour was, in that way, wise for every trial. He constantly drew the strength he needed for his ministry in the prayers that he addressed to the Lord at all times, especially at night...

It is also terribly unwise to remain proud. We must rid ourselves, at all costs, of this dreadful poison, which does us awful harm and makes our fellow person suffer...

Wisdom furthermore means always existing for the good of our fellow person, in all ways. It also means letting our brother or sister shine, and keeping ourselves discreetly in the shadows...

Divine wisdom means being broad-minded, generous and full of affectionate and benevolent feelings, and being strict with oneself, but lenient with others. When we love someone tenderly, we easily pass over many things. We excuse easily. We don't find much to complain about, because love is big enough to fill in the gaps. We appreciate what others have done, even if it's a little flawed, and even if we could have done much better ourselves. Love bridges everything. It's the art of loving and being loved...

Divine wisdom also means never accusing anyone and never accepting accusations against anyone, and furthermore remaining on Mount Zion by shutting our eyes and ears, and putting our hands behind our back, in order to receive nothing against our fellow person...

The Lord tells us: 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.' This is the wisdom of wisdoms. From then on, we can have ineffable experiences that wonderfully strengthen our faith...

It's about living for others and not for us. By thinking about others and taking an interest in them, we will rid ourselves of our own burdens. We forget our own burdens to help our fellow person unload theirs. Thus, our own burdens automatically detach from our back and fall away. The less we think about ourselves, the more the Lord thinks about us. He serves us much more wisely and usefully than we ourselves could. This is more divine wisdom."

We thank our dear brothers and sisters from Sternberg Castle and the surrounding areas, who put all their heart into welcoming the dear Family of Faith, and we hope that this divine counsel will be followed by efforts in sanctification, in order to hasten the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth

The upcoming congresses will take place, God willing, in:

Lyon, France: September 7th to 9th.

Sternberg Castle: September 28th and 29th.

Publisher: The Angel of the Lord. Philanthropic Association. Editor: Philippe Miguët. Imprimerie Villière, 74160 Beaumont, France