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The springs of life and happiness

To know the true God and his glorious dispositions and majestic purposes, is grace beyond expression and comfort passed compare. One needs to be able to see the difference between the true God and the false, and to be able to understand what infinite wisdom and what omnipotence there are in the divine plan. Then it is possible to have a very clear perception of how things are and to put each thing in its proper place. Then one no longer takes fiction for fact and error for reality, but finds the way out of chaos and out of the terrible power of darkness in which mankind are wrapped up. Naturally it is always in the measure in which knowledge is put into practice, that a more or less clear understanding of the thoughts and ways of the Almighty is obtained. When one properly lives up to the principles of the Truth, an exceedingly favourable atmosphere is created around one, and one becomes happy with real and lasting happiness.

In past time, in the Garden of Eden, in which God had placed man, He had also seen to it that there was everything for being perfectly happy and no danger of anything intervening to spoil man's happiness. Man had been given magnificent blessing. All that was subject to some very kind and affectionate conditions. Adam and Eve proved themselves unable to fulfil the conditions on which blessing depended, and self-produced equivalents were the consequence of that omission. Had there been obedience in their lives, the equivalents would have been beneficial, but as there was disobedience instead, the equivalents were harmful.

That enables us to correctly assess the vast scope of the Law of Equivalents. Now we know that the equivalent of wrongdoing shows itself in destruction. The fact is that everything that is wrong or evil, is bad for our system. The human system has only been designed for what is right and good. It cannot be subjected to evil things without paying heavily for it, even to the extent of ceasing to exist.

Our sensory nerves were created for living in an atmosphere of divine love. If we give way to feelings contrary to that, we harm ourselves and slide down the slope leading to the end of existence. Therefore, it is imperative to fulfil the conditions of what is right and good, if we do not intend to destroy our organism. It is a splendid jewel that we have to take great care of, taking care, at the same time, not to make an idol of it.

It is not God Who demands that we should fulfil those conditions, but our organism, which cannot live if we do not. Just as we cannot go on living without breathing, so we also cannot hope that we shall not harm our organism if we neglect the conditions on which our whole being depends. Irritability, anger, spite, jealousy and pride cause great harm to all our organs, which cannot work properly under the influence of those feelings. The blood becomes polluted, and all manner of disturbances are the consequence of that. So that sin brings its own punishment.

The majority of mankind are quite ignorant of all that. They do not realise that it is the defects in their dispositions that bring about their physical and mental ills, and death in the end. To put an end to that state of things, a line of conduct must be followed that corresponds to the imperative demands of our organism and that ensures us having lasting life. Our body is 100% altruistic down to the very smallest detail of what goes on in it. If we behave selfishly, that destroys it. So, it is wise to listen to the voice of reason if we do not wish to feel the painful and disastrous effects of conduct quite contrary to our possibilities.

Mankind have behaved very badly and so have been cut off from divine communion. The consequence has been that they forfeited their condition of sons of God of the earthly degree. That made necessary the Sacrifice of our dear Saviour, God's dearly beloved Son, who came to Earth to pay their Ransom. He took on himself all the debts of mankind to give each human being the possibility of being rehabilitated.

From that time forward, one of the essential conditions for obtaining the balance that leads to lasting life and makes it possible, is to honestly keep the Universal Law, which indicates the divine principles to be respected, set forth in the following few words: "Always exist to do good," in other words "live altruistically, not selfishly". The Law of Balance must also be respected in all circumstances: there must be giving as well as receiving, so that a circuit may be set up and maintained. That principle must be strictly kept to, particularly in what concerns our organism. We must be able to preserve our balance and to even improve our state of health, for we are handicapped by our former mode of life. If, instead of enlarging our assets, we make further inroads into our capital, we shall inevitably go bankrupt sooner or later, which, in the matter under

discussion, means destruction owing to there being nothing to promote circulation. In every imaginable instance, it is the same. Circulation is indispensable in every domain. Stagnation is cessation, which is death. That is what inevitably takes place, whether one likes it or not. That is why human beings die like flies. It is the inescapable result of their conduct.

What mankind need then is a resting point, to be rescued from their perilous situation, a chance to halt their downward trend and climb back up. So, the Son of God came to pay for all men, to redeem them and to give them a fresh start for life. So great is the active power of that life our dear Saviour gave for us, that on receiving a portion of it we are able to remake our own lives completely. That is how we obtain peace through the blood of the Cross of Christ and how we shall receive new life as we carry out the divine programme, that is to say, as we lay aside everything that amounts to a deficit on our account, a virus of destruction.

Mankind are in error and in obscurity. They know nothing about divine ways. They can do no more than ascertain their wretched condition, they cannot find out the cause. They try out all sorts of things in the hope of bringing about improvements here and there. But the final result is always null.

What divine ways require of us correspond exactly with reality. On all accounts, we always come across the same causes having the same effects. Whether in society, in health or in any other domain, there is always the same circulation everywhere, as described in the first chapter of *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance). When it is produced in a natural way — in the sea as warm water currents and on land as warm air currents, streaming from equatorial regions — it produces a magnificent equivalent of incommensurable blessing. In such conditions, an agreeable temperature may be enjoyed in every part of the world. Such is not the case at present, because, with gross selfishness and an inordinate thirst for profit, mankind have deforested the Earth, robbing it of its rich protective fur: the lofty trees that used to be the controlling element maintaining the balance of temperature, moisture and wind. To destroy that controlling element is to break up harmony, balance and well-being, and to thereby destroy oneself.

All things in nature have been admirably arranged with a view to their existing for the good of all, and to never harm anything. That is a magnificent lesson for us. A very particular lesson resides in the example set by Christ, our dear Saviour. He always existed and always exists for the good of all. He is the very essence

You shall have your star

RUSSIA, in the late 19th century: "One should always be kind." How often Serge used to receive that advice from his mother! She was a woman whose heart went out to the misfortunes of others and who was keen to bring up her children on the path of virtue.

"One should always be kind." Those words, which he can better understand today, recall to Serge's mind, the fond memories of his childhood and also of his adolescence, up to the time when he had to part from those he loved with the likelihood of never setting eyes on them again. Having inherited from his mother her moral qualities, and from his father his keen sense of duty, young Serge, though he did not know it, is already well equipped with some valuable moral aptitudes.

"One should always be kind." Of course, but charitable dispositions of that kind did

not find great favour in the hearts of poor disillusioned humanity.

"Be kind to the common people? We might just as well hand power over to them and lose our privileges," was the aristocracy's mistaken reasoning.

"Be good to those who take away our necessities in order to increase their surplus? To the very people who beat us when we are dying of hunger and of cold in windswept country log houses? Get along with them?" grumbled the people.

At the cadet school in his native town, Serge is going through his training course. He will be in the cavalry, like his father, who is a colonel of the lancers, one of the tsar's crack regiments. His is a high-ranking family, and he comes up to the requirements in every way, for the candidate for this aristocracy must possess all these attributes, supreme distinction and also a magnificent moustache.

At the age of 19, Serge is in the Russian

city of Saint Petersburg, over 1,000 kilometres away from home, but in father's regiment. At 20, he holds the rank of lieutenant, and is still the same tall lad: peace-loving and generous. Naturally, he is ignorant of the profound distress of the common people, their dire poverty and the tortures of the whip inflicted on those who manifest their bitterness. Contrary to Lenin — who in exile in the Swiss cities of Geneva, Bern and Zurich, is turning over the principles of his revolution in his mind — Serge is not of the stuff revolutionaries are made of. But, on the other hand, he is of the stuff peacemakers are made of, stuff that is most unwelcome at this time of bottled-up hatred and violence.

Throughout the entire country — like from a volcano on the point of erupting and sending forth its blazing rocks and streams of molten lava — there are to be heard the warning rumbles of discontent. Those who have sown the wind are about to reap the whirlwind.

Serge regularly puts his pay towards the men's rations to improve their menu, seeing that they have voracious appetites. The captain has him brought before him: "Well, lieutenant, it appears your men enjoy good food! We've had complaints from the other companies."

"I'm quite willing to pass the recipe on to them, sir."

"Yes, yes, I know. They only have to do the same as you do. But they're jealous. Don't be overkind!"

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1914: World War One comes to mark the triumph of evil with its procession of tears, of pain and of death, all for no purpose. Serge is promoted, he is now a captain, but those cavalry men with their splendid uniforms are more than likely to find things very different from now on. Following the shady meanderings of the nations' selfish politics, circumstances change day by day. Facts of

of what is good. When we take a little of that essence, it alleviates and cures us. It is the Balm of Gilead, which, when it is received by faith, alleviates all pain and suffering, drives away misfortune, and creates joy, peace and consolation. However, to be able to feel all that within our souls, one needs a very delicate conscience to be always able to respond with goodness to everything that may arise, and to become unused to responding with wickedness.

It is interesting to note that humankind is extraordinarily responsive to evil, but very little to good. It is quite incapable of standing contradiction and does not like to be reproved. It would like to receive affection and has many and varied weaknesses in its dealings with its children by whom it wants to be loved. There are mothers who would never dare to thwart their children for fear of losing their affection. They employ all manner of selfish artifices to draw a smile or a kiss from those small tyrants who are fully aware of the power they wield over their parents. There is also jealousy to make people suffer, to roast them over a slow fire. A jealous creature is an exceedingly unhappy one. The Truth has no effect at all on a jealous man. He will surrender to that power of suggestion which causes him excruciating pain.

A child of God, who faithfully lives up to the divine programme, frees himself completely from those hobble. He sees things in their true light. He becomes attached to lasting things, but not to those which are factitious. That is what we are called to do. Of course, we need re-educating from first to last, and so we need to contemplate our lessons with humility, always exerting ourselves to respond to them in the divine manner, according to the divine principles. We also need to become wholeheartedly bound to our wonderful Saviour who immolated himself to save us and has thus become for us the Author of everlasting Salvation.

Naturally, the education proposed by the Lord costs poor human beings some effort, for they are neither righteous nor sincere, having been brought up in a selfish spirit which has permeated them with numberless habits contrary to the law of life and blessing. However, the Lord knows all things and is always there to help everyone get through difficulty. Every effort made by his adopted children, who are all mankind, is highly precious in the eyes of Him Who dispenses all excellent grace and every perfect gift. After all, all He asks of those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, is that they become happy by following the ways of justice and of truth, the Universal Law of altruism, which rules their whole being.

The Lord only has thoughts that are noble and inexpressibly lofty. He brings everything into play for mankind to become happy and viable by following the principles that lead to their being so. It is his great joy to promote the happiness of all the beings He has created, so that He may pour out over them all the power of his love and of his kindness. He is therefore as magnanimous, generous and selfless as He can be. That is why Apostle John writes as follows: "For God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, so that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life."

Where is progress leading us?

To know the future has always been a deep desire of humankind. Out of simple curiosity or to anticipate the future for commercial or technological reasons, one can today, to a certain degree, predict what tomorrow's society will be like. But the facts prove that we do not know everything and that the future could certainly

have some surprises in store for us, which we do not expect today, and which we are not ready to face. The Swiss French-language weekly *Migros Magazine* No. 46 from the 12th of November 2018, gives us a brief glimpse of the technological achievements that await us. For a comparison, we add the viewpoint of God's Word:

What does the future hold for us?

Will we soon eat no more meat? Will the Internet be the end of traditional shops? Will we soon be trackable human beings? The research team at the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute (GDI) [in Switzerland and named after the founder of the Migros retail company] looks into the future and points out what is in store for us.

The transformation in business

One does not go shopping like one used to. Everything began with the arrival of the Internet, which, in a very short space of time, has enabled us to buy things without leaving home. Since then, online shops have been flourishing, while physical stores are reducing or modernizing. And that is only the beginning, because the sales of physical items, such as clothing, are stagnating in our countries: a growing number of people look for and actually prefer experiences and memories. Thanks to virtual reality, people no longer have to go out to experience unforgettable moments. The progressive disappearance of points of sale will not stop. It remains to be seen in 10, 20 or 30 years, what will be left of business as we know it today.

Voluntary work, yes, but...

Sport's clubs are having difficulties, and churches are overwhelmed. And for good reason: there are less and less volunteer workers. Have we become selfish? Not at all. We are still as dedicated as before, under the condition that we can remain flexible. We thus prefer to organize a local event rather than attend a meeting every week. We want our involvements to be fun, and we want to participate in the decision making. Voluntary work is valuable because it creates social bonds that strengthen the community. That is why there is less criminality and isolation in areas where people know each other. New voluntary workers must have more room to move and must be allowed to take more risks: controlling everything is not the solution.

Clean energy on demand

Autonomous [self-driving or driverless] cars? Free energy? Environmentally friendly air travel? The battle for cobalt? [A metal used in the production of batteries in electric vehicles and in smartphones. Two Swiss companies are competing to exploit it.] Solar panels? The melting ice caps? Population growth? Whatever uncertainties there might be, one thing is certain: in the 21st century, there will be a change in the energy system, from undersupply to oversupply. Energy will not only be available everywhere, all the time and in great quantities, it will also only come from non-fossil-fuel sources. Once the transformation has been achieved, we will live in a society of energy prosperity that has definitively turned away from coal, with the consequences of a radical change in society, in the economy and in politics.

New reality

The three dimensions of our world will soon melt into each other. We will be capable of attaching a layer of digital information over our reality, like in the game Pokémon Go: we will look at our surroundings on our mobile phones and through special glasses and see so-called high-tech objects and additional information. Our screens will show us the way to the bus stop, the number of calories in our dessert, and subtitles when we meet someone who does not speak our language. If we see someone wearing good shoes, one click will

friendship and other treaties follow one another into the rubbish bin.

With his regiment, Serge is detailed to go to France. He is, however, permitted to go and see his family before leaving. ... The painful moment of parting is soon on them. Few words are uttered, and few are the moments for being together.

"Buck up, my son," said Serge's father, "it's only a short absence." And he put a fatherly hand on his shoulder.

As for mother, out of the good treasure of her heart, she draws these words of hope: "Always be kind and you shall have your star. Someone will look after you from above!" She would have also liked to give him a chain with the medallion of a protecting saint, but Serge does not take kindly to good-luck charms or superstition: "Well, little mother, haven't I got my star?"

So now he leaves behind him the rich soil of his native land. The undulations of the mo-

notorous landscape induce meditation. Quite naturally, because he has kind feelings, Serge idealizes these vast plains, and in imagination, sees them transformed into rich forest lands, with all sorts of tall protecting trees, species that have disappeared long ago. He sees them inhabited by happy people who are meek and peace-loving, all contributing to the good of their brethren.

"Will it truly be impossible for mankind to one day understand this matter, which after all is so simple? Is it really fate, and fate alone, that is the cause, ever since the world began, of man being a wolf to man? Is it really fate that is today dragging me away from these fertile plains?" he contemplates.

Aboard ship — favoured by the summer break-up of ice and having turned the North Cape and gone round the British Isles and the Iberian Peninsula — our Russians are coming into harbour in Marseilles in France.

That, however, is not the end of their jour-

ney. Some soldiers are sent to the French region of Champagne, and a whole division, including Serge's regiment, is sent to Greece. A few weeks later, they disembark in the city of Thessaloniki, in that ancient city previously called Thessalonica that used to be the capital of the old Roman province of Macedonia.

In the mountains, with the help of mules, our crack cavalry men carry out the most unassuming missions. But in the course of lending a hand to the weak, Serge and his men sometimes place their very lives in danger, and on one occasion, adventure was very nearly their undoing. Badly knocked around, exhausted and famished, this handful of friends thank Providence for having got them through uninjured.

"Oh dear, my haversack!" Serge exclaims suddenly and apprehensively. But the orderly has been keeping his eye on the precious haversack, and it is not lost. Hastily, Serge takes from it the small packet that his mother, with

be enough to order a similar pair. And if one could also earn a commission by doing that, by putting one's shoes on public display, one could very easily earn money while sitting in a café!

The obsession to eat well

Eating is much more than merely satisfying a need. The act of eating well has crept into all areas of our life and has many aspects. Food is everywhere as a symbol of prosperity and a certain lifestyle, as a reflection of our moral values and even as a substitute religion. It is a part of the popular culture. A large part of this development is also caused by our hectic use of social networks: photos of meals are constantly put on the Net and shared, and no one can escape this. We are therefore increasingly identifying ourselves with what we eat and with what we do not eat. Our current eating habits enable us to express who we are or who we would like to be.

The future of public space

Cities are becoming denser: more and more people have to share smaller and smaller spaces. At the same time, city space is changing, especially because of a new world of work, because of the evolution of mobility, because of conflicts of interests between inhabitants and tourists, and because of the structural transformation of business. Is public space destined to disappear? Is everything not open in a digitalized world? In addition to surveillance cameras, we will be observed on smartphones by mobile-phone antennas mounted on streetlights. We are destined to become trackable human beings who can, so to speak, observe themselves through connected watches and social networks in connected cities. The latter will use algorithms [computer-process calculations] to control waste removal and air quality. Human beings will become an integral part of the "smart city", and they will all together form a new "ecosystem".

Those predictions of the future take into consideration some technological achievements, but ignore many other environmental and social factors that are directly caused by our technology, especially environmental pollution, unemployment, poverty, war, etc. Some progress obtained by various means of transport and communication, seems desirable and even fantastic. However, we do not have the gift of prophecy. If we therefore really want to predict the future, we should learn from the past and the present. To be honest, we must recognize that all technological, scientific and human progress is always accompanied by undesirable consequences, such as environmental pollution, sickness, conflict, etc. Let us think about coal. It certainly enabled the invention and the development of the steam engine that served to drive the machines in industries and the locomotives in trains. It was also used to drive paddle wheels and propellers that led to the birth of steamships that replaced sailing ships. That was the First Industrial Revolution.

It must also be mentioned that oil and electricity produced the automobile and the development of chemicals, which characterized the second industrial revolution. When we think about disturbances that are associated with the exploitation of raw materials, we can conclude from it that advertised progress is not without its share of harm to nature and humankind. Let us therefore be careful that we do not forget the damage that technological achievements cause.

To predict the future with its new technologies and other achievements, enables our leaders to anticipate market trends and to therefore possibly be ahead of the competition. But before we deal with the future, it would be wise to fix the current problems. And there are a lot of them! Environmental pollution, the climate, sickness, military and religious conflicts, unemployment, world hunger, corruption, violence, poverty, etc. To speak of progress while most of our fellow human

tears in her eyes, placed there when they said goodbye. It is a packet of chocolate which he shares out, and a little book. He opens the book and reads to his companions in misfortune from the page at which it opens. Is it a coincidence? It is a letter of Paul, the great Apostle of the new faith, who, in the year 50, in the course of his second journey, also arrived in this place, but by another way, in the company of Silas and Timothy.

When Serge closes the book, none of them has a word to say. Those men, with their heroic courage and nerves of steel, suddenly feel very small. That other men of flesh and blood like themselves have lived through hours of danger — armed with faith for their shield, and teaching the love of God to hostile crowds with darkened minds — is beyond their understanding. Serge meditates on it, but his hour hasn't come yet.

Once the armistice is signed, those who want to can go home. The rest are allowed to

beings are suffering, is not only delusional, but also unmindful and ironic. How can we wish for a better life when there are other people, and there are many of them, who lack the necessities and live in misery?

Because true progress is love for other people. It consists of making sure that everyone has the necessities. And we have the means for that. How can I be happy and live in abundance, in safety and without care, when I know that other people are in distress? One must be an egotist to not reason like that! Furthermore, it is only a question of time before we are also affected by the poverty of other people.

True economy must be directed at our fellow people. It must be social, selfless and altruistic. Only those values will remain. Economy as we know it — driven by efficiency, performance, competition and profit — is destined to disappear.

We certainly respect the competence of the scientists who have done these studies about the future. But without challenging them, we allow ourselves to emphasize that the future will not be product of technology or the fruits of studies by our scientists. Future times with many details were announced by our Lord Jesus and by the apostles. Future times are the fruits of the soul work of our dear Saviour and of his dear disciples. It is peace on Earth, happiness and eternal life for all. There, all people will observe the Universal Law. They will have learnt to love and respect their fellow people. The achievements of modern science and technology are nothing in comparison to the possibilities of humankind once it is in constant communion with its God, which is its true destiny.

Let us therefore turn our back on everything that today's world offers us, and let us respond to the call of grace that is addressed to all well-disposed people and invites them to introduce God's Kingdom on Earth for the deliverance and happiness of all.

A welcome initiative

We recently received the following report from the news website Yahoo! News and from the international news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP), dated the 26th of June 2018:

"Green gold": Pakistan plants hundreds of millions of trees

The change is drastic: in the region of Heroshah, previously arid hills are now covered with forest as far as the horizon. In northwestern Pakistan, hundreds of millions of trees have been planted to fight deforestation.

In 2015 and 2016, about 16,000 labourers planted more than 900,000 fast-growing eucalyptus trees at regular, geometric intervals in Heroshah, but that titanic task is just a fraction of the effort across the province [state] of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"Before, it was completely burnt land. Now, they have 'green gold' in their hands," commented forest manager Pervaiz Manan as he displayed pictures of the site previously, when only sparse blades of tall grass interrupted the monotonous landscape. "The new trees will reinvigorate the area's scenic beauty, act as a control against erosion, help mitigate climate change, decrease the chances of floods, and increase the chances of precipitation," says Manan, who oversaw the revegetation of Heroshah. Residents also see them as an economic boost, which, officials hope, will deter residents from cutting down the new growth to use as firewood in a region where electricity can be sparse. "Now, our hills are useful, and our fields became useful," says driver Ajbir Shah. "It is a huge benefit for us."

Further north, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat region, many of the high valleys were denuded by the Pakistani Taliban during their reign from 2006 to 2009. Now, they

are covered in pine saplings. "You can't walk without stepping on a seedling," smiles Yusufa Khan, another forest-department worker.

The Heroshah and Swat plantations are part of the Billion Tree Tsunami, a provincial-government programme that has seen a total of 300 million trees of 42 different species, planted across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A further 150 million plants were given to landowners, while strict forest-regeneration measures have allowed the regrowth of 730 million trees, roughly 1.2 billion new trees in total, the programme's management says.

Transparency

Kamran Hussain — a manager of the Pakistani branch of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), which conducted an independent audit of the project — says its figures showed slightly less, but still above target at 1.06 billion trees. "We are 100 percent confident that the figure of about a billion trees is correct," he told AFP, highlighting the transparency of the process. "Everything is online. Everyone has access to this information."

The programme has been praised by the head of the Swiss-based International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a green non-governmental organization (NGO), who called it a "true conservation success story". Initially mocked for what critics said were unrealistic objectives, it is a welcome change to the situation elsewhere in the country. Pakistani authorities say only 5.2 percent of the country is covered by forest, against the 12 percent recommended by the United Nations.

Just one big tree remains in the poverty-stricken village of Garhi Bit in the southern province of Sindh, shading its small mosque. It has stood there for a century, locals say. "Before, there were big trees, and many kinds of them," says Dad Mohammad, a 43-year-old farmer. "But they started to dry because of the lack of water, so we cut them down," he says, pointing to hundreds of metres of cultivated land where a forest previously stood.

Disaster

"More than 60 percent of the forests lining Sindh's riverbanks, have disappeared in the last 60 years, mainly due to river depletion and massive logging during the 1980s," says Riaz Ahmed Wagan, of the provincial forest department. "It is a disaster," he says, adding that forestry remains the lowest priority on the agenda of the provincial governments.

The Billion Tree Tsunami, which cost the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government 169 million US dollars, started in November 2014. Officials say they are still implementing maintenance safeguards, such as fire protection, with the project due to be completed in June 2020.

In early 2017, the federal government announced its own Green Pakistan Project, which aims to plant 100 million trees in 5 years, across the country. It ranges from "legislative reforms" to "wildlife protection", according to its leader Ibrahim Khan, who works under the authority of the Ministry of Climate Change. More than a quarter of the work was done by the end of April 2018, he says.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is ruled by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, the political party headed by former cricketer Imran Khan, which is the main challenger to the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), as the country heads into a general election next month. Khan has vowed to make the environment an election issue, and to plant a total of 10 billion trees across the country. "Every child in Pakistan should be aware of the environmental issue, which, until now, has been a non-issue," he told AFP. But it is yet to be seen whether his ambitions will translate into votes.

Pakistani environmental lawyer and activist Ahmad Rafay Allam says that in a country where the electorate is often swayed by infrastructure projects rather than

the environment, he has doubts. "It would be a first," he told AFP.

That is good news that greatly pleases us. All over the world, nature is also being badly attacked by pollution from human activities. The wish to plant such a great number of trees, shows the spirit of the initiators of that project. It is also a proof that those people have become aware of the environmental problem that we are confronted with. Some people say that it is an unsolvable problem, that it is futile to try anything, and that it is only a drop in the ocean! But those considerations are wrong, because the ocean is made of drops of water.

When we know that the world lost 294,000 km² of forest in 2017, which is approximately the size of a football field (almost a hectare) every second, and when we know the value and the influence of trees on the climate — as the report states: "The new trees will reinvigorate the area's scenic beauty, act as a control against erosion, help mitigate climate change, decrease the chances of floods, and increase the chances of precipitation," — we become aware of the urgent action that should be taken.

For large international companies, the money from the cutting down of trees, from the use of wood and from the cleared areas, is obviously more important than the vegetation. And because the "standard of value" in the world is money, calculations are quickly made! But there also other factors that must be taken into consideration. And in the near future, we will be confronted by the Great Tribulation, which is the consequence of the foolish conduct of the nations. But money will not be able to fix that situation, and neither will all the science nor the wisdom of humankind. The only principal that offers a solution to all the problems, is the practice of the Universal Law, which is, to exist for the good of others.

When we actually take that Law into consideration, we will not rob the Earth's forests for sordid gain. We will no longer seek our own immediate interest, but think of children and future generations. That is what the leaders of that reforestation project in Pakistan did. And their work is not in vain. Reforestation will be done all over the world by the people whom the Lord has redeemed, during the Restoration of All Things. That will be the first work to be started at the end of the Great Tribulation. They will plant trees from the coastlines of the oceans and from the banks of watercourses, to the inland. The rainfall and temperature will therefore be quickly regulated. Strong winds will thus reduce to gentle, light, pleasant and beneficial breezes. The climate will then balance. That is the Restoration of All Things, part of God's Kingdom, according to the Prophet's promise: "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom like a rose. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. It shall receive the glory of Lebanon and the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of God. ... Water shall gush in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The hot sand shall become a lake, and the dry ground shall have springs of water." Isaiah 35: 1, 2, 6 and 7.

And what will especially help to introduce that Kingdom, is the love that unites all people with each other. They will not prepare for war anymore (Isaiah 2: 4). The atoning sacrifice of our dear Saviour will have accomplished its work in all hearts, and all people will be restored to perfection. It will be happiness for all and for all eternity.

Journey of a young cat

In the newspaper *Le Progrès*, based in the city of Lyon (in France), the following report was published under the heading:

stay in the army, for there is sure to be a war somewhere, sometime, to keep them busy.

But our four lancers have had enough of war. Since they now have no homeland to go back to, owing to the Russian Revolution, they decide to sail for Africa. But when they get to Egypt, they find nothing is simple. The country is occupied by the British, and work for white people is prohibited.

"You can go back, or we will lock you up," they are told.

They are not very wretched behind those bars, but they have not left one army to become the prisoners of another one.

One of the guards speaks a little Russian: "My lads, you're likely to stay here a long time. I'm coming on duty at two o'clock in the morning. So, if you're interested in escaping..."

It is pitch dark when our four Russians reach the border of the camp behind the barbed wire fence.

"Six kilometres away from here, you'll come to an Arab village. You see up there the constellation of the Great Bear: you imagine a line through the last two stars and follow it till you come to the North Star that gives you your direction. All the best!" the same guard said.

In the silence of the desert night, Serge hears his mother's voice: "You shall have your star."

At dawn, they meet a few Arab peasants near their huts. They are hospitable, for they hide them for a while.

Then their adventure begins, which will lead them for months and years to a place 4,000 kilometres away. Great is their surprise one market day in Casablanca in Morocco to be greeted in their own language. It is a Greek who has previously lived in Russia. He has a good job to offer them: "You're just the boys I'm looking for. You'll escort caravans from Dakar through the desert. You'll be on

horseback again, and you'll be well armed."

So it is to be war once more to earn their bread. The friends put their heads together. No, no, this is not for them. What they're looking for does not appear to exist, for there is everywhere that same spirit of selfishness and pride, and their disappointment goes on increasing. Religions here are worth just about as much as everywhere else. Besides, from the practical point of view also, there is nothing to look forward to, and men as individuals are the same everywhere.

There is nothing new under the Sun, either east or west, so our four friends decide: "Let us go to France... It is there perhaps that our star is shining!" At the end of four days of investigation in the port, they at last come to a merchant vessel flying the French flag. One of the portholes is open, dusk has fallen, and there is no one around. Four silent shadows glide under the mooring ropes, and the providential opening swallows them. In the

stokehole, our friends take up their quarters for the night.

24 hours later, a frightened cabin boy discovers those "coal-heavers", and off he runs to the officer of the watch, and stammers out: "We've got some stowaways in the hold!"

In spite of being severe in appearance, the captain is like a good father to them. He allows them to have a clean-up and feeds them...but there are only three of them. The fourth, buried under a mountain of coal, is dead, smothered in coal dust. He is buried at sea in the presence of the whole crew. And so, this friend of good and bad days is no more than a memory. And long will a family, somewhere between the Dnieper and the Volga rivers in Russia, wait in vain for news before they give up all hope.

Nothing much was said, for death remains to many a mystery to be feared, which they dare not talk about. To some, it is the entry into a new life, and to others, it is the end

A cat walks 1,000 km to find its owner

It arrived completely exhausted after it had walked across a part of Germany and France.

A little cat that could not stand living in Germany where its new owner had taken it to, walked more than 1,000 km in 2 years in order to return to its place of birth and to its mother in the village of Tannay, near the town of Clamecy in region of Nièvre (in France).

Shortly after its birth, the little cat called Gribouille was given by its owner, Mrs Martinet, to her neighbour, a policeman, who, several weeks later, was transferred to the city of Reutlingen, near the city of Stuttgart (in Germany). A few days after arriving in Germany, the little cat disappeared.

Two years later, on a Sunday evening, it turned up on Mrs Martinet's doormat, looking mangy and skinny, and with its eyes full of pus, after it had walked 1,000 km and crossed an international border.

Mrs Martinet, its first owner, said: "I had trouble recognizing it, but its mother immediately started cheek rubbing and licking it. It had the habit of laying on the thyme herb bush at the base of the plum tree, and that is where it went."

"I immediately contacted the policeman to inform him

with no appeal. As for Serge, he does not know what to think, but he does not feel able to accept such a thing without hoping for some remedy: "There must be something, but where, when and how?"

They dock without any fuss in Naples in Italy where they are picked up on the deserted wharf by a couple of policemen on an early beat. All things work together for their good, so that at last they find themselves in the presence of the French Consul who settles everything satisfactorily: "From now on, you will be French. Here are your papers, and your tickets for Marseilles. There, you will find employment. Goodbye, and good luck!"

Some years have gone by. Serge still has not found what he is looking for. But there is one thing he is sure of: he has his star!

His employer has entrusted him with doing up the family's summer residence. It is a beautiful villa with large grounds, and Serge has several months of pleasant work ahead of himself. He has his dog, his parrot, his hen and the peaceful surroundings for sole company. It is an out-of-the-way spot, set among vineyards in the open country. Vain noises of the world rarely reach him.

The chorus of various birdsongs, the tinkle of the romantic fountain, and the rendezvous of the local doves, would suffice for his happiness, but...there is a BUT, in big capitals, for outside the Edenic atmosphere of these magnificent trees, there are the harsh realities of the world. Beyond the birdsongs, he knows that there are weeping and tears, the sorrows of mankind. For he knows that whether they live in luxurious mansions or in dilapidated hovels, whether they be well or poorly dressed, or whether they smile or pull long faces, thousands of things ail them.

pull long faces, thousands of things all them. All those considerations make it impossible for Serge to enjoy his present circumstances to the full. The problem that haunts his mind is immense, complex and inextricable, and on a scale with this painful world that he has travelled through. He is quite sure that the remedy does not reside in the brief improvements provided by the philanthropy of men. "But how, where and when, O Lord, will deliverance come, if one may hope for such a thing?" They are the daily musings of our friend Serge.

He had just exchanged his paint brush for a fork, and was cooking some lunch in the frying pan, when the clang of the doorbell announced the arrival of visitors.

"The Angel of the Lord (the Philanthropic Association)? I've been looking for such for over 20 years. Come in, and let's have a look at what it's all about," he says.

A new impression, scarcely definable, has taken hold of him. "Might this be my star?" Serge wonders.

When the reddening sun goes down behind the trees, and the shadows of the evening spread all around, Serge and his two new friends are still talking together. They have lost all track of time, so much does the newly found happiness of one make the happiness

of others.
So, after all, everything he has hoped for but not dared to believe in, is possible! And he is going to see with his own eyes the Restoration of All Things on Earth! Serge takes long

that Gribouille has been found, but that we will keep it. It obviously did not feel comfortable in Germany," concluded Mrs Martinet.

That young cat that took 2 years to walk more than 1,000 km between Reutlingen (in Germany) and Clamecy (in France), is really extraordinary, just like the cat reported in the USA. The latter must have been older in order to have reached its desired destination after walking 4,000 km in 2 years.

The desire for their destinations and for the people with whom the cats previously lived, must certainly have been great in order to move them to start such journeys, with the only goal of refinding the atmosphere, the irresistible attraction, which the care and kindness of their new owners could not outweigh. On the other hand, and in addition to a clear vision of the goal to be reached, a particular ability is absolutely essential in order to not get lost in spite of all the detours imposed by the landscapes, and to stay on course. That is undoubtedly a type of radar that is able to detect all the useful information in order to be able to constantly sense the right direction.

That is a mystery that veterinarians and zoologists cannot completely fathom, but that, like many other mysteries, demonstrates the infinitely varied wisdom of God, which is found in different forms in each of his works.

efforts that have not been made until now.

We are more than ever aware of how positively the Work being placed before us is not the work of men, but the Work of God Himself. All things are directed by Him and always for the blessing of each, on condition that all resistance, all selfishness and all pride and ingratitude are fought against with utmost energy. May love — divine and selfless, guiding us into utter devotion — become more part of us every day, and also become the object of all our efforts. It is thus that we shall be able to go through the very serious stages which are now ahead of God's people and, moreover, ahead of the whole of mankind. Whoever has eyes to see and a heart to understand, cannot be in any doubt concerning present-day events. The world has truly come to the hour of temptation and of seduction that is going to come on all the Earth's inhabitants. That hour is also to test the faith of all who claim to be God's children and Disciples of Christ. How great is the ministry entrusted to them, for the question is to introduce God's Kingdom, under the Lord's glorious direction, and in accordance with the very precise instructions given by Him to his Messenger, the Faithful and Wise Servant of our time! The terrible threats of the announced Tribulation are now becoming very plain on every hand. The "god of this world", who is the Devil, has made use of human science, allied with selfishness, in forging the weapons of total destruction. Each day that goes by marks a step forward in the preparations for annihilation. All this is most skilfully disguised by means of numberless conferences in which there is hypocritical talk of peace and disarmament. But the words of the Scriptures say: "While people are saying: 'Peace and safety,' sudden destruction will come on them," like the pains that come to a woman with child when the time of her delivery is there. The Apostle also says: "But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief." Let us then be of those who are taught by the knowledge of divine ways that *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance) has so powerfully placed in evidence, and who truly bring everything to bear on hastening the Day of God with holy conduct and godliness.

conduct and godliness.

From Saturday the 25th until Monday the 27th of July, there is the general meeting in Turin in Italy. On Sunday the 16th of August, there will be a small regional meeting on the Test Station of Wart Castle in German-speaking Switzerland. In France, there is a general meeting in Lyon from the 19th to the 21st of September. On the Test Station of Sternberg Castle in Germany, there is a general meeting on the 10th and the 11th of October. In Mexico, there is the general meeting on the

19th and the 20th of December.
More than ever, we submit those different

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