

THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

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Wonderful possibilities of safety

IF there is any Bible text that is well known and quite frequently quoted, it is this one: "All things work together for the good of those who love God." Religious people try to convince themselves of it, particularly when they are in great trouble and feel unhappy, even desperate at times when faced with severe trials. On the other hand, they are also held by the contrary thought which comes in between, insinuating that what is happening to them is not for their good. They are often to be compared to a timorous man in a dark wood trying to sing and to whistle to convince himself that he is not afraid.

Of course, people want very much to make all things work together for their good, as far as they can. However, being selfish, they cannot do this, because the foundation they adopt for all their projects is wrong.

The first cause of all the mishaps men encounter and of all the miscarriages of their plans, is that they are not about the essential things, which would be to seek God and his ways. If they would learn to know God, everything would be cleared up for them automatically. Every question mark would find an answer, for the simple reason that they would love the Almighty.

The fact is that it is impossible to know God, and not to love Him. And when you really do love Him, all things must perforce work together for your good. So that everything that tends to teach us to love God is a very great blessing. It sets our course towards happiness and felicity. The more we love God, the happier we are for possessing an ever-increasing capacity for receiving the manifestations of his love.

The Almighty forces Himself on no one. He gives all his creatures a free choice. Mankind are unable to see things properly as they are, for they have been led into error by Satan, whom the Scriptures call the "god of this world". That is why, with great kindness, God permits them to have experiences which make them wise. As long as one does not know God, one is incapable of realising that every experience, even the most painful, and every vicissitude that overtake one, work together, in spite of everything, for one's good. This is because the mentality of man is completely warped. Therefore, it needs to be trued up, and all the trouble that overtakes him consists of educational lessons simply designed for this purpose.

Mankind are in urgent need of learning what good is, that is to say, what procures them life in an atmosphere

of peace and of contentment and capable of going on always. Good is made of harmony, and harmony always imparts a feeling of well-being and of blessing. For this reason, a good musician always works for purity of tone. A wrong note hurts his ear because his sense of harmony and purity in this domain is offended.

It is the same for speech. There are rules which must be kept to. Speech built up of properly coordinated sentences is harmonious, this is incontestable. However, just as it is not everyone who has a gift for music, neither has everyone the gift of speaking well. Nevertheless, when the spirit that guides the one who speaks is the right one, any lack of skill he may have in grouping his words can be compensated for, and also when the witness he bears to the Truth comes from a heart that is enthusiastic over the Lord and his ways. The first and foremost thing then is that God's Holy Spirit should be the mainspring of our speech, and then, the message we bear touches all hearts and carries blessing. In such circumstances, what defects there are in our speech will not offend. The grandeur and the power of the message surpass all things. That was why, of old, the prophet said: "With stammering lips and a foreign tongue, God will speak to this people".

Why does the Lord employ stammering lips? For the simple reason that those who can speak well will not lend themselves to that ministry, which costs, the one who takes it on, frequent scorn, ill-usage and even persecution. Those who can speak well are in many cases enamoured of themselves, so that the Lord is unable to make use of them because they do not put Him first in their hearts, and this makes their spirituality very poor. In academic discourses, and others of a like nature, many empty phrases are to be found. People who are erudite or so-called, abound in suppositions. Their discourses abound in question marks which remain unanswered because they are satisfied with their own science instead of seeking the only true one, the Almighty's, Who promises us that, through his Son, He will guide us into all Truth. In all those scientific discourses, there is nothing to feed the hearts of those who thirst for consolation and for certainties.

In effect, mankind needs something to lean on. They have no use at all for conjectures. So, they must learn to know God, his kindness, his wisdom and his omnipotence. However, to receive instruction in divine ways, one has to give up self-interest, putting business

first in one's heart, or money, earthly glory or a title of honour. One has to want to serve God. It is into well-disposed hearts that the message is able to penetrate. Such hearts can learn to know God and his divine programme and to set about living up to that programme. Then, that saying: "All things work together for the good of those who love God," becomes invested with full value and full power for their benefit.

As a matter of fact, to them, those words cease to be no more than a teaching, they also become a result that has been obtained through a line of conduct that has been followed out in practice, for the saying does not stop at "All things work together for the good", but there is also the part which says "of those who love God". So that all things may work together for one's good, therefore, one must love God. Now, you cannot love one whom you do not know. So, to love God, you have to know Him, and to get to know Him, there are certain things you have to do. You have to seek to become upright and honest in heart. You have to seek to acquire the divine virtues. That is the way to learn to know and to love God.

Man possesses everything to arrive at loving God with all his heart and with all his understanding. He also has within himself everything required for not loving Him, that is everything the Adversary has deposited in the hearts of men to engender aversion to the Almighty. Satan has done everything possible to achieve this. He has plunged them into selfishness, which makes them incapable of loving. He has saturated their hearts with pride and wickedness, thus making it impossible for them to obtain that "all things" should work together for their good, for, being selfish, they cannot love God.

It is therefore indispensable for mankind to go through a quite new education for the purpose of making them altruistic. It is their selfishness that reduces them to being corpses after a few years' existence on Earth. One who shapes his character according to the divine intentions, receives the possibility of going on living. In this way, all things have worked together for his good, for the result is the elimination of everything that leads to the grave.

The Universal Law, which governs all things in nature, is established so that all things should exist for one another's good. Things that do not exist for the good, cannot subsist.

It is the same for mankind. To have a right to lasting life, they absolutely must live for the good of their fellow men. That is what is not taught at all in the various religions. In universities and high schools, they seek everywhere but the right place for an understanding of

Fanny

ALL through the winter Fanny would be looking forward to the spring. After those long months of struggle with the rising snow, the paralysing ice, the cutting blizzards, the prospect of renewal would awaken a very special joy of living in her heart.

Fanny would have a feeling of spring in the air long before, when dawn began to show a little brighter, and when the sun, ever higher in the heavens, would sink ever a little later behind the mountains. With a soft plunk lumps of melting snow would fall, and the tall fir trees, with sudden relief from its weight would gently raise their branches. The twittering of the tits would come in turn to break the silence of the forest, and the squirrel, blinking its eyes in the sunshine, sniffed into the breeze coming from the south, to catch the scent of the new season. The big break-up of winter was on the way.

A thousand rills trickled in the streets from the ramparts of high-piled dirty-white snow, offering the children a further opportunity to paddle along to their hearts' delight. Their improvised dams were crumbling amidst shouts of joy, giving way to the pressure of these small torrents.

To eight-year-old legs, even stout ones, it was hard going, through this mixture of snow, of ice and of water. Fanny, like the tortoise, hastened slowly.

The principal village was situated in a large bowl and thrust a few branches up the hill sides. The wide prairies joined the forest, and peaceful mountains brooded over the whole. Fanny, starting up the slope, caught sight, higher up, of the farm where her family had their home.

Coming home from school she had found her mother in despair: "Fanny, be a good girl and run to fetch the Pastor, your baby sister is going to die and we've got to christen her;

while you are about it, go as far as the factory and tell your father."

Now she has been on the road for two hours and has not had time to get her breath when she meets the Pastor: "I went to your place", he said, "but your little sister was dead already."

Fanny is blinded by her tears and deaf to everything, she cries her eyes out, and for the first time becomes acquainted with sorrow.

Her mother, who is astonished by her questions and stumped by them explains what has been explained to her: "You christen children so that they'll go to heaven."

But to Fanny this programme seems somewhat strange and is quite beyond her. Baby Zita, whom she loved with all her heart, has been snatched from her, and this, to her mind, is scandalous.

At the cemetery, where she goes in secret seeking proof in support of the departure

of children to the land of angels, she finds only silence.

The spring comes into its reign at last, lets some hope and sunshine into her heart. There is a little holiday time and first walks into the forest, the discovery of the little valley through which runs the stream, cascading, bubbling with impatience behind the big mossy boulder standing in its way. And, there on the bank, a delight to the eyes, liverwort, primroses and violets are beginning to show, where soon the new leaves will be casting their shade. Close by she hears the rustle of wings, a bird, like her, found again the little valley where it makes its home.

At the beginning of the new school term, Fanny finds she has changed masters, she is in a different classroom and has a fresh school mate beside her. Her name is Cecilia. They soon get acquainted and would easily become friends... only: "I say, Fanny, you're

God and of his ways. So that in those places, there is no faith, no assurance and no stability at all. The edifice they erect is shaky and cannot stand without being shored up by every possible means, and is to come crashing down. The Scriptures say, indeed, that Babylon will fall and will disappear and will never again be seen. So, it is easy to understand that in Babylon, that is to say, in the present religious world, nothing can work together for the good of anybody, because Babylon does not love God. It is not viable, not having fulfilled the conditions for becoming so.

Christian people say they love God. However, one loves God in the measure in which one follows his advice. Our dear Saviour said: "If you love me, keep my commandments. ... This is my commandment: love each other as I have loved you." On the other hand, one does not love God if one is not imbued with the divine sentiments, when one defends oneself, and when one attempts to reign over others. The Lord Jesus never defended himself, and he tells us not to do so.

Thus, mankind are in deepest darkness. To love God, you have to love his dispositions and to love what He loves. It is written: "What does the LORD require of you, but to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." One who fulfils those conditions can be sure that all things work together for his good.

It is truly astounding to perceive how people in Christendom try to work things so that they should be for their good, yet categorically reject the things offered liberally to all so that they may learn to love God and to become like Him, so as to become his sons for whose good and whose blessing all things work together, and who are able to obtain eternal life. For this purpose, one has to be detoxified from one's selfishness by complying with the conditions the Lord himself sets us when he says: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny himself."

What line of conduct is followed by those who love God, and what is their destiny? They live out the divine programme and so are able to penetrate the mystery of God, which becomes no mystery to them at all. They are initiated into the whole of God's Work. They know that we have now come to the introduction on Earth of the Kingdom of God. They associate wholeheartedly in that Work. They put God first in their hearts in all circumstances. They live up to our dear Saviour's advice: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and everything else shall be given to you." Therefore, they are happy from morn till night. They are free of fear and of care, and they constantly have the feeling of divine protection.

And so the Lord intends to introduce his Kingdom with his beloved children. There are not very many of them, but they possess faith that is capable of moving mountains. The reason why they are few is that the objective, though captivating, is conditional, and many shrink from fulfilling the conditions.

You cannot know God and not love Him, for when you know Him, you are able to feel his affectionate and fatherly heart, which is all kindness and solicitude. He never scolds, He never punishes and his patience never wearies, yet He is perfectly faithful and unswerving from his principles. He is able to overcome every difficulty, even death. He displays his power and his glory in wondrous love.

So, we know what is to be done to arrive at knowing God and loving Him. All we have to do is to follow his advice. Then, we shall be preservable. Of course, we are handicapped with all sorts of defects and faults of character. But if we allow God's Holy Spirit to work in us, it will change us utterly. Then, we shall be able to feel that all things always are for our good because God makes all things work together with a view to our

education for life and happiness. That is man's destiny. Eternal life was lost in Eden. It is recovered in Christ. The time has come when the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and of his faithful Church, results in all men having the possibility to acquire everlasting life on Earth by loving God above all, with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves.

God and the religions

The following article, which we partly quote, is taken from the Swiss French-language newspaper *Tribune de Genève* from the 24th and 25th of December 2016:

Does the God of the Christians still have a future?

It is easy and comfortable to reduce Christmas to a few rituals: a Christmas tree, a turkey, presents and an evening visit to a sympathetic old person. On this occasion, the anniversary of the birth of Christ, one can ask oneself, as an individual as well as a society, what meaning do godly things still have nowadays, what place does religion have in a world that is electrified with technical innovations and new communication networks, and what is the importance of faith in the face of terrorism?

Emeritus Professor Denis Müller, in the field of ethics and theology, explains his answers to some of those important questions:

What does Christmas mean to you?

It is a time for deep thinking. It is a "new start" in life. It is the celebration of birth and of light that is anchored in Creation, in the Beginning. In this sense, it is complementary to Easter. ...

Is the balance among the monotheistic religions currently changing? If yes, then which religions are affected?

That is a huge question. Of course, the whole world now thinks that the balance is currently changing in favour of Islam. One might think that it wants to win, but that is a mistake. This is a question of how one interprets Islam, its diversity and its various currents. ... In reality, each monotheistic religion is important for understanding the other two. When one monotheistic religion closes itself off to the other two, it runs the risk of falling into dogmatism and absolutism.

But is violence not inherent in all religions?

That is how it is. We Christians, for example, have a long historical experience with violence: the Crusades, the Inquisition and the various religious wars. Christianity was and still is today, even if it does not seem like it, a violent religion.

If violence and religion go hand in hand, what does that have to do with humankind?

For that, there is both a human and a theological answer. On one hand, violence is a part of humankind. On the other hand, religion announces the arrival of God to Cain and Abel. Cain kills Abel, and God protects Cain from the vengeance of others. Violence has been a part of biblical history from the beginning. God is involved in violence. Is there anything more terrible than the Passion [the suffering] of Jesus, and his Crucifixion? In the eyes of a Christian, this is the worst violence.

Religion is therefore always a critical interpretation of violence

Yes, and it can furthermore use God in a perverse way. Especially to justify the use of violence.

That leads us to terrorism

Yes, and that is what Islamic fanatics do today. That is what Christians did in the past. And when a person uses God to justify their violence, they are worse than everyone else. ...

Because religions preach love for one's neighbour...

That is it. I will be a little cynical: when a person wants to be violent, they have the courage to be by themselves. May they also not ask God for his blessing! ...

In these times of unrest, uncertainty and societal change, will Christianity find its historical role as a lighthouse?

I would say that it must be a centre of truth and of peace.

Does Christ have a future?

What a question! For believers, he is the future of the world, the symbol of God's presence. But Christ alone, without God, remains an incomplete symbol.

You are not answering the question...

OK, I will try. There will always be talk about God... When we talk about God (or Christ), we should consider two dimensions: for a Christian, whether they are conservative or liberal, of course, Christ has a future, because they believe in him. Of course, God has a meaning because He is part of their faith. But if you ask the question: "Does Christ have a future?" from the sociological or historical point of view, and if you ask me: "Will Christianity still exist in 50 years, will our grandchildren still understand what Christmas is, and will they all be Muslims or atheists?" then I will answer: "I do not know." I am not a prophet or a sociologist of religion. And none of them would say that there will be no more Christians in the year 2250.

But I can risk giving an anthropological answer: as long as there are people, there will be talk about God, and there will be spirituality. And I tend to accept that it will be as it has always been: a mixture of possibilities. So, yes, the question about God has a future. As long as there are men and women, it will be asked. It will be discussed, even by atheists. And as long as there are atheists, that is a good sign for God. Without them, God would be dead. ...

What does faith mean in the year 2017?

I am not a prophet! Faith means more peace, social intelligence, openness of spirit, and love... That should be enough, right?

The question: "Does the God of the Christians still have a future?" is not correctly formulated. It should ask: "Do people still believe in God?" Because, as it is asked from the questioner, one could completely misunderstand the glorious and all-powerful personality of the Lord God Who does not need humankind in order to exist. It is humankind who needs the Almighty in order to exist.

When one reads in the article: "As long as there are atheists, that is a good sign for God. Without them, God would be dead," then one is speechless. Why then are we in a situation today in which chaos is imminent? Because humankind has left God.

Certainly, there are religions. The talk here is about the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. But let us not forget that it was not God Who created the religions, humankind did. Good is not a religion. Our dear Saviour was neither a Pharisee, a Sadducee nor an Essene. On the contrary, it was the religious people of Jesus' time who persecuted him. The religions have not brought humankind closer to God, but have rather distanced it from Him. A proof of that is the violence linked with the religions: the Crusades and the Inquisition that were called "holy" by the Catholic Church, and today's terrorism. The Almighty has nothing to do with any of those manifestations. Regarding the violence in Christ's suffering and Crucifixion, it was not wanted by God, but was the response of the sinners to their Saviour. Humankind welcomed its Saviour in a stable and killed him on a Cross. Fortunately, all those sins were erased by these words of our dear Saviour: "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing." Or as another well-known version of

a Protestant, aren't you? What a pity, all Protestants go to hell!"

At home, Mummy also gives her precious advice: "You're sitting with Cecilia, she's Catholic isn't she? Be careful, don't get too friendly with her, all Catholics go to hell!"

After that, the mystery beyond the veil becomes a horrible muddle to Fanny. On the other hand, at Sunday school, she is passionately interested. The story of Joseph introducing his brethren into Egypt, and four centuries later. Moses fetching them out again, has no secrets for her. At examination time she always very easily gets top marks. The Pastor himself goes personally to congratulate her parents.

At her twelfth birthday, she has grown into a healthy young girl. One day her godmother comes to visit them. In the capital city where she lives with her husband, they earn a lot of money, and Fanny will be useful to them,

they would put her to a good school, and she would have a splendid education.

When, several weeks later, she arrives there after a long journey, the first one in her life, she is filled with wonder at the sight of that splendid lake, so blue, the flowered walks, and trees that she has never seen before.

Short-lived are the charming promises her godmother made. By the time she reaches the house carrying her two heavy suitcases, and has taken possession of her poor bedcloset, has been told to scrub the floors Fanny realises that her happy days are over. The good school promised consists of evening classes for the poor, one hour of study after a tiring day. Washing days with big sheets, ironing, housework, shopping, all this, at twelve, comes very hard. When the day's work is over, with a finger pointing at her bed-closet, she is told: "Go to bed."

If the milk boils over, if she forgets an er-

rand, if she takes a piece of bread, she is punished: five days on polenta and water which she must eat alone with her fingers out of the saucepan. She becomes fearful and clumsy. When she is accused and reproved unjustly, even beaten or locked in, she takes it all in silence. On Sundays, to get that loutish girl whom they do not owe a thing off their hands, that they may be free to have their meal on the terrace of a fashionable restaurant, they lock her up in her bed-closet with bread and water and leave her there all day. A fanlight opening on an inner court smelling strongly, is the only air and daylight she has. In the gloom and solitude of her cubicle Fanny thinks over the story of Joseph, sold by his brethren and a prisoner amidst strangers. Those experiences, which in the past had given her joy, were still able to console her today. But when she would get hold of that Bible in which she could find help and faith, it is snatched from her hands.

Of course, she could write home about it all, but never will she do that, for she knows her parents are weighed down by many other cares. And would she be believed? Her godmother is a lady, and her husband an important man.

For four long years Fanny is subjected to all the wickedness and spite the woman is able to find. in her selfish heart.

Every time she is able to attend Sunday school this provides Fanny with a ray of light. But that is just it: generally, when it is time for her to set out, there is sure to be an urgent errand to be run, a job that has been forgotten, or something that has been mislaid to be found.

One morning, being busy in one of the rooms, she hears a voice in the corridor which she recognises. It is the Pastor's voice, and he is saying: "Yes indeed, she is the best of all our pupils, and my wife, who never makes a mistake, told me she would be when she

the same text says: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The truth is that humankind has strayed with the appearance of sin when it separated itself from communion with God. It does not know where it comes from or where it is going to, what its origin and destiny are. It does not know why it is on Earth. It may be educated but it has no faith. And the above article is no exception to the rule.

But the Almighty has foreseen and provided, from before the foundation of the world, for the Redemption of humankind through the sacrifice of his beloved Son. That is the Good News of the Gospel of Christ. The Lord God not only gave us his Son, but He also gives us faith, without which, we could not make good use of his sacrifice. What He now leaves up to us to do, is to let virtue follow our faith. Because faith only becomes our own property when we love our fellow person.

A society that does not or no longer believes in God, is destined to disappear. Humanity's history gives us information about that. What remains of the brilliant civilizations of antiquity? Of the empires of Babylon, of Persia, of the Greeks and of the Romans? Ruins and relics. Our current society is also destined to disappear. The only people who will remain will be "the meek" ("the gentle") as well as those who have put all their trust in God and have learnt to love their neighbour. We have now entered the time of the great "temptation" ("trial", "testing") when even "the elect" ("the chosen ones") would be deceived if that were possible, as our dear Saviour announces in Matthew 24: 24.

God's future is mapped out. For Him, time does not count. His plan is eternity. He is unchanging, everlasting and immortal. We are only at the beginning of the knowledge of God. In millions of years, human beings will still be learning from their Creator because "God is love", and this love is infinite, like the universe in which He lives, and so is time, of which He is the Master. It is our future that is a big question and that will remain so, as long as we do not employ this gift for observing the Universal Law, which teaches us to exist for the good of others. That is the only reason for our life, that gives us the right to exist, and that enables us to exist forever.

When all people observe the Universal Law, then this marvellous promise will be fulfilled, which was given by the angels at the birth of our dear Saviour in the fields of Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on Earth to people of goodwill." Luke 2: 14.

Where are we going?

In the Swiss French-language newspaper *Tribune de Genève* from the 28th and 29th of January 2017, there appeared an unusual article about the imminent Apocalypse ("end of the world" and Doomsday). This is a matter of a prognosis by a group of scientists who take into consideration threats from nuclear weapons, climate change and new technologies and who estimate the time remaining until the end of the world. Of course, this is only a relative probability. It should make everyone aware of the potential dangers from the inappropriate use of the various means that are within our easy reach. We quote the entire article as follows:

Threat to humanity: it is two and a half minutes to "midnight" (the end of the world)

The Doomsday Clock has been moved forward by 30 seconds by scientists. Among the given reasons... Trump.

These are anxious times. On Thursday [the 26th of January 2017], the Doomsday Clock, which symbolizes imminent planetary catastrophe, was moved forward by 30 seconds. The famous Doomsday Clock is now showing 11:57 pm and 30 seconds. "Midnight" means "the end of the world". This does not have anything to do

with the "survival of the fittest" theory. This symbolic tool — which was created by scientists at the academic journal Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (based in Chicago, USA) — has the purpose of supplying information about the dangers (nuclear, environmental and technological) that threaten the planet and of evaluating these dangers in the number of hypothetical minutes that remain until the disappearance of our civilization.

What was the reason given for that fateful moment on Thursday? A strident rise in nationalism, climate change, a deterioration of global security in the context of increasingly sophisticated technologies, and... the belligerent discourse of Donald Trump, which, since March, became one of the Top 10 greatest risks to the world economy, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). But do not panic, this is not the first time that the hands on the Doomsday Clock have been moved forward.

Hydrogen-bomb tests

Introduced in 1947, at the start of the Cold War, by scientists who had worked on the Manhattan Project that developed the first atom bomb, the Clock has been periodically adjusted. Since its creation, according to events, the experts have adjusted it 19 times. Last Thursday at 4 pm, it reached its closest time to midnight (to the end of the world) since 1953, the year that the USA and then the USSR tested their hydrogen bombs. The journal's committee, which consists of 15 Nobel laureates, said: "The probability of global catastrophe is very high, and the actions needed to reduce the risks of disaster must be taken very soon."

The committee originally concentrated on the probability of a global atomic war by considering geopolitical movements. For example, in 1963, when Washington and Moscow signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty, the Clock was at 11:48 pm. Five years later, when France and China had nuclear weapons, the fateful hour was moved five minutes forward. In 1991, with the Cold War officially over, the Clock was adjusted several minutes backward.

Since 2007, the Clock also takes into consideration the risks caused by climate change and the problems associated with hydrocarbons and by new technologies. In 2015, the Clock was moved forward by two minutes because of uncontrollable planetary warming and because of the nuclear-arms race, and then, in 2016, it remained unchanged because of the Paris Climate Change Agreement and because of the Iran Nuclear Deal Framework...

The Doomsday Clock has not been this close to midnight since 1953:

1947. *Creation of the Clock.*

7 minutes until the end of the world.

1949. *The Soviet Union (the USSR) tests its first atom bomb.* **3 minutes.**

1953. *Following the US test, the USSR tests the hydrogen bomb.* **2 minutes.**

1963. *The Soviet Union and the United States sign the Partial Test Ban Treaty.* **12 minutes.**

1968. *France (1960) and China (1964) now have nuclear weapons.* **7 minutes.**

1990. *Fall of the Berlin Wall (1989). End of the Cold War in sight.* **10 minutes.**

1991. *The USSR and the USA sign the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. Dissolution of the Soviet Union.* **17 minutes.**

1998. *Assuming a conflict, India and Pakistan test nuclear weapons.* **9 minutes.**

2007. *Nuclear ambitions of Iran, and nuclear tests of North Korea.* **5 minutes.**

2015. *Climate change, and the nuclear-arms race.* **3 minutes.**

2017. *A rise in strident nationalism worldwide, disturbing comments made by Donald Trump about nuclear weapons and climate change, and deteriorating global security.* **2.5 minutes.**

We think that it would be good to add a supplement to the above article and to answer the question: "What is the Apocalypse?" It is also a name of the last book in the Bible in which it is also known as the Book of Revelation, which was written by apostle John while he was exiled on the Island of Patmos.

The Book of Revelation is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what shall soon happen. He has made it known by sending his angel to his servant John..." Revelation 1: 1.

In that book, we find the summary of the history of the true Church and the messages addressed to it by its Master, Jesus Christ. One must remark that all the details regarding the formation and the establishment of this Church over the course of the centuries, were known and directed in advance by our dear Saviour. The messages to the Seven Churches of Asia give us information about that, in the way that our dear Saviour judged his Church. He himself walked among the "seven lampstands (candlesticks)", which are the various periods of his Church, as he had promised his disciples: "I am with you every day until the end of the age." And we can state, because all the periods of this Church have passed, that our dear Saviour was never wrong. All that is contained in the Mystery of Godliness.

In the course of the Mystery of Godliness, the Mystery of Iniquity developed. The latter began with clerical tendencies, which the Master described as the work of the Nicolaitans. From the first period of the true Church onward, one sees the birth and the development of that current. The apostle Paul is compelled to say: "The mystery of iniquity is already at work..." 2 Thessalonians 2: 7.

At the end of the Gospel Age, the seduction is so great that even the true Church is rejected. We find in the message that the Lord directed at the last period of his Church, this reproach: "Because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth." Revelation 3: 16.

After that, this calling is sounded: "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household [people], to give them food at the proper time?" (Matthew 24: 45). That Servant has come, brought his message and gathered the last Consecrated, who wish to give their lives with their Master for the salvation of humanity.

The Apocalypse, which is also known as "the Revelation of Jesus Christ", cannot be the bearer of bad news, but only of good, of marvellous news. In fact, John the Baptist, on a certain occasion during his ministry, sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask him: "Are you the one who should come, or should we look for another?" Jesus replied: "Go and tell John the things you hear and see: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news [the Gospel] preached to them." Matthew 11: 3-5.

That Good News is that of the Restoration of All Things, which was announced by the prophets and by apostle Peter. Acts 3: 21.

Of course, that Restoration does not follow the end of the world — which is expressed by the article we are occupied with, and which is commonly expressed — but the end of a world: the end of this current wicked world, the end of the reign of evil and of God's Adversary: Satan.

What should also be seriously considered but is unrecognized, is that it is not humankind who shapes events, but God through Christ and his Church and through his other children. Our dear Saviour predicted in his great prophecy, which is mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 24: "You will hear of war and rumours of wars,

came to join us. She said: "That's a very fine girl; she's a bit different from the others."

At noon, contrary to habit, godmother is in a happy mood for she has some visitors, she seizes her opportunity.

"I had a visit from the Pastor this morning, and he said this girl isn't much good, we won't be able to do anything with her, that she is the worst pupil he has ever had."

At the end of the year it is usual to award the best pupil with a prize. The whole class is unanimous in saying that it is Fanny who deserves it.

Alas, poor Fanny! Justice in the heart of man is like the road to hell (if there were such a thing) paved with good intentions. It is Sophia, a pretty girl with well-to-do parents and who embroidered the Pastor's cushion, who is given the prize.

So justice is nowhere to be found, Fanny realises in pained surprise.

Once when her masters are absent, Fanny goes to visit an aunt in another quarter of the town. At night, when she goes to bed, her aunt asks her: "What's happened to your arm, it's all blue?"

"That's where godmother beat me!"

This makes aunty's blood boil, and as soon as godmother gets back she warns her: "If this ever happens again, I shall go to the doctor and to the police!" And this only makes matters worse:

"The bathroom and the water-closet are no place for a girl like you, you'll have to manage with the public lavatories in town when you do the shopping."

When her father comes to town for her first communion she refrains from worrying him, but he guesses there is something wrong: "If you are unhappy, come home", he says.

A few days later, with the twenty francs she has been paid for four years' work, she takes french leave. She boards the train which

takes her home to her mountains as fast as steam will carry her.

★

Many years have gone by since then. What has become of Fanny? Has she found consolation? Has she found those green pastures and those still waters where the good Shepherd leads his flocks?

In the little train that puffs and clanks between the tall pine trees, taking sudden darts into tunnels that fetch it through the rocks that bar its way, or wending its way with temerity by precipitous gorges, Eva is not an ordinary traveller. Out of the carriage window, braving shakings, thrills and cinders in her eyes, she gazes in wonder at the wonderful panorama that is offered to her eyes.

In Calvin's city she is an art teacher, and is well able to appreciate the beauties of nature. But it is riot her love for all this beauty that has brought her out on this long journey: With her big boots, her large hat and her bag

full of papers, she is going in this favourable weather to spread a precious message.

She gets off the train at her destination. It is a fairly large village, but to get at the outlying farms you have to walk. Well, what of it? Eva is breathing pure air, and the hope she is carrying with her from door to door keeps her thoroughly fit. At the top of a steep incline escalated by a winding path going by flowering elders and age-old pine trees, she comes suddenly upon a farm. Farther away in a field there is a garden fenced off. There she finds someone who greets her with a sad face: *The Paper for All*. I've never heard of it! But if it is the message you spoke about, it's what I've always been looking for, at least ever since my first sorrow at the death of a little sister. I was eight years old then."

The hat with which the agreeable evangelist waves her goodbye is no sooner out of sight than Fanny is seeking in those printed lines the secret that is going to refresh her

but do not be troubled, for all these things must happen, but the end is still to come..." (Matthew 24: 6). And further: "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24: 14.

The Coming of the Kingdom will coincide with the ruin of the present wicked world. They are two events in one. But God will always remain the Master of events, which are not random, but are foreseen and known long in advance by the Almighty because He, in view of them, even immolated his Son before the foundation of the world.

But regarding "the day and the hour", our dear Saviour taught us that no one knows them, neither the angels in Heaven nor the Son, except the Father (Matthew 24: 36). That is why we cannot adequately exhort our dear readers and especially God's people, to not feed themselves on the commentated current affairs in the media, because they are not good food for faith.

It is marvellous that we can do something, namely to collaborate on the introduction of those new times, when there will be no more unhappy people. Let us therefore associate in that marvellous work, and let us leave evil in all its forms. The equivalent of our efforts will be joy and life forever.

Taxi...please!

The European publication *Point de Vue et Images du Monde* produced the following story reported by Trémolin:

Trips for wealthy dogs

I did not believe that story, but so many old taxi drivers have told me that it had happened to them that I eventually had to accept it. It was before the war, at the time when all the cars of a Paris taxi company had identical bodies.

One day, the driver of one of these taxis, which had been standing idle for a while, saw a splendid Alsatian

dog trotting gaily, stop by his car and start to bark for all it was worth.

He gave it a closer look. Its coat was well kept, and its whole appearance proclaimed that it was not a stray dog. But why ever did it bark like this? Not threateningly anyway. The driver even remarked to himself that this Alsatian behaved exactly like his own dog when it wanted to go for a trip.

He spoke to the animal, which wagged its tail gently, waited and started to bark again. The taxi driver thought that perhaps the dog was hungry. He broke off a piece of the sandwich his wife had prepared for him and threw it to the dog. It ate it, wagged its tail to say thank you and started barking again.

The driver was beginning to think that he had had enough of it. He had had a poor day, and a big dog barking in front of the taxi door is likely to put customers off. He got out of the car and patted the dog, which offered no resistance. But the minute the taxi driver wanted to get back behind the wheel, the dog started to bark furiously.

Eventually, the driver noticed a sort of label hanging from its collar. He got out of the car again, looked at the label and read a notice in beautiful handwriting which said: "I live in such and such a street, at such and such a number. Please take me home. You will be well rewarded."

More and more puzzled, the taxi driver opened the door for the dog, which was apparently waiting for just that, and which then jumped in, squatted and waited.

"Here is a clever dog," thought the driver. He drove off and took this strange customer to the address given on the label. It was a restaurant. He got out and opened the door, and the dog jumped out and pushed open the door of the bistro like someone quite pleased to be home at last. Rather taken aback, the driver followed the dog inside and came across a rather matronly landlady who, without further ado, asked him how much she owed him.

"But," said the driver, "I did not start my meter."

"Where have you come from?" inquired the landlady.

The taxi driver told her. She calculated quickly and handed him the fare together with a handsome tip. More and more puzzled, the driver considered the money without being able to make head or tail of the situation.

"Oh, you know," said the woman, "my dog loves to run away from home, and every day, it manages to get home by taxi. It is costing me a fortune!"

"But how did it know that I was a taxi?" asked the man. "There are other cars in Paris."

"Well, I think it recognizes you by the body of the car. All the cars of your company are painted red and black."

It was so indeed, and this story has enabled me to decide that dogs can recognize colours, a thing that some zoologists are still pondering over, it appears. Also, I have recorded it in the file concerning the intelligence of Alsatian dogs.

If animals cannot speak human languages, they can nevertheless understand and obey certain formulas that have been patiently taught to them. An animal is, however, capable of making itself understood. It often calls for perseverance on the animal's part, until a person grasps what is wanted of them. But it usually manages if the person it appeals to is attentive.

The dog in question here was evidently already used to taking a taxi home when it happened to have strayed too far and felt tired. It had very likely taken taxis a few times with its mistress, and that was enough for it to realize that these cars with red and black bodies were at its service to take it home. Was it aware that its address was attached to its collar with all the necessary instructions? Maybe, since this driver was not the first one to have had a look at the label. What it did not know was that taxi journeys are not free of charge and that fares have to be paid. For, to dogs and any other animal, money does not belong to the realm of useful things. What matters to them is to have enough to eat and to feel the kindness of the people around them.

soul. For many years this little Paper is a comfort to her without her clearly understanding the message it bears. So little does she understand it that at the death of a baby girl of sixteen months, an impression of despair invades her and gains an ever stronger hold on her heart.

It is just when she ceases to believe in anything that the miracle happens. Once again she is in her garden with her sons. There is nothing to be heard but the cow bells in the distance, but suddenly there comes a woman with an open countenance and very outspoken whom she had not seen approaching who speaks to her of hope: "Here is *The Message to Humanity*, I am sure it will satisfy you."

As she reads the first lines of it, she is quite sure, now she need not seek any further. It is true, comforting, wonderful.

The justice, the wisdom and the love infused into her by every line of *The Message to Humanity* do the saving work of faith in her heart. At last she grasps the profound reasons for the sufferance of evil and its tragic consequences, and no more does this set her any anguishing problems. She knows the dead are at rest awaiting the great awakening, and this truth reconciles her heart.

A little time later there is a lecture in the village, and it brings together all the meek seekers after truth and justice. The hall is full right up, and from an apparently inexhaustible source the lecturer draws precious words to illustrate in a way that everyone can understand God's great Universal Law.

Just like the parched stag, Fanny has drunk at that spring of living water, and is determined to go further into things. She realises immediately that great efforts are needed to obtain the fulfilment of that promise, and she feels she is herself the least fit of all those present.

Yet it is she who writes, who moves heaven and earth to obtain a meeting room, for the worthy lecturer said to her: "My dear sister, I shall come when you invite me. As for you, be so good as to find a place where the brethren may gather. And may the Lord's grace help you."

Fanny is not afraid to fly her colours. Wherever she is she talks about her hopes, and pays visits to over thirty families. Her zeal, her joy and her love are not to everybody's taste. There is her neighbour, a religious fanatic, who, pending her going to hell, casts big paving stones on her chicken run. There is her cousin who, with a Bible under his arm and a lifted finger threatens her with the wrath of God. But, above all, there is her husband

devoured with jealousy, who becomes spiteful when he realises that Fanny is irrevocably determined to put the Kingdom of God before everything else.

She keeps her house in perfect order, takes loving care of her five children, does the gardening, milks the cows, but nothing can stop her forgoing with her beloved brethren once a week.

Neither shouting nor beatings, nor the long walk through the woods (often after dark), nothing is able to alter her mind. All these are but light afflictions well worthwhile bearing with for the sake of the privilege of knowing the grace granted her. She even has occasion to attend a congress held in the very town where, as a child, she had such an unhappy time... but this time to find a happiness that nothing in the world could replace. To hear the dear Messenger's voice, to know that wonderful family of faith with its warmth of heart uplifts her with enthusiasm.

One evening when it is pouring with rain, Gregory, her husband is jubilant and mocking: "No need to beat you this evening, in this weather you'll be glad to stay at home!" But in wind or wet Fanny hears only the voice of the good Shepherd. His rod and his staff lead her into green pasture and by the still waters where there is peace, and this evening, as on every Thursday, she sets off. Hardly has she taken a few steps when the rain stops, and when, three-quarters of an hour later, she gets into the shelter of the meeting place, it comes down again as hard as ever. To all their relations and friends; Gregory has to confess: "I can't even make her cross any more, whatever I do she's always happy."

It was not always easy, for instance when the man had tears in his eyes when sending for the vet to attend a sick cow, and in the same breath made light of his wife suffering from an open abscess on her leg: "You coddle yourself!"

But once she has obtained the blessing Fanny does not allow it to melt away like snow in the sunshine. She keeps watch over her heart with the simplicity of a dove and the wisdom of a serpent, knowing that the victory rests with the one who is able to love.

Her unfortunate husband is no more. That religious fanatic, her neighbour, has ceased bombarding her chickens, and her cousin can no more consign her to divine vengeance. All those people are waiting in the grave till He, who is going to call them back to the land of the living, sees fit to do so, and then to turn their stony hearts into hearts of flesh.

Fanny has all her family around her, and

they love and esteem her. They all make things easy for her till the time when they, like her, are able to walk by faith along the road to life.

News in brief of the Reign of Justice

The general meeting of Lyons faced the dear family of faith with the urgency there is to increase their efforts, in the case of those who wish to be in a position to face up to the days that are at hand, and which will end up the present dispensation and establish the Kingdom of God. The first day's message reminded us of an essential piece of advice to be found in Solomon's book of Proverbs: "Be not wise in thine own eyes, fear the Lord, and turn away from evil". As was pointed out in the commentary of the Lord's Messenger, that is a basis that is quite indispensable to such as wish to move forward in divine ways and in the direction of life. Pride, self-sufficiency, and ambition have built up the wisdom of this world, which Paul the apostle says outright is madness. Every member of the human race has, in varying degrees, been saturated with this wisdom. The essential fight to be waged against oneself, therefore, must aim at becoming humble, small in one's own eyes, at fearing God, which simply means honouring Him, revering Him, and loving Him, recognising all the benefits he has showered upon one, and which He is continuing towards one, conditionally upon one's being able to feel them. God's Servant told us in that dew that false wisdom invites us to gratify the selfish "me", seeking after glory, honours, wealth, excuses of every kind, defending selfinterests, avoiding the difficulties of the day, and so forth. On the other hand, divine wisdom says to us: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and everything else shall be added to you". Many were the examples recalled by God's Messenger to show us how correct that thought is. Whoever has really made the necessary efforts in all circumstances to keep the Kingdom of God in sight and mind, as a guide to his thoughts, words, and actions, has been able to experience how truly God's kindness and power are boundless and conduct all things for that so essential reeducation of the heart, in order that, from children of the adversary, we might become true children of God.

The text of the dew of heaven of the second day, and the commentary of God's Servant, reminded us in an impressive manner of the words of Jesus: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". The Lord's Messenger

told us in that dew that we are at the school of purity, to arrive at never giving out around us anything else but a fluid of life and blessing. For that purpose, he added, we have to take practice in humility and kindness, and forbid ourselves every feeling that does not provide our neighbour with something that does him good, comforts and encourages him, and draws him to the Lord. This calls for an extensive reform within ourselves, and we have to undertake it with all honesty, courage, and willingness.

The last exposition crowned those powerful instructions, the details of which will be recalled to our minds in all the publications of the Lord's Messenger. The text was: "Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us". The dear Messenger developed this text in an impressive manner that deeply stirred the hearts of the brothers and sisters. He pointed out to us that all God's true children are close upon the time when they will have to become the revealing of the sons of God to unfortunate humanity in the thick of the frightful tribulation which, every day and in all respects is becoming more clearly defined. The Host of the Lord also has to be able to display characters tempered in trial, as God's Servant said. If we do not even come up to the ankle of a Daniel, or of an Abraham, we shall not possess the requisite qualities. That is why trials today are excellent stepping-stones to the necessary foundation. He added these few lines: "A child of God who becomes viable is not merely one who is perhaps animated with very kindly sentiments, and is very well disposed, devoted, agreeable and thoughtful, who never does any harm, and willingly denies himself. This is not sufficient at all. What is required is characters very strongly accentuated in the doing of good, very unassuming, very humble, very small in their own eyes, but animated with overflowing zeal, with burning ardour, possessing powerful faith, a faith that is invincible and not to be shaken, which imparts to them all the courage they may need".

The commentaries of a great number of brothers and sisters showed the work that is going on in the hearts of those who truly take things seriously. We thank those who sent us their messages of affection, being in thought with all the brothers and sisters in the thick of the struggle the whole world over.

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