

THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

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The indispensable food for our sensory nerves

MANKIND today are in darkness. They have everything to learn, or rather, they have to change everything they have learnt, to make it over utterly. We have frequently been able to see for ourselves that, just as our body needs food and drink, our nervous system also depends on a beneficial influence, which has to do it good. It cannot do without it. For instance, we know what happiness there is in feeling that someone has affection for us. This is food which does us an immense amount of good. Our nervous system needs that influence and, above all, that of the love of God, our heavenly Father.

Unfortunately, mankind presently have Satan, the Adversary, for their spiritual father. It is he who has induced them to behave the way they do. The consequence is that the human race is being propagated on Earth in a lawless way. So, man's condition is exceedingly unfavourable because he is in uninterrupted contact with the Adversary, with him who is "the god of this world". He resides in the Earth's atmosphere, where he reigns as sovereign master. His deadly influence tires the nerves, is a great strain on them, and does them terrible harm. He also succeeds in suggestionizing people during the night, to their great hurt, seeing that, owing to this, they are deprived of the rest they need.

So, it is easy to understand that mankind who are worked over by the devilish spirit are led to their graves by this influence. Since it works on them all the time, they make habits and build up a character, which are the sum of the condemnation lying on them, ruin their health and make them die. All pain and all disappointments are the result of man's selfishness, imposed on him by the power of the devilish spirit of "the prince of this world", as our dear Saviour calls him.

The divine influence, on the contrary, has wonderful results. It takes away all nerve tension, relaxes us and does our whole being good. Nerve tension causes all sorts of disturbances in people's organism. There are people who are defenceless due to absence of mind. They are incapable of fixing their attention on one thing. Others have all kinds of passions, some are most fiery tempered, and others ferociously jealous. All this comes from the demonic influence working strongly on their minds. The influence of the divine Spirit destroys this nerve tension and restores everything in the body to harmony with the Universal Law, which procures appeasement and tranquillity.

The Adversary, the god of this world, who is exceedingly religious, has bestowed some religions on mankind, and with these religions, the Devil's kingdom, on Earth, carries on with greater verve than ever. Our dear Saviour was not religious at all, and he delivered a testimony that was quite different from religion, which was why the Scribes and Pharisees of his day opposed him bitterly. So, the question is to fight down the spirit of religiousness in us, because it leads us to our graves.

Now, to die is no natural thing. It is to live that is man's natural condition. To obtain everlasting life, one has to follow the wonderful advice our Lord gives. We are dealing with an enemy who does not spare us, either day or night, and we need to exercise intense prayer to overcome all his attempts on our integrity. It is an immense favour to be able to go to God in prayer to receive his almighty assistance. This favour is granted to us by our dear Saviour who covers our shortcomings. Thus, by faith, we are able to have the benefit of his merits, and if we are obedient, we can go to God in prayer acceptable to Him.

Man was created in perfect harmony with the divine law, and this is why our organism functions in accordance with the Universal Law. However, as our nervous system has been impressed by the power of the demonic influence, we need to exert zeal, a burning zeal, in throwing off that frightful hold.

It is an immense blessing to us to know that we are able to improve our state of health, though we have not to be out for that object like a miser is out for gold. To be able to cure ourselves of our various ailments, our whole nervous system needs to be at perfect rest and magnificently relaxed. Then, little by little, all the disturbances which have arisen in our body will disappear, for it is nerve tension that causes disturbances there. What tenses the nerves is selfish feelings; what relaxes them is altruistic feelings. Therefore, we must allow free entry to the impressions of divine grace, so that they may exert their influence on our sensory nervous system. This calls for a deal of willingness, of zeal and of eagerness in reforming everything selfish in us.

We must try to come before the Lord with a heart free of all resistance, like an obedient child goes to its father. When in trial, from a great danger threatening us, we could easily be frightened. We should not be, because fear is not divine, it comes from the devilish influence. Fear is due to lack of faith. So, we must get

rid of this feeling by doing what is needful for faith to crystallise in us as a character we have acquired.

The good impressions of the communion we can have with the Lord, rest us and grant us joy, appeasement of our hearts, and consolation. So, we must seek them with ardour in making efforts to obtain this communion, this sublime contact through faith. For this purpose, we need to be truly faithful and determined to fight.

Some men of God were, to some extent, faithful in their convictions, but in the face of danger, of martyrdom and of death, they took fright and denied their faith. This was what happened to Jerome of Prague. Fear of torture and death caused him to recant; however, when he came to himself and realized there was no way out, he pulled himself together and said: "I will remain faithful to the Lord..." Then, he bravely bore his torment.

Our dear Saviour bore the whole keenness of the pain inflicted on him with the torment of the Cross. The fact was that he had to pay the price of the redemption of men, as the Scriptures point out: "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth...bruise for bruise." The exact equivalent of everything had to be paid. In this way, he granted mankind the possibility of reforming their mentality to become viable in the Restoration of All Things. He firstly opened the Heavenly Calling in favour of those who want to associate with him in the salvation of mankind.

The reformation of our character is the essential thing, the thing which has to be the constant subject of our meditations. There must be no resistance in our hearts, and we must have faith and go to the Lord in accordance with the right principles and with our hearts in a proper condition. We also need prayer for thanking the Lord, for this is indispensable. If we do not thank Him, we cannot have joy, for joy is the outcome of gratitude. If we are grateful, we are also filled with enthusiasm.

We can address the Lord at all times and in all circumstances. If we have a task before us, we ask the Lord to lay his blessing on it. If we are in trouble, it is to Him again that we apply because we are sure of his assistance and that He will show us the way to get over it.

It is in prayer, offered up with faith and with sincerity in heart, that we shall succeed in carrying out the glorious divine programme and in obtaining a decisive victory over the power of the Adversary's spirit, which is constantly working us over. With prayer, it is possible to defend ourselves and to get the better of and to break that hold. I remember being suggestionized by the Devil, who would give rise to all sorts of desires in my heart. I asked the Lord for his grace, and the desire

The power of the true Gospel

MANKIND are exceedingly wretched, more so today than ever before. The conditions, both moral and physical, which prevail on Earth are deplorable. There are numberless people devoured by cruel anxiety over the future. The problem of their daily bread is constantly before them. There is another calamity hanging over their heads like the Sword of Damocles. This is sickness, an everlasting threat in all circles. Rich and poor alike are all vulnerable, no one escapes, and there is physical pain which, at times, is intolerable.

That is not all: there are terrible disappointments, heartbreak and mental pain beyond description, playing havoc in every class of society. How many, being unable to bear this fearful torment, commit suicide!

In the thick of that desperate situation, how wonderful it is to know the ineffable inten-

tions of the Almighty, what He purposes for mankind, and to be sure that the Kingdom of God is coming with its deliverance and blessing! What joy there is for those who — amidst this flood of trouble, of tears and of grief — are able to provide a ray of hope, the true consolation which does not deceive!

Our beloved evangelists who go forth to spread the splendid divine message, are able to achieve magnificent things in the course of their mission. For instance, one of these evangelists recently told us about the following experience:

One burning hot August day (summer in the Northern Hemisphere), I was evangelizing in a town. I had rung and knocked at many doors which had remained closed when, at last, a very kind-looking woman answered. She looked grieved and exceedingly worried. Her forehead was deeply puckered. I spoke a few kind and affectionate words as she stood there with the door ajar, whereupon she

opened it wide and said: "Do please come in. I feel God has something to disclose to me through you."

I immediately prayed to the Lord to give me what was needful to console this labouring soul. Then, she said: "I'm looking for some people who are improving and are able to set me a good example. I would so much like to change my character, and I need to be directed and to have some moral support, but I find none of this in my religion. I thought I had brought my sons up to be Christians, but now they are grown up, they have gone right off the track. This grieves me because I feel I am to blame, being unable to set them an example as I would wish. One of my sons is living with me, and I can't stand his wife's faults and failings, so everyday there are painful tiffs. Therefore, I feel there is nothing to live for, and I would like to die."

So, then I told her that I had come for the very purpose of inviting her to the School of

Christ, at which one can change one's character utterly, become a magnificent example and do a deal of good to those around one. To finish with, I showed her our publications, which she eagerly bought, in spite of not being very well off. However, she thoughtfully said: "If it's going to help me, I can't expect it not to cost me anything."

A few days later, this agreeable lady attended one of our meetings.

A little later, I paid her a visit. She said: "I've been very much pleased with everything I've read and heard about your principles. But, tell me, is it truly the only right way?" I answered: "Ask the Lord, He will enlighten you."

Sometime later, I met her again at a meeting. The expression of her face had utterly changed. She was absolutely radiant. She said: "I've had such a wonderful experience. The other morning, I was reading your *Paper for All*. As I read it, I recognized my

immediately vanished from my heart. My eyes were opened, and I was able to see that the Adversary had been working on me, and that prayer had saved me and freed me from the suggestion of the Devil.

Many people think they will never be able to get rid of certain habits that torment them and cause them a deal of mental suffering and much tribulation. We must never entertain such a thought, for we can get rid of lawless things, all of them; but, of course, we have to apply ourselves with great zeal and ardour. There are all sorts of passions which are the cause of the rapid dissipation of human life. This is the direct effect of the Adversary's suggestion, by which we have been entrapped, and which has set some harmful habits in us.

So, the question is to pull ourselves together and to fight against them with divine assistance, doing our best to head in the right direction, that of keeping the law of divine ways. Then, we can be carried away and rejoice in a far more superior way through having acquired generous, noble and amiable feelings that uplift our souls and lead us into spiritual pleasures that surpass, by a long way, everything to be found in the world.

Nothing that the world is able to provide us, is sound. All of it is hollow. There are only gratifications that do not last and lead to disappointment. One thinks one has obtained something, yet discovers one is empty-handed. The divine sentiments, on the contrary, provide us with inexpressible joy once they have taken root in our hearts.

That is the case with the affection cultivated in the Kingdom of God, with the lasting friendships founded on respect and esteem that we can enjoy together in the ineffable tenderness of divine love. That love leads us to love our fellow men. It helps us to forget self, to set ourselves completely aside and to always be in a position to give comfort, assistance and support. If they are our sentiments, we are able to overcome the greatest difficulties.

That is how we become free men who know what they want and do not permit themselves to be suggestionized any more by the Adversary, being firmly attached to divine principles. If someone is in trouble, we help him. If someone offends against us, we forgive and cover the offence because we live up to the wonderful principles of the law of altruism. As we faithfully go that way, a change takes place in our sentiments by degrees, and, at last, the former character disappears completely, leaving us free with the freedom and the glory of children of God. Then, we are able to offer prayers to the Lord, which are acceptable to Him, and which He is able to answer because they are presented properly, purely altruistically, with the sole aim of introducing the Kingdom of God on Earth. This was what our dear Saviour taught his disciples when he said: "When you pray, say: '... Your kingdom come.'"

Science and conscience

Science today has almost unlimited possibilities at its disposal. The question is, as the following article shows: "What can we know and what should we do?" The text is from the French newspaper *Ouest-France* on the 20th of November 2023, in the "Point of view" column and was written by Jacques Le Goff:

Science and ethics: a tense dialogue

We recently learned that an Israeli team has succeeded in producing — in vitro [in "test-tube experiments"] and from embryonic stem cells — a synthetic embryo that perfectly imitates a real embryo. The aim is to facilitate research into certain diseases of genetic origin. But what would happen if a mad scientist decided to

implant it into a uterus and risk producing a monster?

If the prospect is improbable due to the nonviability of the research object, there is nevertheless cause for concern. All the more so when we simultaneously learn that Chinese animal-cloning experts have just developed a macaque [a species of monkey] with a partially humanized brain. If this kind of experimentation is banned in Western countries, what will happen if it develops elsewhere at the risk of creating chimeras [mythical mixed-body-part or hybrid creatures] that are no less frightening?

Furthermore, in the field of artificial intelligence (AI), we are now wondering whether we can go as far as producing a machine that has self-awareness and is therefore capable of thinking, which would also pose an existential threat to the human race.

Current events confirm the crucial importance of regulating scientific activity through ethics in a tense dialogue between two very distinct lines of questioning: What can I know? What should I do?

The answer to the first question opens up a virtually unlimited horizon for science and the technology that implements it. That is why the Hungarian physicist Dennis Gabor said: "Anything that is technically feasible must be achieved, whether this achievement is judged morally good or reprehensible." With the risk of madness mentioned by the French physicist Paul Langevin: "Experience shows us that a man with excessive power becomes unbalanced: scientists would be no exception and would almost become madmen," Fausts and Frankensteins [both fictional scholars] blinded by scientific intoxication.

"Together, we are smarter"

Hence the importance for scientists to observe themselves in order to consider the second question: "What should I do?" The same question that led Robert Oppenheimer, among others, not to repeat — when he was invited, in 1946, to join the hydrogen-bomb [H-Bomb] project — what he said about the atomic bomb [A-bomb]?: "When you see something that is technically sweet, you go ahead and do it and you argue about what to do about it only after you have had your technical success. That is the way it was with the atomic bomb." Which led to him being banned...

That is proof, if it were necessary, that the ethical exercise is, by its very nature, a risk-taking exercise, almost always in the midst of uncertainty, and often in the vagueness of the law that is supposed to govern the action. Hence the importance of collegiality in order to clarify the choice and to make the right or the least-wrong decision. As the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty said: "Together, we are smarter."

That is the justification for the ethics committees in hospitals and the National Ethics Advisory Committee [in France], whose opinions are so valuable in the field of bioethics and biotechnology.

It is also the reason for the existence of international movements of scientists, such as the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995, and the [French] Universal Movement for Scientific Responsibility [M.U.R.S.], which implements the reflective and critical capacities of men and women in science in order to exercise their responsibility in all fields of expertise and to prove wrong the German philosopher Martin Heidegger's assertion that "science does not think". Science might not, but what about scientists?

Learning in order to know is a temptation. How can we resist it in a society that values skills and also provides the means to develop them? Scientific research requires money, lots of money. So, we sometimes play the Sorcerer's Apprentice, but as Jacques Le Goff rightly says, we have to ask ourselves questions and know when to stop if what we are doing is not beneficial to the community.

In the above case, curiosity is a bad adviser. However, curiosity is often what motivates our scientists. How many discoveries have thus ended in disaster? One of the best known is the atomic bomb.

"Woe is me," are the words that Einstein is said to have uttered when he realized that his research had led to the creation of the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. However, even though the atomic bomb was designed thanks to his work, the German scientist never worked directly on the project. Julius Robert Oppenheimer, on the other hand, was directly involved. This highly talented physicist was the scientific director of the Manhattan Project. During the Second World War, he and his team concentrated on making a bomb that could end the conflict. For two years, they developed this new weapon. On the 16th of July 1945, the first atomic bomb, called Gadget, exploded in a test called Trinity. After seeing what his invention could do, Robert Oppenheimer realized what it really was and regretted having given humanity such a weapon.

That experience and many others, should make us seriously think and, above all, show us that we are not masters of what we create. Once made, a discovery can fall into the ill-intentioned hands of unscrupulous people, and produce a real disaster. The means and knowledge that we currently possess greatly increase the probability of such misfortunes.

How wise it would be to turn our eyes to the One from Whom help comes: the Lord God! He wants the best for us. He demonstrated this by sending his beloved Son to Earth to pay our Ransom. The Lord will never let us down. He is the most faithful Friend we can count on. He has prepared a radiant future for humanity by restoring all things to perfection, as was the case when the Earth and humankind were created. In the near future, the Kingdom of God will be established on ruins of the "present evil world". Those in the graves will come back to life at the voice of the Son of God, who conquered death by his Sacrifice. No more harm or damage will be done anywhere on Earth, where peace will reign for eternity.

How do we address God?

How do we address God, and what gender should we attribute to Him? This is the subject that the Protestant Church of Geneva and the University of Geneva, are jointly working on. The Swiss French-language newspaper *Tribune de Genève*, in its 4th of October 2023 edition, published an interview, with questions asked by the reporter Lucas Vuilleumier, and which we fully reproduce:

Should God be "demasculinized"?

The Protestant Church of Geneva and the University of Geneva, are organizing a study day to discuss the way that we should call God.

Should our representations of God be demasculinized? This project — by the Society of Pastors and Deacons, the theological authority of the Protestant Church of Geneva — has shocked people beyond the Protestant community. This consideration, which was revealed by the media company Protestinfo in 2022, will be publicly relaunched on Thursday the 5th of October [2023], thanks to a study day, called "What words to call God", in partnership with the University of Geneva.

This an opportunity to listen to researchers and pastors who take a critical look at the question of the gender of God, and to open a dialogue between those who are scandalized by the idea that God could be "Our Mother", and those who are disturbed by the idea of a uniquely masculine God. These are explanations by Laurence Mottier, the moderator of the society.

The Protestant Church of Geneva and the University of Geneva, are organizing a study day on "What words

exact portrait. I realized that it was my own character that was making me so unhappy, and not those around me. But I also made out, from that paper, how to get out of that situation. Then, my heart was flooded with a peace such as I had never in my life had before. I seemed to hear someone saying: 'Keep going, you're on the right road.' Now I'm convinced of it. Can't I talk about it to other people? There are so many suffering as I suffered. That would be the only way to show my gratitude for the happiness that has come into my heart."

From then on, this lady made astonishing progress. She exerted herself to be amiable towards her daughter-in-law, and so their relations became much more affectionate and went on improving until the day when she was able to say: "Now, I love my daughter-in-law as much as if she were my own child. I owe this to our dear Saviour's wonderful school. Formerly, I used to cry every day.

Since you first came to see me, I have not shed a single tear of grief, but only tears of joy. Sunshine has come into my heart. You have brought me what I had been looking for for 20 years."

Today, that dear friend, who has become a true sister in faith, is glad to busy herself with visiting subscribers to our publications in an area of town, and she does it with a great deal of happiness. So, in turn, she is able to give back joy to many a heart after having herself received the consolation of the Kingdom of God.

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Another evangelist also told us about one of his experiences:

It was a glorious morning, the countryside was magnificent, a real picture to rejoice the eyes. I was going along a pretty path, running along the edge of a wood. Suddenly, lower down, I caught sight of some red roofs peeping out of an immense nest of verdure.

I thought to myself that in such a beautiful site, the people must be well disposed towards the Kingdom of God.

I knocked at the first door I came to. A woman of advanced age answered. She appeared to be in a very bad temper. I had hardly shown her *The Monitor*... when she made as if to throw a shovel that was close to my legs. She thrust me away and slammed the door with great violence. However, I had time to kindly say: "Madam, I realize that you are in a great hurry, please excuse me. I shall pray that your house is blessed."

Truth to tell, I felt she was unhappy, and I would have liked to be able to communicate some of my own happiness to her heart. As I was leaving the property, I jammed a *Monitor*... in the handle of the barn door.

Some weeks later, I was passing again that way to see the people who had shown some interest in *The Monitor*..., and I thought about that old lady who had been so greatly agi-

tated. I thought that perhaps this time I might be able to do her some good. The moment she saw me, her face lit up, and she stepped forward with eagerness, saying: "My dear sir, do come in. What a pleasure it is to see you again! I must ask you to forgive me for having been so rude to you last time you called. Sit down, and I will tell you all about it. The moment you went away, I felt such remorse over having been so wicked. Fortunately, as I went out, I caught sight of your *Monitor*... stuck in the handle of the barn door. I read the title of the first article: 'How to overcome trouble, agitation and adversity.' The thought passed through my mind: 'This is the very thing for me,' and I started reading it on the spot, in spite of being so busy. How restful it was for my heart, you'd never imagine! And how good it was! I read the paper right through, from beginning to end, and then set to work again. The work seemed to melt in my hands, and I felt I was going about it with wings.

to call God", focusing particularly on the question of "God, our Father or Mother". Why continue this consideration?

This consideration is part of our ongoing search for the most appropriate words to speak about God today. Our idea is that the Gospel is a living word in dialogue with our times. Considering the question of God, and the names attributed to Him, are part of the quest to give meaning to our Christian heritage and to our faith in Christ.

Initiated at the end of 2021 by the Society of Pastors and Deacons, where does this consideration stand today?

After the controversy at the beginning of 2022, the working group that deals with the question within the society, took time to consider how to best continue its consideration. It was at this point that we called on the Faculty of Theology [at the University of Geneva], in order to take the consideration forward. The aim of this study day is to provide a space for debate and common questioning, where researchers will take a critical look at the theme of gender and language. It is open to everyone, Protestant or not.

Why do you think this debate is so important?

The question of God, which is no longer self-evident in our society, suffers from a rather fixed view.

Among a certain group of people, not only the younger generation, there is a strong need to form a more vital link with the Divine, which involves questions of gender. I see a need to be able to express, from the human experience, a different way of experiencing transcendence, for which traditional language has become an obstacle. This study day, organized with the University of Geneva, will be an opportunity to cultivate this quest for diversity.

What do you think about the controversy that has developed?

I undersand it as a tension that is linked to intergenerational issues.

Not everyone lives their faith in the same way, and it turns out that not only referring to God in masculine terms is a real issue for some people today. Why isn't this understood? This is what has really struck me about this controversy: the lack of dialogue.

Have you spoken with people who are reluctant?

Yes, I have understood that for these people, the link with God, and the time of worship, are a place of security and identity.

I am therefore very attentive to this and to the right of these Protestants to feel disturbed by this consideration. To question the representations of God, is not an obligation, nothing is imposed.

But the fact that some people want to start this debate must also be heard. So, I try to advocate tolerance. It is not a matter of rejecting each other because a subject is disturbing. On one side or the other.

Isn't this a minority need among the Protestants?

It's hard to judge. But the working group thinks that it's worth looking into the subject. I'm also grateful to the Faculty of Theology for offering its expertise in this area.

The new president of the Protestant Church of Geneva has explained that no decision on this issue is on the agenda. Is there a power struggle between the society and your church, on this issue?

Not at all. The authorities of the Protestant Church of Geneva recognize that the society has the freedom to open up theological fields and to debate them. But in this respect, we are a source of proposals. Furthermore, our working group does not currently have any institutional aims, but would like to encourage a calm, serene and lively discussion. When the time comes, it will be up to the consistory (the governing board) to decide.

Aren't you afraid of starting a controversy?

On the contrary, our ambition is to open up a high-quality dialogue through biblical, historical and theological insights. We can't move forward, as a church, by sweeping certain issues under the carpet.

Isn't it problematic that all participants seem rather committed to your cause?

That's not the case. They're academics and researchers, not activists or militants. The academic world is neutral. The aim of this day is to critically question the ways in which God has been named in history and in the contemporary world, and to establish a constructive dialogue with points of view from each speaker. We will therefore not offer an exhaustive or dogmatic answer. The Faculty of Theology is not there for that.

It's a strange question to ask about the gender of God! Especially from Christians who are supposed to have faith and are therefore already in a relationship with God.

Under the law of Moses, the people of Israel were commanded: "You shall not make for yourself an idol or an image of anything that is in the heaven above, on the earth below or in the water beneath. You shall not bow down to them or serve them" (Exodus 20: 4 and 5). That should accustom us to consider Him as a Spirit, and to address Him mentally, without any physical representation of his physical Person. Moreover, our dear Saviour said to the Samaritan woman whom he met at Jacob's Well, in Sychar: "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4: 24). This statement is clear: God is Spirit, so there is no question of debating the gender to attribute to Him, since a spirit is neither masculine nor feminine.

Our dear Saviour addressed God in prayer as "Father". This is only a term to enable us to address the Lord by means of human language, which is imperfect, but not to attribute a gender to God.

We also find in Psalm 2: 7 this affirmation of the Logos: "The LORD said to me: 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you.'" This statement makes us understand that we can call God "our Father" and that He is in no way "our Mother". In fact, it is the father who begets, and it is the mother who gives birth.

They are different expressions, and many others are available to us in the Bible, in order to help us adopt the appropriate language to address God. But above all, we must keep in mind that the Lord is in Heaven, and that we are on Earth. That He is God, and we are sinners. The relationship that we can have with God is only possible through our dear Saviour, who paid for us by giving his life in order to redeem us from the condemnation of sin.

The Lord is therefore our Father only through faith in Jesus Christ. It is only through his precious merits that we can approach God, and as long as we are sinners, it is impossible for us to directly address the Lord. It is important that these fundamental truths are continually present in our minds. And if we want to honour and glorify God, we must also glorify his beloved Son, our dear Saviour, according to the will of his Father.

Furthermore, it is up to us to raise ourselves to God and not try to lower God to our level. When we want to pray to the Lord, it is essential to be aware of the Personality Whom we are addressing. It is only through his humility that we can consider obtaining an audience with God. Because the Lord is the greatest Authority in the Universe. All celestial beings serve and worship Him constantly. Only human beings on Earth, and the fallen angels who followed Lucifer in his fall, are separated from God.

Apostle John tells us: "Love comes from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 John 4: 7). We see that the connection with God is a matter of feelings (sentiments). In fact, "God

is love" (1 John 4: 16), and it is the feelings that we cultivate that bring us closer to Him or separate us from Him. It is also our feelings that determine our personality and therefore our destiny. In reality, the Lord, Who is also the Almighty, does not force anyone. It is we who must absolutely want to be in harmony with Him and to honour and glorify Him through our conduct and everything that emanates from us. In truth, the Lord does not need us, but we are fully dependent on Him if we want to live.

We look forward to the coming time when all people will know God, as the Prophet Jeremiah said: "'After those days,' says the LORD, 'I will put my law in their minds and write it in hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. They shall no longer teach their neighbour or relative: "Know the LORD," for they shall all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them,' says the LORD, 'for I shall forgive their wickedness and shall no longer remember their sins'" (Jeremiah 31: 33 and 34), and as the Prophet Habakkuk said: "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, like the water covers the sea" (Habakkuk 2: 14). These prospects fill our hearts with joy.

The sacrifice of the gazelle

Under that title, we read the following moving story, written by Mrs H.V. from Soulac (in France), in the European publication *Confidences*:

Before I begin, I'd like to make it clear that this is a true story, which took place overseas several years ago.

My husband, a bachelor at the time, was hunting with a friend. After driving for a long time through the African bush, they thought that they were going home empty-handed, when they spotted three gazelles lying under a tree.

Hearing the car coming, the gazelles all stood up together. Worried and nervous, they made a few disorderly leaps and two or three prodigious jumps, before fleeing at extraordinary speed. The hunters did not hesitate to follow.

The gazelles sped off, seemingly flying over the bushes, while the car followed as best as it could. The terrain was hardly conducive to such a pursuit. There were countless holes and bumps, treacherous stumps, termite mounds as hard as cement, and tree trunks cut to knee height, mostly hidden by grass, which were all obstacles for the hunters who narrowly avoided them at the risk of breaking their necks, because there was no question of them slowing down.

And always, far ahead of them, the gazelles were fleeing at more than 100 km/h, sometimes making sudden turns, without slowing down their pace.

They always kept the same order: the father in the front, the little one in the middle, and the mother behind. Therefore, the young gazelle was forced to run as fast as its parents that were heading for a wooded area, where they were sure that they would no longer be pursued.

But, having found less uneven ground, the car gained ground, getting closer to the unfortunate animals. The gazelles noticed this and understood that this wild chase could not last much longer, especially as the young one was showing clear signs of exhaustion.

It was at this point that the male made a heroic decision: he stopped abruptly and faced the hunters, voluntarily sacrificing himself to save his female and his fawn, which continued to run and disappeared behind the dense bushes.

Although my husband was surprised by this rapid about-face, he immediately guessed what the brave animal's manoeuvre meant. He stopped the car and only had time to lower the barrel of his friend's gun, who had not understood the nobility of this sacrifice, and was ready to shoot.

When my husband came home, he found me in this happy mood. I spoke to him with kindness, a thing I had not done for a long time. He was so surprised that he said: 'How nice you are today! If you were always like this, how wonderful it would be, with all the worry and the grief we've got! We could console each other for all the adversity we are going through. Look at it now, what a terrible storm we're having! It drove me indoors. Any minute, I'm expecting the house to be struck by lightning.'

Then, I answered: 'No, no, Edward. You needn't be afraid, there's nothing to fear. A man called by this morning. He said he would pray for us, so that our house may be blessed. So, you understand, our house is blessed, and we're in no danger! He left such a splendid paper with me. I read it right through, and it's put some lovely and magnificent things in my heart: I can't tell you how wonderful!'

'So, I perceive,' my husband answered, 'it's why you're so amiable. If only this state of things could last. I say, Milicent, you won't scold me anymore, will you? You won't fly into a temper anymore, so that we can be as happy as we used to be?'

Then, I promised him I'd do everything *The Monitor*... teaches, that I'd do my best to become kind and affectionate. My husband wept for joy, like a little boy, and said: 'If you could manage that, this would be the most wonderful day in my life, and for our little Jimmy as well. I'll go and fetch him, he must be jolly frightened of this storm.'

Jimmy, our grandson, was in the fields, minding the cows. My husband must have told him something about it on the way back, for when he came in, he flung his arms around my neck, saying: 'Oh granny, is it true that you're not going to scold anymore and not get into a temper? Oh granny, how happy we're going to be together!'

The old lady went on: "Oh dear, I can assure you, I've had no end of a struggle. I've had many a slip up, but never stopped fighting. And things have improved so much that peace has come into our home, and joy too, in spite of all the trouble we're having with our two sons who have forsaken us with all the work and little Jimmy. But we are happy once more, my husband and I, just like we used to be. He's also taking great pains to please me. And Jimmy is so pleased to have peace at home! He's a different boy. Please, I would like to subscribe to your paper. We absolutely must have it, to feed our hearts on those splendid teachings, so that we can keep hold of what we've received.

I can't thank you enough for having come and for having been so kind to me! God bless you and your Work, and bring you back to us, from time to time, as a messenger from Heaven!"

★

Another evangelist, a young lady, related the following:

Evening had come, and I was pedalling with all my might to get back to my little room before dark. There were a lot of ups and down ahead of me. I came to one very steep hill and had to get off and push my bike. I gradually overtook a very young girl also pushing hers. She turned her head, and our eyes met. I smiled at her affectionately, and she smiled back at me. I spoke kindly to her with all the affection I felt for her, for she appeared to me to be very sad. She felt my sympathy and started telling me about her immense trouble. She said: "I am working in the town of X, and I come home every evening to give my mother a helping hand. She's all alone now with my six little brothers and sisters." With these words, her lips began to tremble. She drew closer to me, her eyes filled up with tears of grief. "My daddy killed himself the other day. He would often get drunk.

The male was there, in front of them, quivering, short of breath, chest out, and head held high. He had an attitude of defiance, and yet his large clear eyes stared at the hunters with fear.

A few minutes passed in silence. Then, no doubt realizing that he was being shown mercy, the male took a step forward and, reassured by the motionlessness of the men, quietly left to join those he loved more than himself.

Such an attitude, full of limitless devotion and nobility, moves us deeply. It is an infinitely touching image of the selfless love that animals can show their young.

What a contrast with the situation of the two hunters who, with their guns drawn, would not have hesitated to shoot such harmless animals! Fortunately, one of them was later moved, and they did not fire their rifles at such a noble animal, more noble than them!

We rejoice that the time is approaching when the blessed fruits of the Ransom, paid by Christ, will visibly manifest themselves on Earth. Then, all humankind will then be able to regain their dignity as the royalty of the world. The practice of hunting will disappear forever from regenerated humanity, who will happily lavish their kindness and tenderness on the animal kingdom around them.

Let us therefore seek, through our nobility and selflessness, to hasten that wonderful time of the Restoration of All Things.

Helping nature

The French newspaper *Ouest-France*, on the 5th of September 2023, reports on a phenomenon that is certainly not new, but which is taking on worrying proportions: the invasion of the natural environment by exotic animal or plant species.

Invasive species are proliferating around the world. A global report lists 37,000 exotic species, of which 3,500 are extremely invasive. The cost of controlling them has soared since 1970. Furthermore, 200 new species appear every year.

What are we talking about?

"At least 218 invasive exotic species have been responsible for more than 1,200 local extinctions," explains a report published yesterday by the experts from the IPBES, the biodiversity equivalent of the IPCC for the

climate. However, not all species that settle in an environment that was not theirs, become invasive. Scientists estimate that of the 37,000 exotic species, 3,500 have harmful effects on local biodiversity, including humankind.

Where do they come from?

Most were introduced by humans for the benefits they provide: pretty plants, such as the Japanese knotweed in gardens; fleshier animals, such as the Pacific oyster; and more colourful animals, such as the red-eared slider [a US turtle]. Then, there are all the species that use the world's trade routes, such as mosquitoes, boring snails and gluttonous earthworms. Every year, 200 new exotic species are listed.

Who is the most affected?

The Americas. But the whole world is affected, "including Antarctica", writes the Chilean ecologist Anibal Pauchard, one of the main authors of this report. As far as natural environments are concerned, it is the forests and islands, fragile and enclosed areas, that are suffering the most. And it is not going to get any easier: "Trade and intercontinental travel" are increasing, points out the UK's Helen Roy. We can expect a 36% increase in invasive species between now and 2050, compared to 2005.

What are the governments doing?

They spend around 400 billion euros [437 billion US dollars] per year on eradication campaigns or monitoring new diseases. Costs have quadrupled every decade since 1970. But overall, countries are not investing enough, at the risk of contaminating their neighbours and in defiance of the commitments made at the [United Nations Biodiversity Conference] 2022 Montreal summit (COP 15).

What are the solutions?

"Prevention is the best option," says Chile's Anibal Pauchard. "Eradication, containment and control are also effective in specific contexts." In Asia, more biosecurity controls at borders have limited the spread of the brown marmorated stink bug [Halyomorpha halys]. In India, a fungus from Peru, called *Puccinia spegazzinii*, has been introduced to combat an invasive weed called *Mikania micrantha*. This biological control has been effective in more than 60% of cases.

There are 37,000 exotic species, including 3,500 classified as extremely invasive; at least 218 invasive species are responsible for more than 1,200 local extinctions; and 200 new invasive species appear every year. There is cause for concern, especially since the cost of controlling these parasitic plants and animals, has quadrupled 5 times since 1970, and now stands at 437 billion US dollars, which is not enough to solve this major problem.

How could things get this far? The main cause can be attributed to the increasingly faster and more reliable means of travel. Plants and animals have been deliberately and sometimes unwittingly brought from distant countries, to where they have now acclimatized, settled, multiplied and eventually supplanted local species. This is something that would never have been possible if we consider, for example, the natural barrier created by the oceans, which would never have been crossed without the means of transport.

The original distribution of the various plants and animals in all parts of the globe, had been established by the Creator, so that the plant and animal kingdoms could develop harmoniously and without damage, under the care of humankind, who were to be the royalty of earthly creation. There was a balance among the various species, but this balance has been broken. The result is the troubles that we are experiencing today, troubles that cannot be eradicated without considering a complete change in the current system of things.

That change has already been planned by God and is called the Restoration of All Things. It was first mentioned by Apostle Peter in his Pentecost speech (Acts 3: 21), when 3,000 people were baptized. This Restoration began with the publication of *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance), which enables the establishment of the New Earth, where righteousness (justice) dwells (2 Peter 3: 13). It is the Sacrifice of our dear Saviour and of his faithful disciples, which makes possible this great return of humankind to perfection, which was their destiny that was lost in Eden through the Fall into sin.

We rejoice to see God's plan progressing, but there is still more to do. The Lord gives an opportunity to all who wish to collaborate on the reconciliation of humankind with God. In this Work, there are only collaborators, and no one should remain inactive. Everyone is invited to make their contribution to this marvellous programme that will finally bring peace on Earth, for all eternity.

That night, he beat my mother, and she had to run away, taking us with her. When we came home a few hours later, we found a terrible disaster. No more daddy, and no more money. He had burnt everything and then committed suicide..." After a while, the young girl said: "I loved my daddy very much."

I was deeply moved and gently laid my hand on her shoulder, saying: "Don't cry anymore! The Lord will comfort you. He is the Father of all orphans, and what a wonderful Father! He arranged that we should meet, so that you might pour out your grief to me, and so that you might receive his consolation. Now, take me to your mother."

In a little while, I was sitting with that family, so sorely tried. It made me immensely happy to be able to give these grieving hearts the consolation of the Kingdom of God! The children nestled up to me as if they felt a protective influence in me. The good mother listened eagerly to me. How glad I was to be able to make the true God known to her, the God of widows and orphans, to tell her about divine forgiveness, which includes and reaches all people, about the Resurrection and about the coming of the Kingdom of God, which effaces everything, levels everything and makes it possible for us to recover all we have lost, and in splendid conditions in which happiness is quite unmixed! The young girl also was all ears. She was only 16, but was going to work to bring home all her wages, so that the small family might be fed.

I left *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance) with the mother, and she promised to read it at once.

It was late at night when I left that dear mother. My heart beat for very gladness at having been able to comfort those grieving hearts and to light there the flame of hope in God's blessing.

Now, *The Monitor*... goes there regularly, bringing its ray of sunshine, of affection and of joy to the dear mother and her children. They are really sure of God's protection, they do not feel they are alone. They commit their lives to the Almighty, trusting in the future and convinced that the Kingdom of God is coming with its wonderful and everlasting joys. They know that, through the Resurrec-

tion, they will receive again the father they lost in such tragic circumstances, and that, in the course of the Restoration of All Things, they will all together enjoy happiness that will never again be spoilt by anything at all, thanks to our dear Saviour's Ransom.

News in brief of the Reign of Justice

We have the great favour of starting a New Year, and we want to be grateful to the Lord God for his infinite patience towards us.

We still have to deplore many shortcomings and delays in sanctification, and so we want to humbly ask our kind heavenly Father for the cover of the precious merits of his beloved Son, and to exert ourselves to live our vow of sacrifice or of the law, with much greater faithfulness than in the past.

Time is short, and humanity is waiting for deliverance. This should spur us on to become more faithful, which is what we want to strive to achieve.

On the 31st of January, we will have the joy of gathering to celebrate, as we do every year, the anniversary of the end of the race of the Faithful and Wise Servant of God. Here, we present a few excerpts from an exposé he gave in his time, which we will read out in Cartigny, and which retraces the exceptional career and faithfulness of the Lord's Messenger:

"By their habits, humankind are chained to the darkness. To free themselves from it, they must live God's ways. Therefore, someone must show them the way. This is how, in all times, the Lord has sent a leader or messenger, to lead those who wish to be directed towards the light. ...

Then, during the High Calling, in each period of the Church, the Almighty sent an angel, or messenger, to lead God's people. ...

In the last period of the Church, there was a very special task to fulfil. This is why, in Matthew 24: 45, the Lord asks the question: 'Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his master has put in charge of his household...?' It was a question of bringing the message of consecration, in order to come out of the lukewarmness of Laodicea.

Then, *The Divine Revelation* appeared, in which the conditions for becoming a member of the Little Flock, were highlighted in such an understandable way that it was no longer possible to be mistaken. This sorted Laodicea out. The 'wise virgins' followed suit and bought the 'eye salve'. There were very clear corrections and profound instructions about the ministry to be carried out in order to form the 'tabernacle of God' among humankind, in this time that corresponds to the end of the nations, and to the introduction of God's Kingdom.

As a logical consequence of *The Divine Revelation*, *The Message to Humanity* appeared. The Lord has all things in hand, and leads his people, bringing them out of Babylon and leading them to a safe place. ...

With the knowledge of the Universal Law, we understand that our body is a living Bible. It reveals, to us, that every organ works for the good of the whole. By following this guidance, we see the Morning Star shine, and feel the invigorating rays of 'the sun of righteousness'. ...

The Faithful and Wise Servant, on behalf of his Master, has given a clear and precise explanation of what the Lord's Second Coming is, and the understanding of the entire mystery. To understand, we must watch and pray. ...

Of course, faithfulness must be fully lived to have that confidence. I practised it, and I thought: 'Divine ordinances are right, it's you who are wrong. So, seek to live them honestly.' I tried, and I saw that everything worked wonderfully. This was how the Mystery of Godliness opened up for me. ...

In my search, I read the writings of Pastor Russell. At one point in time, he timidly tried to introduce the idea that the Little Flock should do a work of reconciliation. But those who followed him did not want to know anything about it. So, he was afraid and changed his mind in order to keep the people who were not disciples of Christ, since they did not even live renouncement of self.

It's one or the other: we either renounce everything we once loved, everything that the Devil has sown in our hearts. We put it all aside without restriction, and the mystery

opens up for us. Or, we don't renounce, or half-heartedly, and we cannot fathom the mystery.

Reconciliation is the essential part of the ministry of a member of the Little Flock. This is precisely what the Faithful and Wise Servant pointed out. After this profound revelation, the Lord gave his Servant the wonderful revelation of the holy Host of the Lord. The mystery of the Host, the first fruits of the New Earth, was revealed, and the Host has risen. Thus, the mystery of the New Heaven and the New Earth, has been opened up. The Mystery of Godliness has also exposed the Mystery of Iniquity, and the refuge of falsehood has been flooded with truth.

They are therefore marvellous revelations that have been brought to God's people. And yet, all that we have mentioned is only a spiritual appetizer. The main course is much grander and is mentioned in Job, where it says that the 'one among a thousand' shall come to show humankind the way they should go, to not go 'down to the pit'. This is the main thing, and it is the Faithful and Wise Servant who has come to open up this mystery. ...

Laodicea said: 'I am rich. I have become wealthy and don't need anything,' but the Lord responded: 'You do not know that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.'

At that time, I wrote that to the main office of the Bible Students in New York. They responded by sending a bailiff! We forgave them, and we did our duty and gave our testimony. We could not do otherwise. ...

They are the sentiments that we must acquire because they correspond to the heart condition of those who will be the Revealing of the Sons of God, to unhappy humanity. Thus, we will have honoured the Lord God, his beloved Son and also the angel whom the Master sent before us to protect us along the way."

We wish our dear brothers and sisters, and our dear readers, a Happy New Year by divine grace.

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