

THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

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Knowledge of the true God

WHEN you consider the conditions of the human race, you have to admit that, particularly at the present time, few are their days of joy. Worry, sorrow, disappointments, fear and anxiety for the future, are the order of the day. They are in darkness and have no idea of what their destiny is. They are in utter error and in total confusion.

Yet our dear Saviour has been on Earth. He said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." Very few listened to him, however, and even fewer did as he told them. He had no success at all with the authorities of his day. All were offended by him because he was not religious at all. He delivered the message of divine love and lived up to it, without rites and without ceremony. The work he had to do was to go to the assistance of unhappy and fallen human beings, to pay their Ransom with his own life. Actually, the life of man lost in Eden could not be redeemed with gold or perishable things. For that purpose, the precious blood of the Son of Man was required, of the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish.

Mankind have no idea at all of the Truth. They think the condemnation weighing on them is punishment inflicted by God. They do not know that God has nothing to do with the matter at all. They have condemned themselves by following a line of conduct that leads to destruction because it ruins their organism which was not made to be used so. Theologians do not know what sin is. This is what is thought in general: because mankind sinned against God, God took offence and wreaked his vengeance on them in the shape of condemnation and death.

That is utterly wrong. It has never been the Almighty's intention to punish mankind. On the contrary, He has always wanted to get them to feel his love. The children of Israel had received the law of Moses. As long as they lived up to it, they were able to feel divine protection and to obtain marvellous prosperity. But very rarely indeed did the Israelites live up to that law with all their heart. It was summed up as follows: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself." They did live up to the letter of the commandments, but they did not put any heart into it. To follow them out was great drudgery to them, and that was why they failed to obtain any blessing from it. Divine ways are a matter for the heart. They are founded essentially on love.

Today, we possess knowledge of the Universal Law. It

teaches us that man has an imperative need for doing good, for being amiable and kind to his fellow men. That infuses into him vitalising impressions of which he cannot afford to deprive his whole being. As a matter of fact, man needs to love. The love he displays towards those around him is a tonic indispensable to his sensory nerves, to maintain his vitality, for the love we show to those around us, makes us joyful. Now, joy is indispensable to man. Everyone can find out for himself that when his heart is joyful, his whole organism prospers. It is a power of life flooding him. When you are joyful, the sun appears to shine more brightly, nature appears more beautiful, and people more amiable. There is an atmosphere of life created, in which one feels one is immersed.

What mankind do not know is that real joy in the heart is the product of divine blessing. Sorrow, anguish, sadness, disappointment and bitterness have a disastrous influence on the sensory nerves. The result is nervous tension which affects man most unfavourably. To be joyful and in a condition favourable to our bodies, we must therefore trust in God and do as He advises us. When we do that, we can have no more anxiety or fear. At the same time, we must love our neighbour and must forgive and forget offences. That is a preventive against nerve tension. All of that is a process of constant purification that clears away every sentiment that is contrary to love going on in our souls for the greatest good of our whole being.

In our bodies also, everything is arranged most wonderfully so that an incessant work of purification may go on there. Just consider the windpipe. In it, there are cilia: very fine hairs in constant vibration to sweep out everything that could become infectious in the lungs. Similarly, in the whole body, there exist ideal purifying systems which keep it in a state of perfect cleanliness. Therefore, everything ought to be in perfect condition. Unfortunately, man has lawbreaking sentiments that draw his sensory nerves, as we said above, and are a hindrance to the organs functioning normally and freely in the altruistic work they do on each other's behalf. That is what leads to sickness and then to death.

All of God's creations, both great and small, bear witness to God's ineffable wisdom which is varied to infinity. That fills us with enthusiasm because it displays the prodigious power of love and of kindness that presided over all creation, particularly over that of man.

Man is the result of the power of divine love applied to the bringing into existence of creatures able to feel the joy of living and, both spiritually and physically, to feed on the benefits of the Creator and Benefactor. Having been created according to the law of love, they are dependent on that law, which they, in their turn, must live up to. To be viable, they must be happy, and to be happy, they must make those about them happy. That is the immutable principle of the Universal Law, which requires all to exist for the good of all else, never to grieve others or to make them suffer. It is always the purification of the heart that maintains the purification of the organism.

That is what all mankind are being faced with. At present, they do not understand this, because their minds are darkened by the selfishness inculcated in them by the "god of this world". And of those who have drawn near to God and his ways, very few have kept to that divine principle. This is to be seen in the children of Israel. Having gone through endless tribulation because of their infidelity, they ended up in captivity in Babylon. By then, the Israelites were prepared for going through the purifying trial that arose for them. The Lord called them back from Babylon where they were languishing, to return to the Promised Land. To be sure, they needed magnificent faith and zeal fit to stand up to any test, for it was a tremendous journey and, besides, the Promised Land was entirely devastated. So that only those who were sincere and who had burning zeal, had the courage to undertake to journey. Thus then, they were sorted out, and the nation was thoroughly purified. This, however, did not last. Once again, they turned their backs on the divine principles.

In the course of the Heavenly Calling, there have constantly been drives of purification in the Lord's Church. In the days of Smyrna, very violent persecutions took place. One might wonder why the Lord did not prevent this. The thing was indispensable for the process of purification to take its course. For that reason, all along the Heavenly Calling, the true Church has had to go through trial and battle. The fact is that God's people have to shape a character in divine sentiments. For that purpose, they have to develop solid faith, and such faith ripens through trouble. This calls for sincerity through and through, and for placing oneself entirely in the Lord's hands. One has to count on the Lord and on no one or anything else.

The programme for a child of God is to seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, all else being added. For that purpose, faith is indispensable. What is the Kingdom of God? It is to love God above all and

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life

JOSÉ cannot help thinking with dogged despair about the hard fate he shares with the other poor people around him in the country of Spain where he was born and grew up. Now it pains him to witness the crying injustices committed by the rich and powerful against the poor and the weak. How ardently he longs to be able to do something to promote the happiness and liberty of his fellows! He is very much interested in socialism, for he feels that this is where the solution is to be found for all the problems that preoccupy his mind.

His thoughts run along these lines: how little it would take to make everybody happy! The Earth is rich enough for everyone to live there in peace and plenty. If only it were possible to give each family a small house and a plot of ground. Here, to be sure, the yoke

of the rich weighs heavily on the necks of the poor. So, there is nothing else for him to do: he must leave his native land and go to another. Where he is, he will never be able to give his children the necessary education for them to be capable of earning their living without having to work beyond their strength. Perhaps they will be better off in France where there is greater liberty and free schools.

Such thoughts as those are often on José's mind. He perceives that here in Spain, everyone who tries to shake off the yoke of the rich and powerful, is severely punished: arrest, imprisonment and executions are the order of the day.

So, José turns the matter over for a long time in his mind before making it up. Then one day, he takes his whole family with him, and goes and settles in the Paris region. He has five children, the eldest of whom is eleven. Weakened by the after-effects of an attack

made on him a few years previously, José is incapable of doing strenuous work. He starts off by selling bootlaces, for his capital is very small. His wife helps as much as she can by going into domestic service. The family is closely united by the bonds of warm affection. Little by little, things begin to prosper till the time when José is able to launch into selling flowers, which is much more pleasant and also pays better.

It was in this atmosphere of work and devotion that Martha was born, one of the last girls to be born in that family. She loves her dear father very much and pays great heed with deep respect to his wise advice concerning uprightness and honesty.

The 1914 war breaks out to upset the tenor of that happiness, for although José is not called up, the family has to share in the general privations attending war. The invader has made great inroads into the country, is coming closer and closer, and is

causing great alarm among the inhabitants of the Paris region. Gothas, the most up-to-date military aeroplanes of those days, come over and drop their bombs, sowing terror and distress. A big cannon, known as Big Bertha, many miles away, sends its shells into Paris, and they burst with a frightful din, causing great damage.

One of Martha's sisters is so seriously affected in her nerves that trouble breaks out in her blood circulation, and soon after, to the great sorrow of those who love her, she dies. Then, one of Martha's brothers — a particularly brave lad who walks several miles to work and back every day and who gives all his wages to his parents — finds a tragic death in a bathing accident. He is only nineteen. All those afflictions have been a sore trial to José and his family.

The great world upheaval eventually calms down, and little by little, everyone is able to rebuild their nest on the ruins, both moral

one's neighbour as oneself. Do that and you will live. The programme for a child of God is to do good to his fellow men, to help them, as our Lord did. To be able to do this, you have to keep watch on your heart and allow no thought or feeling to stay there that is not in accordance with God's law.

Divine protection is sure for him who behaves so, and no harm can befall him. Only such things may befall him as will help him in cleansing his heart and in carrying out his mission. The ministry of a member of the Church, is to associate with his Master and Lord, Jesus Christ, in the salvation of mankind. That is what so-called Christians are not aware of. They are not informed at all concerning divine ways, because their leaders fail to impart these matters to them. As the Scriptures say, they are the blind leading the blind. It is for that reason also that Christendom, as a whole, is called "Babylon...the confusion". Mankind are not informed about what produces life and what produces death, because none at all live up to what the Lord Jesus taught.

Meanwhile, all along the Gospel Age, our dear Saviour's small Church, a hidden mystery, did its duty. It associated with its Master in the work of the deliverance of men, which, for all who take part in it, calls for a willing self-immolation, as that of the Lamb of God who laid down his life. This is a work of faith, of love and of kindness, a work of supreme good. The Church of Christ, the Little Flock, has existed for the good of humankind, to the extent of laying down its life. Therefore, having voluntarily lost its terrestrial life, it in return receives the immortality of divine nature.

That ineffable labour of sacrifice performed with our dear Saviour for the salvation of mankind, is now reaching its close. The final very small quota of the Ransom is being paid by the last members of the Body of Christ. For that reason, another calling has now been sounding for several years, the calling up of the Host of the Lord. That Host is the first fruits of the New Earth in which justice dwells, that is to say, of the Restoration of All Things, mentioned by the prophets. That great Army is called to introduce the Kingdom of God once and for all on Earth, the reign of joy and of happiness. That people is initiated into divine ways by the Church. Its banner is the Universal Law. Its ideal is to exist for the good and the blessing of all. For that reason, that people is viable and is heading for eternal life. Death has no power over it, for the Ransom is now paid, and the effects of blessing of that noble labour, may now make themselves felt.

As for the nations, to be sure, they are reaping the results of their works. They have sown the wind and are reaping the whirlwind. Instead of sowing love, they have sown hatred, wickedness, mistrust and selfishness. The result is the great trouble which is advancing with rapid strides. That is the battle of Armageddon, mentioned in Revelation and directed by Satan, also called the Adversary, the Devil and a liar from the beginning. That will put an end to his reign as the god of this world. He knows it, and that is why he has come down to the Earth animated with great wrath. He would like to utterly destroy humanity. But the Host of the Lord together with the meek (the gentle) who seek God and want to set themselves right with the conditions of his wonderful law of love and of nobility, will be protected. It is the sentiments of their hearts that will protect them.

There is no longer any question of seeking protection behind walls, even if they are made of steel, of avoiding famine by hoarding, or of seeking to preserve oneself from the general distress in any way whatsoever. In the face of the catastrophe which is on the way and which

will be such as there has never been before and will never be again, there is no power and no precaution that can save man. The only thing able to save him is the condition of his heart, if it is the right one.

Those whose hearts are devoted to God — God can see into the secret places, and nothing is hidden from Him — will find shelter under his wing. Everyone else will be submerged automatically by that day, burning like an oven, which they themselves have prepared. Fortunately, the work of Christ ensures the Resurrection for all, on Earth, in Paradise restored. But then they will have to submit to the law of divine love, without which, man cannot go on existing. All things will have become new, and the former things will have passed away.

The Lord is speaking today through his Book of Remembrance (*The Message to Humanity*) to all well-disposed hearts, inviting them to rally to his programme, to his ways, and to walk in his paths, so that they may be spared throughout the day of trouble. Of those who seek his Name and wish to submit to his programme of life described in *The Message to Humanity*, He says: "I will have compassion on them as a man has compassion on his son who serves him." So, everyone, if they will, may have the benefit of that wonderful protection by living up to the conditions attached to it. For that purpose, you have to draw near to God, to heed his voice, to follow his advice, to let go of selfishness and to apply yourself to living for the good and the blessing of your fellow men.

Will the sun go out?

From the Swiss French-language weekly *Migros Magazine*, from the 4th of March 2019, we quote the following article that answers a question by 10-year-old Laura:

Why will the sun go out one day?

Yes, the sun will go out one day, but you can be sure that we still have time, because it will be in 5 billion years. Now that we understand what happens in a star, we can calculate its lifespan.

In fact, before the work of the English astrophysicist Arthur Eddington, it was thought that the energy emitted by a star comes from the star's contraction due to gravity. But that theory could not explain why stars shine for so long.

In 1920, Arthur Eddington suggested that when a star collapses under its own weight, it heats up to an internal temperature of millions of degrees Celsius, to a temperature that rapidly fuses the hydrogen atoms in the star and releases fantastic amounts of energy. This is known as "nuclear fusion". This energy balances out the melting of the star, which becomes stable, like our sun.

Only the hydrogen burns, and when there is none left, the fusion stops, the tank is empty, and the sun goes out. It is enough to know the mass of a star (like the size of a tank) in order to know how long it will shine.

The curious thing in this story is that the bigger a star is, the shorter it lives. This is because there are more atomic reactions in a bigger star and the hydrogen is therefore consumed quicker. So, a star whose mass is 10 times greater than our sun, will live 100 times shorter, while a star that is 10 times smaller, will live 100 times longer.

If little Laura asks that question, then it is because it is not obvious that the sun will go out one day. Without knowing it, her question is not silly at all, for the simple reason that the sun does not go out.

Our scholars are brilliant. The sum of the knowledge they have acquired comes from study, a lot of work and many complex experiments, and we certainly do not want to underestimate all that. Furthermore, we cannot compare our and their point of view and knowledge, and we are well aware of the gap between us and their

education. But there is a very important factor missing in the knowledge of most researchers, and that is faith.

To be able to explain what is happening inside a star or how nuclear fusion works, is something fascinating, but, to all of that, one must add the reality of the existence of God. Without that factor, without the awareness of the existence of a Creator, his Creation will always remain an impenetrable mystery to us. The following quote is attributed to the French writer and philosopher Voltaire: "The universe confounds me! I cannot imagine that such a 'clock' can exist without there being a clockmaker."

One can well imagine that if God created the sun and countless other stars, the planets and their satellites and all other celestial bodies, that He is also capable of maintaining them. In fact, the Almighty displays constant and immense activity in the universe. It is He Who keeps everything in motion through the power of his Spirit. If He were to stop this activity for a just a moment, there would be indescribable chaos in space. These truths were revealed to us by God's last Messenger, and we easily believe them.

We can only give ourselves a very imperfect idea of the Lord God's personality and power, and of everything else that emanates from Him. He is almighty and not only timeless, but immortal, which means that He does not have to be supplied by a source of life in order to exist. He possesses life within Himself and can transmit it to others without reducing his vitality in any way. Regarding the sun, it is therefore supplied by the Source of life that is the Almighty, and it can continue to indefinitely shine and maintain life on Earth. Humankind itself is dependent on God's Spirit to stay alive. Humankind dies because it is separated from the Source of life.

In God's Kingdom, which will soon be established on Earth, all people will regain communion with the Almighty, due to the atoning sacrifice of our dear Saviour and the divine education that will make them benefactors who are capable of keeping the Universal Law of altruism. Our dear Saviour made us this promise: "Blessed are the meek [the gentle], for they shall inherit the Earth" (Matthew 5: 5). That does not mean that the sun will die out in 5 billion years and that the Earth will become an uninhabitable planet. That promise was made to us for eternity by our dear Saviour on behalf of his Father Who can assure life forever.

"He [Jesus] is not here; he has risen!" Luke 24: 6

In the Swiss French-language newspaper *L'Illustré* on the 12th of April 2017, we read the following interesting article:

The tomb of Jesus Christ was opened

Scientists who opened Christ's tomb in Jerusalem during restoration work, had the impression of being present during a mystical phenomenon: three state-of-the-art measuring devices for electromagnetic resonance, immediately and inexplicably either malfunctioned or ceased to work at all. As though this mystery should not be approached...

It is the holiest place in Christianity, the centre of faith for all believers. Located in the enormous Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in Jerusalem, the tomb of Jesus Christ has been attracting millions of pilgrims from all over the world for hundreds of years. Cut into the rock of a 2,000-year-old former stone quarry, it is covered by a beige-colour marble slab, and a small structure [a shrine known as the Edicule] was built around it and encloses it. Inaccessible and out of sight, this empty tomb is nevertheless the heart of the Christian mystery, the absolute proof of his Resurrection. Because it expresses the message of the Gospel: "Why are you

and material. José and his loved ones resume their occupations, and the years go slowly by. Then at last, the day comes when José is able to build a house, a very unassuming little house, but the family have their own roof over their heads. Great is his happiness. "At least," he says, "this is your own house, and nobody can send you packing!"

Some years later — his health undermined by worry over the painful conditions in which the human race has to live, and seeing no way out — José breathes his last, enfolded in the affection of his wife and children, without having realised his dream of peace, of justice and of harmony on Earth. It is Martha most particularly who inherits his aspiration for justice and mutual understanding to come to mankind through a new education.

Martha and her young sister take care of their mother, both are earning. How happy they are to come together every evening in the warm affection which unites them! Though

they are Catholic, they seldom go to church or practise the outward rites of their religion, but sincerely believe in God and in Christ, the Saviour of the world.

There comes the threat of unemployment in France, and Martha contemplates having to return to her land of origin. So, she goes to Spain and very quickly finds employment as governess in a rich family. There, of course, she has to give way to the demands of her new post, among all the rest, to attend church. Martha does her best to keep her heart clean in spite of all this. In her employers, she sees some generous qualities quickly smothered by their interests and their privileges which they wish to maintain at all costs.

Meanwhile, through the efforts of a few idealistic hearts who ardently desire to see the people emancipated, the political regime changes, with the result, that, after a while, the Spanish Republic is set up. This takes place without any bloodshed, so there is great

joy in the poorer classes, and there is singing in the streets and squares. Alas, this joy does not last long. Fomented by the agents of foreign powers and by financial interests, the Spanish Civil War breaks out to tear apart the Spanish nation.

Martha's employers arrange to go away somewhere where they hope to be safe. As for Martha herself, she tries to return to France. She is given her papers, and she turns her steps towards the frontier. It makes her heart bleed to see her country painfully suffering the savage scourge of war. She boards a bus which, after a while, gets on its way. Further along the road, the vehicle is attacked by the forces of repression and comes under some heavy bursts of gunfire. The bus driver shows great courage, he does not desert his post, and he commands his passengers to lie down on the ground, while he drives the bus further on. When at last they get out of range, everyone gives a sigh of relief. Martha, however,

is very much upset by all these happenings, for she is very sensitive and highly emotional.

When she reaches Biarritz (in France), she remembers the school teacher who educated her when she was young. This woman used to be very fond of little Martha, and when she retired, she had given her the address to which she intended to go. This address is quite close to Biarritz, and by a lucky chance, Martha meets her old school teacher in the street. She tells her all her troubles, and the good lady, moved by compassion, invites her to spend a few days with her to recuperate her strength. Martha eagerly accepts the invitation. It is such a relief to find a kind friend and a soothing influence after going through so many very painful experiences, and she is deeply thankful for it.

After that, she rejoins her dear mother and her sister. Life goes on once more in peace and agreeable simplicity. Martha's heart, however, is forever turning towards her own

looking for the living among the dead? He [Jesus] is not here; he has risen!"

For the first time in 200 years, or more precisely said, for the first time since the 19th of November 1809, Jesus' tomb was reopened, for 60 hours between the 26th and the 28th of October 2016. The reason? Unavoidable conservation and restoration work had to be done to the Edicule, which had not withstood the ravages of time, and which was at risk of collapsing. They had to lift and move the marble slab that sealed the holy rock [the "burial bed", the "holy bed"] in which the Lord's body was placed after his Crucifixion on Good Friday and in which it lay until the realization of his Resurrection on Easter Sunday. It was actually straightforward work (masonry and mortar), but it was a mystical experience for the few people who participated in it.

The chief scientific supervisor was Professor Antonia Moropoulou, a Greek chemical engineer. A scientist through and through, she nevertheless acknowledged the strange phenomenon that occurred as she began to examine the tomb with electromagnetic-resonance measuring devices. Three state-of-the-art devices immediately and inexplicably malfunctioned or ceased to work at all. "I cannot tell you any more," she said. "Sometimes, there are inexplicable phenomena." However, as a believer, Antonia Moropoulou added: "Christ's tomb is a living tomb. I think that everyone can understand that there are natural things that can disturb an electromagnetic field. One must simply admit that the strength with which one believes or thinks, plays a role."

"A visible sign of an invisible reality"

Marie-Armelle Beaulieu — who is an active Catholic and a French journalist working in Jerusalem, and who was also given permission to visit the tomb — felt "a type of drug, a powerful spiritual hit" in herself. "I entered and saw that there was nothing to see. That is the extraordinary thing. I revered the visible sign of the invisible reality of Christ's Resurrection. I did no more than the pilgrims who have been visiting this tomb for hundreds of years: I saw that it was empty, that Christ really rose from the dead."

The tomb remained open for the duration of the work, and then it was resealed. It did not reveal any secrets, other than what was already known: it is beautiful and empty! There were no bones or other human remains, only piles of rubble and layers of dust that had accumulated over the centuries. The experts were nevertheless surprised when they lifted the first marble slab of the tomb, to see a second grey marble slab of the same length but only half as wide. The latter — adorned with a beautifully engraved Cross of Lorraine from the time of the Crusades in the 12th century — was put in in the 16th century to prevent pilgrims from stealing parts of the tomb, which they considered as special relics for veneration.

"Historically considered, this is undoubtedly the place of the Cross and of the tomb," explains the French historian Jean-Christian Petitfils, an expert on the life of Jesus and on the beginning of Christianity. "After the relentless oppression of the Second Jewish Revolt by the Roman Emperor Hadrian in the year AD 135, the Jews, the Samaritans and the Christian Jews were expelled from Jerusalem. Hadrian wanted to eradicate all traces of Judaism and Christianity. He tore down the places of worship and expelled the Jews from most of Judea. The holy tomb was destroyed. The place was covered with rubble and raised, and a forum was built on it with a temple of the goddess Venus. But the memory of Golgotha [Calvary] and the tomb was respectfully passed on from generation to generation, so that no one thought of building a replica elsewhere."

The conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, to Christianity in the year 312, made it possible to uncover the birthplace of Christianity, which, thanks to the layer of earth spread out by Hadrian, was

perfectly preserved. On a journey to Jerusalem, the mother of Constantine, Helena, who was later canonized, discovered the relics that no one at that time had thought of preserving, firstly because, according to the Hebrew faith, they were impure, and secondly because they were associated with the atrocious martyrdom and humiliation of the Crucifixion: the Cross [the True Cross], the shroud and the tunic. Saint Helena found the Cross at the bottom of a well in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, the rich citizen and secret disciple of Jesus, who received his body in order to place it in the new tomb that he had made for his own burial. Completely overwhelmed, she had a magnificent Holy Sepulchre [tomb church] built, which was repeatedly destroyed, rebuilt, plundered and restored over the centuries.

The Dome of the Rock

When Caliph Umar [Omar] conquered Jerusalem in the year 638, the city came under Islamic rule, but the holy places of Christians were not at risk. On the contrary, Umar declined the very diplomatic proposition of the Patriarch Sophronius to pray inside the Holy Sepulchre because he feared that some of his fellow Islamic believers would use this as an excuse to transform this sanctuary into a mosque. 50 years later, one of his successors, Caliph Abd al-Malik, decided to build the Dome of the Rock, a building that was meant to be more magnificent than any other construction on Earth, including the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul [historically Constantinople, in Turkey] and the Kaaba in Mecca [in Saudi Arabia]. René Guitton — a French writer and Eastern expert — said: "Since that time, it has been the habit of Muslims from al-Quds (Jerusalem) to call the Holy Sepulchre an unflattering koumana ('rubbish heap')." To liberate the tomb of Christ, the idea of the Crusades eventually developed in Christian countries. Moreover, the chronicles of that time do not mention "Muslims", but "pagans", "unbelievers", "Antichrists" and "Saracens". When the Crusaders conquered Jerusalem in the year 1099 and ruled it for less than 100 years until it was reconquered by Saladin [a Sultan of Egypt] in 1187, they re-established free access to the holy places, but not for the Orthodox Christians, these hostile Brothers who were considered as heretics.

Muslims watch over the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

But the relations between Christians and Muslims at that time were not as antagonistic as one might think. The "imaginary fracture" between East and West — which the Lebanese intellectual and economist, and former finance minister Georges Corm tirelessly denounces today — does not reflect the true relations and the cultural exchange that previously existed between the Christian and the Muslims worlds. There were no merciless confrontations, but rather a type of classical rivalry in which today's allies were tomorrow's enemies, and vice versa.

Who would have thought that it is Islam which has been watching for centuries and still does today, over the survival of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and thus over the symbolical protection of Christ's tomb? René Guitton, who is furthermore dedicated to the defence of Christians in the East, reminds us that "it was Saladin who, in 1192, gave two Muslims families: Joudah and Nusseibeh, the respective tasks that they still fulfill today, namely of holding the key of this sanctuary and of being the door people of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, whose doors open at 4 a.m. every day, according to a carefully planned ritual."

Even if not many of us have the possibility of travelling to Jerusalem and of visiting the holy places — which means places that are full of history and especially full of impressions that come from the glorious ministry of God's Son on Earth — we can nevertheless understand the emotion of those who visit these places with great respect. We are not saying that stones are important,

because our dear Saviour himself did not pay attention when his disciples remarked about a beautiful temple. He simply said: "The time will come when no stone will be left on another. They will all be thrown down" (Luke 21: 6). He also said to the Scribes and the Pharisees: "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days" (John 2: 19). As John reported, Jesus was talking about the Temple of his Body, his Church, the true and living Temple of God, which is not made by human hands, but whose Architect is God (Acts 17: 24). They were the only things of real value to the Lord, which are nevertheless invisible to the world, because it does not know the true Church.

Our dear Saviour also said to his apostle Peter: "You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades [Hell] will not overpower it" (Matthew 16: 18). He thereby showed that the true rocks of salvation are in fact people, who number 144,000, and who, as Scripture tells us, form the New Jerusalem, the Temple of the Living God, which will definitively replace the previous and purely symbolical temples built by human hands (Ephesians 2: 20). Apostle Peter added: "You also, like living stones in a spiritual house, are being built to become a holy Priesthood." 1 Peter 2: 5.

We made that slight digression in order to show what is important to the Lord. Of course, those who look at the empty tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ, must certainly feel an undefined emotion if they have even the smallest spark of faith and appreciation for the King of Kings, who left Heaven in order to abase himself below sinful humankind, to die for its sins and to rise for its justification. And the deeper the faith and the appreciation, the deeper the emotion. Others who have neither faith nor sensitivity for divine things, feel absolutely nothing. They are then part of the large number of tourists who visit the Holy Land in order to have a beautiful journey and to view the sacred sites as a distraction or out of curiosity without the necessary respect.

Fortunately, the Lord is no longer there (!), among the masses of tourists who want to visit and take photos, but who in no way want to follow the teachings of the meek Nazarene who said that no one can be his disciple if they do not deny themselves, take up their cross and follow him. No, the Lord is with his little Church that is scattered all over the world. Since his Resurrection, he has been occupied with all the souls who, wherever they are, wish to give themselves with their Master for the salvation of humanity. He leads them, he protects them, and he carefully educates them. He teaches them to sacrifice themselves for others, to pay for the guilty, so that, together with him, they accomplish the wonderful Work of humanity's salvation. That is what the world should direct its attention to, instead of rushing off to Jerusalem. But today is just like the time of the apostles, who were considered as "the scum of the world". In all this, we can see that people are in fact animated by credulity, but not by real faith. They fly thousands of kilometres to Jerusalem, but when a small disciple of Christ with the divine message is standing at their door, they pay no attention to it and close their door on the Lord himself, who said to his disciples: "Anyone who receives you, receives me." Matthew 10: 40.

Let us therefore not seek the Lord where he no longer is, but let us try to feel his presence where we are, because he very kindly said to us: "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28: 20). For that, let us develop strong faith and great divine spirituality, like apostle Paul, whose faith was so great that he could say and feel: "Having been buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through your faith in the power of God, Who raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2: 12). This is the most important message: to know that Christ rose from the dead and that his disciples can therefore participate in his death and also in his Resurrection. That is what inspired the apostles, who did not make a sacred site out of the

people whom she left in such sore distress. "Oh," she sighs, "for the possibility of one day bringing peace to those poor people!"

So, Martha starts to attend Peace Lectures and anti-war meetings, organised by people who want to set up fraternity among the nations. However, notwithstanding all the willing hearts fighting to pacify the human race, after several years of comparative calm, war breaks out once more over France and the rest of Europe. The insatiable power of the "golden calf" is once more crying out for cannon fodder. And so, the Second World War is raging in all its horror and with all its atrocities. One of Martha's brothers-in-law is called up and sent to the Maginot Line, leaving his wife broken-hearted. As things get worse in France, the government orders the voluntary evacuation of old people and children. Martha's mother is old, besides which, both her daughters happen to be unemployed. So, all three decide to go to the south of France,

thinking they may be able to find favourable conditions there. Having come to a small town, they settle down unpretentiously and apply themselves to seeking employment. In answer to an advertisement, Martha applies to a rich lady who is seeking a governess for her son. Martha is chosen out of many candidates for the post because she speaks both French and Spanish fluently. Martha's mother and sister have also found employment, and so the matter of their finances is settled. Soon after this, Martha's second sister joins them with all her family.

Martha's employers, rich people from Venezuela, now suddenly decide to go to Spain and ask Martha to go with them. Once again, she crosses the frontier and enters her own country. When the invaders advance towards the south of France, Martha has her people join her in Spain. Now, they feel they are all safe and out of trouble. Soon after this, Martha's employers return to Venezuela, and

she finds a new post with a Spanish family.

There, she makes the acquaintance of an agreeable young woman, a governess like herself. One day, in the course of a conversation with this young woman, Martha tells her what she thinks about the clergy: "Why is it that the clergy do not form links among the nations, and among the classes? Why do they not teach the nations Christian sentiments, so that there may be an end to war, since the divine law is explicit: 'You shall not kill'? Wouldn't it be possible to employ human energies and faculties in doing useful and beneficial things: tilling the soil, planting trees, etc., so that there would be food for everyone and no more reason for tearing each other to pieces in war?"

Martha's friend listens attentively to all she has to say. Then she exclaims: "But my dear, you talk like the brethren of the Truth I used to know in France. Since that is the

way you see it, if you like, I will lend you a book which you will surely find exceedingly interesting."

No sooner said than done. She lends Martha a book titled *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance). Back in her room, Martha starts reading her book at once. On the cover, she reads: "The new world," and on one of the pages, there is a picture which represents Isaiah's vision: some men around an anvil, beating their swords into ploughshares. She also reads these words: "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." Still further along: "The Universal Law. The day of deliverance."

Never before has she felt such deep joy and contentment. As she reads the preface, she feels her heart vibrate in tune with its consoling message. There, she finds all the problems that have troubled her since early childhood, very clearly explained, demonstrated and solved. Whereas before, the situation in which

tomb, but who, on the contrary, partly left Judea [the region] in order to bring the Good News of the Gospel to other nations. They did not feel the need to return to the tomb, but always felt the Master's presence at their side!

When the whole Body of Christ has finished its earthly ministry as sacrificial Priests, the First Resurrection will take place, that of the Saints in Light, who will be with their Master and Lord. That will be the revealing of the New Jerusalem, transparent as crystal, the Tabernacle [dwelling place] of God among people, and He will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death (Revelation 21: 3 and 4). Humanity will then wake up from its blindness and see what was invisible to its eyes. It will understand that everything is currently spiritual, that the Lord is currently everywhere, and that it is up to us to feel his presence by faith, as our dear Saviour taught the Samaritan woman: "Believe me, the time is coming when you will not worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ... The true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth, for they are the type of worshippers the Father is seeking. God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." John 4: 21, 23 and 24.

Abdul, an exceptional dog

Under the heading "This is the most intelligent dog in the world", the French magazine *Spécial Dernière* published an article with a photo of a superb Labrador sitting proudly and focussing keenly on his handicapped master's every gesture. He is capable of giving every service required.

He is 10 years old, and his master named him Abdul. After passing difficult tests organized by a group of American "behavioural veterinarians" in Boston, this famous Labrador was pronounced "the most intelligent dog in the world".

Abdul has certainly not usurped this title: without him, the life of his master, a woman of 29, handicapped from birth and confined to a wheelchair, would not be what it is.

"He understands 103 commands," says his master. "I can ask him practically anything. If I go to the cinema, it is Abdul that pays at the box office. According to the signs I make, he knows whether he must wait for change or not, coins or banknotes... And how much. The only thing he cannot do is sign cheques."

Abdul also does the shopping. Every morning, he goes to the shop around the corner to get the newspaper, and according to the day, he knows whether he is supposed to bring back this or that newspaper. He never leaves a shop before he has been given everything his master has ordered him to get. For instance, when Kerrill "Kerry" Knaus sends him to the grocer, she gives him a list that she attaches to his collar, as well as a purse. So far, commonplace. What is not, is that before she lets him go, she tells him that he will have to bring back, for example, 5 things. Well, Abdul attentively watches the grocer and will not leave the shop before the salesperson has put five items into the basket he holds between his teeth.

He also does a great many services at home. For instance, fetch this or that item from a cupboard that is out of his master's reach. Or again, pick up something lying on the floor and put it on a low table, where Kerry Knaus will be able to get it from her wheelchair.

If she has a visitor, at a sign from his master, Abdul will fetch the table on casters where the drinks stand, and he will drag it by means of a strap which he takes in his mouth.

"Abdul is an exceptional subject," the experts declared. As a rule, Labradors are different from other dogs. They are the most reliable and the easiest ones to train. A specialized institution takes four months to train a Labrador for its master's life's needs. If its master

is deaf, the dog will be trained to inform them (not by barking) that someone is ringing the doorbell or that there is danger in the house. Some, destined to deaf-mute mothers, can perfectly well recognize a baby's cries and alert the mother in one way or another if need be. In the United States, there are about 20 such specialized centres, providing personalized training according to the needs of their master. Whereas in Europe, only dogs for the blind are trained. Yet, according to experts, a perfectly trained Labrador can, in 70 to 80% of cases, replace family help or the assistance of a third party.

Is this not one more proof that a dog is a person's best friend?

It is obvious that with such a devoted and intelligent companion, the existence of a seriously handicapped person, as it is here, is greatly improved. What help and what cheer it is for the disabled to have a willing servant that watches their every movement and answers it at once, both punctually and faithfully! How good it must also be to feel its friendship and its kind, conscientious and alert care!

Abdul is by no means the only one to be of great service to a disabled or aged master, by displaying quick intelligence in comprehending their wishes and carrying them out, but we are bound to recognize that understanding 103 different commands and executing them perfectly, like the few mentioned in the above article, demands exceptional qualities and abilities.

Are these not uplifting and comforting impressions for hearts sensitive to devotion and kindness? Particularly these days when the media is crammed full of all sorts of crimes committed by the "most intelligent" creature in the world! In a time that boasts of its "high moral culture", which, after all, mainly abounds in violence! Especially towards the weak!

Might there not be marvellous and salutary lessons to learn from animals? And perhaps chiefly from the Labrador!

mankind found itself had appeared to her to be inextricable and painful in the extreme, she now has a splendid hope like a bright and beneficial light shining in her heart. As she reads on, the impressions of a prospective deliverance are intensified, and joy and consolation flood her thirsty heart to refresh it. At last, it is possible to believe in goodness, in happiness, in peace, in justice and in love, and in the possibility of all these things becoming current in the human race. Everything is made clear by the dazzling light of the Universal Law, the great law of creatures and plants, of all things in existence, even of the things that appear to be inanimate, yet bear within themselves the intense circulation of altruism. Martha has the feeling that new life has been infused into her.

The chapter which exposes the baneful power of finance, confirms everything she has already felt and guessed in her dealings with society.

Martha understands the aspirations of honest hearts in all countries, who desire happiness and freedom, such as, for instance, her dear father did. How glad it would have made him to read this, she thinks, and to know that there is at last a solution, a really sensible one, to all the painful problems with which poor humanity is faced!

Martha understands, at the same time, that without the foundation of the Work of Redemption done by the Almighty and his beloved Son, no attempt to break through to freedom could possibly succeed, seeing that poor human beings, unknown to themselves, are prisoners of Satan and of his deadly influence.

The fourth chapter of *The Message to Humanity* very convincingly exposes the condition of the hearts of men, the victims of occult powers and influences of evil, because of their selfishness and their ignorance. The dawn of new prospects breaks in her heart, and she must tell all these comforting things to her dear mother and sister. To her great joy, they are both keenly interested in those splendid prospects. Martha would very much like to get into touch with people who, like her, appreciate the message and wholeheartedly intend to live up to it.

One day, Martha's friend has a visit from an agreeable and courageous evangelist who has great pleasure in visiting Martha also. Now, the relations so much desired are established to the great joy of Martha and her dear ones. She takes great interest in the publications of the Kingdom of God, and, seeing how much she appreciates them, the evangelist passes on to her everything of his own in that line.

Next, Martha writes to the Lord's dear Mes-

senger, the author of those publications which all bear the seal of God's Holy Spirit and of wisdom far beyond what could be displayed by an ordinary human being. She expresses to him all of her appreciation and esteem, and asks whether it would be possible to assist her people to obtain deliverance.

Some time after that, Martha and her sister are made happy by being able to attend a large congress of the Angel of the Lord (the Philanthropic Association). They are also invited to visit one of the stations of the Kingdom, and there to sample the kind brotherly affection which unites well-disposed hearts. And so, both of them, filled with courage, set out with all their heart to live up to the glorious teachings received, and with all the strength of their souls, they pray: "Your Kingdom come," for the deliverance of all who are groaning under the oppression of evil. They rejoice with all their heart over the assurance, which is theirs, that soon the dear departed will be comforted and restored to the "world of the living" under the rule of the great Saviour who is kindly inviting everyone: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

News in brief of the Reign of Justice

The general meeting in Geneva was truly a quite particular event crowned with divine grace. The teachings given to us on that occasion by the Faithful and Wise Servant, were wonderfully suited to the experience and to the fight of faith, of God's people. The teachings were, at the same time, an immense comfort to everyone.

The text for the first day was taken from John 17: 9 and 10: "They are yours. All mine are yours, and all yours are mine. I am glorified in them." The dear Messenger's commentary began with these words: "In the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John, our dear Saviour gives us the most impressive and the most moving expressions of his love for his disciples. He most truly put into this chapter, quite particularly, the fullness of his love for them, whom he loved to the very end, as the apostle John says. He displayed great tenderness and solicitude when he said in the 11th to the 21st verses: 'Holy Father, protect, in your Name, those whom You gave to me, so that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them safe in your Name. ... I am not praying for You to take them out of the world, but for You protect them from the Evil one. ... I sanctify myself for them, so that they may also be sanctified by the Truth. My prayer is not only for them, but also for those who will believe

in me through their word.' Those last words concern us closely, and he went on: 'So that all of them may be one, just as You, Father, are in me and I am in You. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe that You sent me.'

We can see what an immense work of nobility, of love, of exquisite affection and of solicitude at every moment, is represented by the calling, the formation and, at last, the election of the Little Flock. When we consider that we, each one of us on our own account, are the object of such an infinite display of kindness, of sublime benevolence and of wondrous care, then truly, if our hearts are not softened and do not melt, and if we are unable to take all the steps, that means that we are not worthy of all the divine goodness."

The text for the second day was this recommendation of the apostle Paul: "In everything, give thanks." The dear Messenger said, amongst other things: "That is a thought of capital importance. It shows that we have to become capable of thanking the Almighty for all things, even for those which could cause us some difficulty and, in some cases, great pain. Such are then instruction which goes very deep and which needs to be meditated over with great care and to be taken dearly to heart.

Another truth is this: all things work together for the good of those who love God. That is a magnificent consolation to God's children. It means indeed that by the power of divine grace and the affection of God's Holy Spirit, you can in all circumstances come to the happy equivalent of whatever the conditions, for the equivalent is ever at hand and can harmonize all things in sublime manner when you trust yourself to the Almighty and wish to do his will.

Accordingly, if you are going through trials which might be arduous or incisive, they are nevertheless magnificent blessings when you are able to obtain divine understanding in your heart. We have catalogued such difficulties among the negative trials, and we have demonstrated that, all in all, they are the most easy to deal with.

Agreeable trials — which are pleasing, which give you joy, and which at times come because you have been walking in the right direction — are in one sense difficulties just the same. Why? For the very reason that their effect is to test you and set your back to the wall to see whether you are going to give the glory to God, or if you intend to keep the glory for yourself. That is the whole question. If you keep the honour for yourself, then you have utterly failed in the trial."

The text of the last day was this infinitely

comforting thought: "LORD, You hear the desire of the sufferers, You will prepare their heart, and You will listen carefully." The dear Messenger said: "That is a magnificent text. It shows the wonderfully affectionate intentions of the Almighty Who is exceedingly sensitive to the sighs of those who suffer. Our dear Saviour says they are blessed. Why? Because, being broken-hearted, they seek consolation. And with the Almighty, that does not fail them. That was why David said: 'The LORD is my shepherd: I lack nothing. ... If my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will take care of me. ... O LORD, faithful God.' That is what each of us must be able to feel in full. Then, all care, all worry, all grief and all difficulties are drowned in that wonderful assurance which banishes all fear and all anxiety, everything that could cast you down.

Mankind are afflicted by all kinds of outward things which make them suffer. But they do not realize that the thing which makes them suffer most is their own character. In our midst, it can be exactly the same. We know the Truth, and the Law of Equivalents, but they are of no use to us if we do not live up to what we know. Then, we keep the same sentiments as the world, we judge as the world judges, and, inevitably, we find we are unhappy just like the world.

Yet mankind do not like being sad. They go in for all kinds of festivities. Why? So that they may rejoice and be pleased and happy. But what heartbreaks there are in those festivals! One or another has received more honour, has been more highly appreciated or has been more vigorously applauded, so that there is jealousy, rancour, discontentment, wrath, hate, etc., all sorts of sentiments which do terrible harm to the one who has them, and all owing to the character. In our midst also, such sentiments are to be met with as long as there is still selfishness. If one had been able to rejoice over another's having succeeded better than oneself or his having received more kindness or been more appreciated or loved, one's joy could not have been tarnished.

So, it is in oneself and not round about, that evil must be sought. No one but himself can sadden a man when he is under divine protection. No one has the power to hurt him. It even often happens that the wrong attempted against him turns into blessing. Such was the case for Joseph. He was placed in a position where he was able to shape a magnificent character and to provide immense blessing."

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