

THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

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Man proposes, but God disposes

MANKIND strive for stable and lasting conditions. They make all kinds of forecasts concerning this. They rely on certain men who appear to be capable of bringing about some much-needed changes in world conditions. However, unforeseen circumstances arise, which they are powerless to cope with, and which bring all their hopes to nought.

Thus, in the past, all who engaged to steer world affairs along certain lines, and to make the ensuing conditions lasting, have been mistaken in their predictions. Events have given them all the lie and exposed their incompetence by wrecking all their projects.

The fact is that man proposes many things, all manner of reforms, and what have you. However, all these things are always built on unsound foundations, on self-seeking and on an aggressive selfishness. For that reason, all the plans made by men are doomed beforehand to checkmate. On selfishness, nothing stable can be built. The Almighty's plans are quite different from those of men. They are established on a very stable and sound foundation, that of altruism. That is why the plans God laid down, even before the foundation of the world, unfold exactly in accordance with his ideas. They will forever be a demonstration of harmonious and perfect divine wisdom.

What prevents man from finding out divine ways, is the fact that those ways are essentially altruistic, whereas man is utterly selfish. That is what prevents him understanding the Almighty's ways and living up to them. All who, for a while, have guided the destinies of the nations, of course, have sought their own interests first of all, little or much: therefore, their glory faded with their end. Such, among others, was the case for Nebuchadnezzar. That monarch had great authority and was extraordinarily powerful. In his heart, there awoke a desire to know what would happen to his kingdom. He would have liked to perpetuate, after his death, the glory he possessed while alive. With terrible zeal accompanied with threats of death, he summoned, from every corner of his realm, holy men, astrologers and wise men. He commanded them to explain to him a thing that he had dreamt, and to probe into the future concerning himself and the future of his kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar inevitably had to recognise his own limitations in the matter, and to realise that the glimpses he would have were greatly confused.

In spite of being very keen to satisfy the king in order

to avoid the death penalty hanging over their heads, the wise men of Babylon were unable to gratify him. He was as wrathful as could be when he perceived that they were incapable of enlightening him, and that his will was not to be carried out. Then, Daniel, a man of God, revealed the Almighty's secret to him.

Nebuchadnezzar rallied to Daniel's oracles with admiration, because that man of God proved able to remind him of his dream in every detail. Daniel delivered the divine testimony to him, and revealed the secret of the Lord, Who is alone in holding the destinies of all nations in his hand. The fact is that it is God Himself Who disposes in all matters and for all purposes, and it is impossible for the nations to head in any other direction than the one He has foreseen.

We have often highlighted Daniel's godliness, wisdom and faithfulness, and described all the blessings the Lord showered on him. Today, we mean to talk particularly about divine foreknowledge, by means of which, God knows all things in advance and directs the thoughts of the nations like watercourses. Nothing is able to escape from his might. Everything He has foreknown takes place without fail. For that reason, mankind ought to put their trust in divine ways and in nothing else, because, after all, although they make all sorts of plans and endeavour to have their wishes and ideas adopted, in the end, it is nevertheless always the divine purposes that prevail all along the line. God's plans are not made haphazardly. They have a very definite object. Their object is to educate mankind through experience for the purpose of making real sons of them and a harmonious demonstration of the Kingdom of God set up on Earth.

In Nebuchadnezzar's vision, reconstituted and interpreted by Daniel, all the empires that were to follow after his were represented. Nor were Christ's ways omitted from that description, with what they comprise, the High Calling, or Heavenly Calling. The High Calling began with our Lord Jesus's advent on Earth, and has continued till today. It has been voiced among the Christian nations. But because, in those nations, our dear Saviour's doctrine was not put into practice, they have remained ignorant of the divine plan and the Restoration of All Things. The fact is that the Christian world believes that, after having spent a certain time on Earth, human beings are called to go to Heaven,

naturally without any idea of how such a destiny is to be of any use.

In contrast with that, divine ways are comprehensible. There is no mystery about them; they are simple because they are true. All those ways are just and in perfect harmony with reason. From them, we learn that after the calling of the Little Flock (the Church, the Bride of the Lamb, the Royal Priesthood), there comes another calling among all the nations of the Earth.

That calling, a terrestrial one this time, is shown forth by Daniel in the explanation he gave Nebuchadnezzar, as a stone cut from the mountain without hands. First, Daniel shows Nebuchadnezzar the empires which are going to succeed his own: the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman Empires. A part of the latter is called the Holy Roman Empire.

Since our dear Saviour's coming till today, that is, close on twenty centuries, the Christian world has been almost entirely ignorant of the High Calling. It has been understood only by those Christians who have been resolved to faithfully follow in the footsteps of their Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ. All the rest have composed the various churches called Christian, which have nothing in common with the true Church. That is how Babylon (the Confusion, the "great whore" in Revelation) has come into existence, to finally degenerate into the Great Tribulation, now beginning to make itself felt.

In the course of his interpretation, Daniel points out that, at the finish of these events, a stone is cut, without hands, from the mountain. It falls on the feet of the great statue which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his vision, and brings it crashing down. This stone stands for a nation which has no part in the little Church of Christ, or in any other religious power. This is the entry, on the scene, of a nation of goodwill. There, we have the terrestrial calling addressed to all the nations of the world. This nation of goodwill is called the Host of the Lord, God's people. It comes to the knowledge of mankind in distress as the Revealing of the Sons of God, to groaning and dying creation. The Host of the Lord fulfil, in particular, a mission which had never before been contemplated. Their mission is to fulfil the destiny of man on Earth, demonstrating that the Earth is made for living on eternally by those who accept God's plan of Redemption, together with all his ways.

From the foregoing, we can see that man often proposes, but that it is God Who disposes. The great ones of the Earth, those who are powerful, have imagined that they were able to layout the plans for a new world organisation to which future people would be able to

All things work together for the good of all

IN a small country town in Germany in the 1930s, William's father had bought a plot of ground on which he intended to set up a painter's workshop. Unfortunately, he discovered that the expense was beyond his means, and so fell into financial difficulties. To make it possible for him to honour his engagement, every member of the family had to go to work to furnish his contribution to satisfy the creditors.

Mother, who took great care of her children, went to work in a factory. William, the eldest of the children, with twelve years to his credit, went out selling newspapers to do his bit towards the general effort. In his last school year, he engaged himself at an ironmonger as delivery boy, so that he might do a bit more to help his parents. Thus, he learnt quite early that life has its duties. But

to him, it was all joy owing to his attachment to his family.

Then, William went to commercial school. His brother intended to be apprenticed to his father the following year, thinking that later, William and himself together might make the business prosper and expand.

It was then that World War Two broke out, overturning every project. Food rationing made it imperative for mother to rent a piece of ground for a vegetable garden, to grow food for the family. William very willingly helps his mother in the garden. It is his great reward, early in the morning in the open air when everything is fresh with dew, to be able to watch sunrise. On those occasions, he feels the full magnificence of that splendid creation, all light and majesty. On the other hand, there is the contrast of mankind making war on one another and killing one another in millions, a frightful thing to behold. Every day, there are warnings and terrible fights.

That reign of terror so deeply affects the young heart of William's sister, that she has diabetes. In those difficult times, how is it going to be possible to obtain for her the special foods and, above all, the insulin and other remedies the child needs so much? Things go from bad to worse, and she finally goes into a coma. Even in hospital, they are unable to do anything for her, and on her thirteenth birthday, she dies, to the great sorrow of the whole family. Indeed, they all feel it is a terrible loss. On the notification of death, father writes: "She was our sunshine."

Two days later, William receives his call-up papers. However, owing to his young sister's death, he is allowed a week's respite. When he reports for duty, he learns that the recruiting officers for the SS regiments have gone, taking with them a number of youths who presented a fine appearance. William takes this for a fortunate coincidence, due to an act of Providence.

Once he has finished his recruit's training course, William is posted to the Intelligence Corps and then placed in the GHQ offices. Therefore, he is dispensed from combat service. However, eighteen months later, the young soldiers with whom he is grouped are kept together with a view to receiving fresh postings.

Now, William falls sick and is sent to hospital with very bad quinsy. The next day, his comrades are sent to an infantry school to learn hand-to-hand fighting, and then posted to the front. Owing to his sickness, William is saved from that.

In hospital, he does his best to make himself useful and lends a hand wherever he can. So greatly is he appreciated that, when he is cured, he is kept on as an assistant. The doctor shows him every kindness. He also is given a special certificate. The doctor keeps him at the hospital as long as he can. When this is no longer possible, he gives him con-

refer. Already of old, those who set up the Holy Roman Empire intended to create a homogenous power, and in this way, to establish world authority. But they failed to obtain their ends. Schisms arose which undermined its power. Instead of unity leading to power, there was division. Protestantism also followed as an outgrowth of Catholicism, rejecting certain dogmas upheld by Catholics, though adopting the Holy Bible for its foundation. Once again, there was the setting up of a selfish authority, acting under cover from a superior authority, frequently mystical, threatening with chastisement all who refused to submit to its doctrine.

The same principles hold sway in the nations. Some of these think themselves superior to the others. They want to thrust their authority on the others because they look on them as degenerate. Such is always the way of nations that are ruled by a dictator. All this has been going on for centuries. However, the end will be just as the Almighty announced in advance. It is the spiritual power God grants to his children, that is going to prevail, and so the Kingdom of God will be introduced on Earth. It is the honest people — those who seek wisdom, justice and love which are true — who will have the full benefit of this.

That is the way in which divine ways have always been fulfilled, and the way they are being fulfilled today, just as they have been described in advance by God's faithful servants. Contrariwise, the proposals put forward by men, whatever they may be, all go awry because they are founded on selfishness. Selfishness can end in nothing else but disappointment. The ways of selfishness, even when directed by men of genius in human eyes, are not viable.

We have come to the final settling of accounts. Therefore, the light, uprightness, justice and truth are about to triumph to the glory of God through the setting up of the Kingdom of God, the Restoration of All Things on Earth. Mankind, educated in accordance with divine ways, will have recovered their dignity of terrestrial sons of God, which was lost in Eden. Then, they will be able to live eternally on the restored Earth, as is their true destiny.

Antibiotics and health

There is widespread use of antibiotics in the breeding of farm animals and in the fight against bacteria in medicine. Nowadays, we cannot manage without antibiotics. However, the following article — which we reproduce from the Swiss-French online magazine *L'ILLUSTRÉ* published on the 5th of March 2019 — directs our attention to a serious problem: antibiotic resistance.

Antibiotics: the end of a miracle
Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to global health, food security, and development today, warns the World Health Organization (WHO).

That is worrying information. In Switzerland, patients are dying of infections that can no longer be fought with antibiotics. This especially concerns people who have severe health problems, such as burns victims.

That is confirmed by Doctor Laurence Senn [female] — the Director of the Hygiene, Prevention and Infection Control Unit at the Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) in Switzerland — who says: "When a person suffers burns to 80% of their body, the risk of infection is very high, and treatment with several antibiotics is necessary, which gradually increases the resistance of bacteria." The fact remains that, according to statistics, 270 people die every year in Switzerland as a result of infections that could not be treated (700,000 worldwide, and 25,000 in Europe). That is a number that she, Dr Laurence Senn, an author of the Antibiotic Preservation Objective (OPA) — which is a study funded by the

Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research, conducted in eight French-speaking hospitals, and launched on the Web in 2018 — is cautious about: "One should always consider a person's general health condition before blaming their death directly on the ineffectiveness of antibiotics."

It concerns everyone

That said, Dr Laurence Senn does not deny the problem. For her, antibiotic resistance is a reality that must be faced and that everyone must be aware of. And for good reason: "Due to a lack of profitability, pharmaceutical companies are not planning much new. We therefore fear that we will gradually lose the effectiveness of the antibiotics that we are using nowadays."

For Dr Laurence Senn, that concerns all of us. "It's a bit like climate change. As private citizen, one asks oneself: 'What can I do?' One of the causes of resistance to antibiotics, is their misuse in human consumption, and using less of them will have an effect," she explains, before detailing more about the fight to be fought. "Excessive or inappropriate use accelerates the phenomenon of resistance. It is important to clarify that it is not people or animals that become resistant, but the bacteria that, once they have become resistant, can then spread from person to person."

"Deadly superbugs"

Two months ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched a global appeal, warning against the misuse in some countries and, more surprisingly, underconsumption in other regions. They are the two things leading to the emergence of "deadly superbugs". According to the WHO — based on a report from the year 2015 on data collected from 65 countries — 500,000 people from 22 countries currently have resistance to antibiotics. "The report confirms the serious situation of antibiotic resistance worldwide," says Dr Marc Sprenger, the Director of the Antimicrobial Resistance Secretariat at the WHO.

Also in that report, we read that the rate of resistance to penicillin, the medicine used for decades worldwide to treat pneumonia, ranges from 0% to 51% among reporting countries. And between 8% and 65% of E. coli bacteria infection cases, associated with urinary tract infections, presented resistance to "ciprofloxacin", an antibiotic commonly used to treat this condition. "A growing number of infections — such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, gonorrhoea, and salmonellosis [salmonella] — are becoming harder to treat as the antibiotics used to treat them become less effective," states another WHO fact sheet.

Three sources

According to experts, apart from the natural resistance that a human being can develop, there are three different causes of antibiotic resistance: human overconsumption, veterinary overconsumption, and the production of antibiotics in Asian countries that have little regard for the environment.

More than 90% of the world's antibiotics are produced in China and India, where a part of the waste ends up in the environment, creating centres of antibiotic resistance that can spread throughout the world through trade and travel. In some rivers near the factories, concentrations of antibiotics have been found that are several thousand times higher than what is detected in hospital or city waste water in our countries. ...

Room for improvement [in Switzerland]

... If the incidence of certain resistant bacteria has decreased in recent years — which is particularly the case for Staphylococcus aureus — the number of resistant strains present in our country continues to grow, as is shown by data collected by anresis.ch (the Swiss Centre for Antibiotic resistance).

"There is, however, no reason to give in to panic," in the opinion of Dr Laurence Senn, who also says that

coordinated action should slow, if not stop, the advance of a risk that the WHO describes as dangerously high.

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"We must not delude ourselves. There will be more and more cases of infections caused by multi-drug-resistant germs that cannot be treated orally," says Dr Serge de Vallière — the Director of the Ambulatory Parenteral Antibiotic Therapy Unit (APA), created under his leadership at CHUV in December 2013 — who gets straight to the point. For him, the general situation is already worrying, even in Switzerland. He also says: "It is now the responsibility of everyone — the medical profession, politicians and civil society — to mobilize and manage this problem in the best way. Otherwise, if we continue to carelessly and wrongly use antibiotics, we will sooner or later find ourselves in the situation of a country like India, where the statistics are frightening."

The problem of antibiotic resistance that is mentioned in the above report, does not surprise us. Nature tries to fight the dangers that threaten it. It was therefore foreseeable that the use of antibiotics, especially their overconsumption, would lead to antibiotic resistance. And when one knows the time required from the discovery of a product to its introduction on the market, it is feared that nature is quicker than our scientists, which does not necessarily let us expect a lot of good in the future. One might imagine the emergence of bacteria against which there is no medication or treatment. The patients afflicted by those diseases would be condemned to die of their ailments, which is inconceivable nowadays.

Doctors are now confronted by diseases against which they have practically no defence. Some treatments are developed that are mostly very difficult to endure by patients and that have undesirable side effects, but that admittedly give them a little hope.

The question that one should ask oneself, in our view, is not whether antibiotic resistance is a consequence of the excessive or inappropriate use or the production of antibiotics, as the report states, but rather, are antibiotics really the solution to, the remedy for, the diseases that are produced by bacteria. One would respond to us: "If you have another solution, we are listening!" The remedy exists, but it does not come from us. While we respect the abilities and knowledge of our scientists and all the work of researchers for the benefit of public health, we also allow ourselves to highlight, for example, that the way of natural remedies is often underestimated or completely ignored in favour of synthetic remedies when the problem of the habituation to these substances is well known. And nowadays, according to the statements in the report, we also have to deal with the problem of the habituation, not of the patients, but of the bacteria to the products that we use to fight them.

When we look for an answer in the Bible, we must once again see that it is right. It tells us: "The wages of sin is death." And one of the forerunners of death is sickness. That is therefore not a coincidence, but a consequence of our way of living, or of the conduct of our fellow people. That is a very interesting realization because it shows us that the state of things, sickness or death, is in no way caused by a destiny that we cannot escape. The opposite is the case, and that is also where the Bible gives us certain promises that demonstrate that we can definitely escape misfortune by observing a certain discipline. The nation of Israel, for example, had received the law. By observing it, those people would have been blessed, and all woes would have departed from them. That is what the Lord God had promised them. Currently, we have even more. We have received Christ's Great Commandment, and in these End Times appeared God's last Messenger who brought knowledge of the Universal Law. That law contains the following two simple rules that apply to all beings and things in the entire Universe: "Every being and every thing exist for the good of each other, and all of them have

valescent leave, which he is able to spend happily at home.

Then, when the time comes for William to report to the posting office and then to the Intelligence Corps to which he belongs, the war comes to an end, and all else goes by the board. So, now in civilian clothes, William endeavours to return home. He is arrested by the Americans and placed in an immense prisoner-of-war (POW) camp in the open country, with some twenty-five thousand other prisoners. There, they are crowded together. Owing to lack of hygiene, an epidemic of dysentery breaks out. William catches the disease with the rest. One of his comrades who knows something about the matter, advises him to abstain from eating anything, and also not to drink the water brought to them in barrels and not at all clean. By following that advice, he manages to get over the disease.

About a month later, all the prisoners are sent off in goods vans to France to work there.

They stay four weeks in a camp, after which they are sent to a cement factory where they meet with a kind reception. After weeks of famine suffered in the prison camp, they can hardly believe they can eat enough to satisfy their hunger. They live in an orchard where the branches are bent low with the weight of the fruit, and they are allowed to eat as much as they like.

Here, William is employed in the kitchen. Seeing that he is very handy, he is initiated into all the work to be done. After a while, they ask him to cook for the whole family, six people, and also for six prisoners of war working there. He is in this place for nine months till the day when, owing to some financial trouble, his employer is obliged to send him back to the POW camp, the last of all the prisoners.

After a short time in the camp, William, together with two other prisoners, is sent to work on a large estate occupied in agri-

culture and vine growing. Here, the work is very well organised, and William is treated well. He has the opportunity to learn land work. Of course, his thoughts are often on his home and his people. How are they bearing up after the terrible blow caused by his little sister's death?

As a result of her grief, William's mother has felt such great need of consolation that she attends the meetings of several evangelical groups. One day, she gets into a conversation with a woman living in the village, who tells her about the wonderful hope of the Resurrection of all who have gone into the grave. She tells her that the Almighty has undertaken a Work of rescue, and that all who wish can benefit from it. God has raised up a Messenger to carry the "everlasting Gospel" to the unhappy human race: "No more anguish, no more fear, no more enemies, no more cares, no more sickness, no more death."

Mother willingly attends a meeting where

those wonderful things are taught, and she soon associates fully in the Divine Family. She feels that her faith is greatly fortified when, after the war is over, she attends a general meeting where she meets the Lord's Messenger in person. The immense encouragement obtained from the blessed hours lived with the Family of Faith, brings mother to dearly wish that her son, a prisoner of war in France, might have contact with the Truth. Through the brother who presides over the meeting, William's address is given to the nearest group in France.

One afternoon, William's employer comes to tell him, in bad German, that he has received a letter from a woman who wishes to bring greetings from William's mother, and asks if she may visit him in his captivity. The employer is willing for her to come, and also to grant him the time off to receive his visitor.

In the days that follow, William is waiting expectantly, he wonders what is going to take

communion with each other." When that principle is observed and lived, it automatically contributes to the good of those who submit to it.

As one sees, the solution to humanity's problems is not far away. And it is not even complicated, everyone can apply it. However, the acquisition of a new and altruistic character is necessary and so is the putting aside of our selfish habits. That far-reaching programme was made possible by the Ransom that was so generously paid by our dear Saviour, with whom a class of people associated themselves and formed his true Church. And in the near future, all humankind will profit from the beneficial effects of that Sacrifice. That is what the Bible talks about. It even announces the Restoration of All Things, which had been foreseen and predicted by the Prophets of the Old Testament (Old Covenant). Then, there will be peace on Earth for all and for ever. Sickness and even death will be conquered and will make room for eternal life in the restored Paradise.

Is death inevitable?

From the Belgian French magazine *En Marche* No. 1616 from the 1st of November 2018, we quote the following article:

Knowing you are alive

In recent days, our cemeteries have received some colour: our thoughts are with the deceased who are close to our heart. Death has slightly entered our lives. For mental health in our mortality, it is a valuable interruption. Because we like to forget about our mortality.

"Our century has started to hide cemeteries, to banish ostentatious funeral rituals, to avoid mourning clothes, to chemically alleviate the suffering of the bereaved, and to not speak about death any more," sadly notes the writer Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt. His voice is wise and far from wanting to sound morbid, and it mainly wants to remind us — as many other thinkers do — that we have to die. No matter what some transhumanism experimenters, who seek to infinitely extend the existence of our old bones, would like to make us believe. And despite the strategies that we use to forget that we are on this Earth for a journey lasting only a few years. "Learning to live," in the eyes of that writer, means "learning to die". The shortness of our lives requires us to live life more intensively and consciously, instead of worryingly.

Abandoned cemeteries with tidy parks

A walk in a cemetery involves a type of "nostalgia in advance", explains that writer. He does not describe that feeling as sad or anxious, but rather as a reminder that we are alive at this very moment and that "the beauty of beings, of the environment and of gestures, is precious". The writer Colette Nys-Mazure shares that view: "There is no doubt that when one faces death and agrees with it, it gives life more impetus and enthusiasm." Burials can therefore help to cherish the memories of our ancestors and to strengthen our lives.

However, the paths of cemeteries are less and less crowded nowadays. Funeral customs have changed. More and more people (50%, according to estimates) are choosing cremation. Many families take the ashes of their deceased, without placing them in a grave in a cemetery. "One can say that cemeteries are no longer the only place of memory," analyzed José Gerard from ASBL Couples and Families, several years ago. "One can also say that the physical place where the body or the ashes of the deceased are buried, no longer has the same meaning as previously."

At the same time, there is a renewed interest in those spaces dedicated to the deceased, as shown by environmental protection and land management. This year, another 39 cemeteries in the region of Wallonia (in Belgium) were classified as "nature". That increases to

165 the number of cemeteries engaged in revegetation and biodiversity. Of the 3,500 cemeteries in Wallonia, more could be included, and the awareness campaign among the local councils is going well.

Places for the living

Furthermore, the determination of a few people — such as Xavier Deflorenne from the Funeral Heritage Management Unit in Wallonia — prompts us to once again care about these abandoned places. Recently, people have become more aware that "cemeteries are places for the living: community and societal tools. We should not use them to look behind us, but to look at ourselves", observes Xavier Deflorenne.

They are public domain. If they are not invested in, they cannot be protected, either from being forgotten or from profiteers. And the danger is great in a time when a funeral service can be an "all-inclusive" product purchased from funeral-company brochure. In a time when, in matters of death, we seem to prefer amnesia.

It is certain that "celebration is superfluous. We do not need it. Celebration is useless. ... We can live without celebration", says the theologian Gabriel Ringlet. "But to improve life, to lighten it, to uplift it and to expand it, we need a ritual. It will not remove suffering, but it can overcome hopelessness and make room for joy, perhaps there where one would not expect it." In a plea for celebration, this theologian sees a deep and increasing desire in many of his contemporaries for a renewal of rituals, under the condition that it is once again enchanting, artistic, spiritual and sensory...

To comment on that article, one must first define what death and life are. A really crucial question is to want to know why one dies, and, is death inevitable and unavoidable, and also, is it really the end of all life? The answer to the last two questions is "no". Death is not inevitable, and it is also not unavoidable. Our dear Saviour said to Martha after he had resurrected her brother Lazarus: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11: 25 and 26.

The Bible also teaches us that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6: 23). Death is therefore the equivalent of a line of conduct that we call "illegal" because it breaks the law that rules the entire Universe and also our body. Death is therefore not the consequence of a punishment from God, because there is no divine punishment. "God is Love," Apostle John tells us (1 John 4: 16). In Him, there is no retaliation or thought of revenge. Furthermore, to save his creation fallen into sin, Almighty God consented to the Sacrifice of his beloved Son. Apostle Paul said to the Romans: "God proved his love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." Romans 5: 8.

When we keep those truths in mind, then we can also understand that life is the equivalent of virtue, which mainly consists of love for others. It is our sentiments that determine our destiny: death — when our sentiments are bad, which means selfish — or life — when they are altruistic. That is very simple. One can explain those important principles in a few minutes, but to live them requires all our attention and application. That being the case, it becomes understandable that "we [don't] have to die". One could further understand that life, in the truest sense of the word, is an art that humankind is currently completely unaware of. The words "living" and "enjoying" are often mixed up. Yet, "living" is not a selfish action, but an altruistic one. The proof of that is that one cannot continually live alone. One needs one's fellow people. Why: to profit from them and to control them? No: to do good to them, to exist for their good and to love them. One must be a benefactor if one wants to stay alive. We were created in such a way that we cannot exist if we do not spend ourselves for the good of those around us.

Let us also not be surprised that our society prefers to avoid the subject of death and everything related to it. Human beings were created for life, to appreciate the beauty of nature, the Sun, bird songs and the smell of flowers, and to especially have communion with their Creator and with each other, whom they should love as themselves. Humankind's destiny is eternal life. Humankind is the only creation on Earth who knows that it must die. And that makes it think deeply. Human beings would rather not think about it, because no one can look death in the face without avoiding thinking about that equivalent that will strike them one day and that they are totally powerless against.

When the author of the above article somehow invites us to come to terms with death, it is because no one can see an alternative to that tragic end. However, the moment has come when all people will be informed about their true destiny and especially about the plan of love that the Almighty designed by means of his beloved Son, in order to save us from death and to give us eternal life.

The current system, which represents the Permission of Evil, will soon end in frightful trouble, as it is announced in God's Word. It is not a matter of the end of the world, but of the end of the current bad world. Then, there will be room for the Restoration of All Things, for the Reign of Justice, in which Christ will rule as Sovereign Master, and in which all who are in the grave will come back to life. Humankind will be freed from power of the Adversary, under whom it has been harshly and unjustly enslaved and tormented. Humankind will receive a new education that makes it viable and able to inherit eternal life on the restored Earth.

The sword and the holy-water sprinkler

From the European newspaper *20 Minutes* on the 5th of February 2020, we partly quote an article with the title:

Missiles may eventually no longer be blessed

Moscow, Russia: The Russian Orthodox Church is considering stopping blessing the army's weapons of mass destruction [WMDs] ... "which can lead to the death of an indefinite number of people". ... Developed by an advisory body of the Russian Orthodox Church, chaired by Patriarch Kirill, a document launched a public discussion on this subject. Believers and religious dignitaries have until the 1st of June to make their submissions. However, the document states that "the defence of the fatherland with weapons, is blessed by the church". ... The tradition of blessing weapons, in Russia, dates back to "at least the 12th century", according to the document. Back then, the priests blessed the swords of the young Russian princes, thus confirming their superior status... The blessing rituals of intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBMs], air-defence systems and even fighter planes, have been regularly held in the army since the early 2000s.

The Russian Church calls itself Orthodox — which is a word that comes from the Greek prefix "ortho", meaning "right" and "just", and the Greek word "doxa", meaning "opinion" — which means that it believes it is the true Church of Christ. In contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, it does not recognize the authority of the pope, and only accepts the teachings of the first seven ecumenical councils (up to the Second Council of Nicaea in the year 787). As we know, a description of the Eastern Orthodox Church (of which the Russian Orthodox Church is a part) is given in the Bible, which describes it as a woman who fled into the wilderness where God prepared a place for her to be taken care of for 1,260 days (Revelation 12: 6). The true Church of Christ is barren, but will have a large number of children after the Marriage of the Lamb, when it is with Christ

place. One morning, he is called and told that the expected visitor has come. A very kind woman comes forward to meet him. So much kindness and benevolence does she display, that William feels transported into a different world. Unfortunately, they are not able to understand one another's speech, but the woman's dignified attitude and the kind influence that emanates from her, make a deep impression on him. The secret desire of which he becomes aware, is that he would like to be like her.

Now, wishing to see what is going on, William's employer comes along, and this gives the woman the opportunity to talk to him, too, and to tell him about the hopes of the Kingdom of God, after which he takes a subscription to *The Monitor of the Reign of Justice*.

When it is time for his kind visitor to go, William is permitted to accompany her as far as the village station. She doesn't mind

a bit that there is a big PG on the front and the back of his uniform (PG is an abbreviation of *prisonnier de guerre*, which is French for "prisoner of war"). The departure of this amiable woman — all sympathy, cordiality and kindness — makes a profound impression on William.

When, later, a Catholic priest and a Protestant pastor visit the camp to hold services, and recognise William as the man who said goodbye to the woman at the station with so much warmth, they tell him that many travellers had taken exception to his behaviour, seeing that he was a prisoner of war.

Sometime later, the evangelist visits William once again, bringing him some literature in German: *The Monitor of the Reign of Justice*, *The Divine Revelation*, and the *PAPER FOR ALL*. William reads them all with great interest, and can only approve of everything that is written. Later, he receives, from a general meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland,

a postcard on which the brethren have written in his own language: "You have a big place in our hearts." This makes him very glad indeed. He is sure that, as a prisoner in a foreign country, this is the most favourable moment for him to receive the message of the Truth.

As there is still no hope of him being released, William accepts a nine-month contract for civilian work with a very agreeable French farmer. The estate is in a magnificent region of the country. There, besides the field work, he also has occasion to see to the cattle. He frequently receives *The Monitor*, and this gives him great joy.

At last, the time comes around for William to go home. What happiness this is for him after being separated for so many years from those he loves, to see them again, who are so dear to his heart!

His dear mother, so glad of the intervention of the brethren in France during his captivity,

invites her son to express his gratitude for everything that has been done on his behalf, which William is quite ready to do. On this occasion, the elder of the congregation gives him some very clear explanations concerning divine truth, quite especially concerning the necessity there is for sowing life if one wishes to reap it. This idea leads him to go in for thorough self-examination.

However, for the time being, William is not prepared to renounce the world and all it has to offer. It is his impression that, in all his years in the army and as a prisoner of war, he has lost the most splendid part of his youth, and with it, many things that he would like to have now.

Having worked for two and a half years in agriculture in the open air, expending physical energy, he has no desire to go into an office. He asks his father to be so kind as to take him into his business to also learn the painter's trade. It is understood that after a

in Glory. During the Gospel Age, the true Church of Christ does not have children. In contrast, the Eastern Orthodox Church (also known as the Orthodox Church) has children. Revelation 12: 17.

Let us return to the subject of the article. We are truly surprised that it should be necessary to think about setting up an advisory board, chaired by Patriarch Kirill, that distributes to believers and religious dignitaries, a proposal to decide whether blessing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), should be stopped. One should, quite simply, never have done it!

The Russian Orthodox Church states that "the defence of the fatherland with weapons, is blessed", which completely contradicts the Gospel. Did our dear Saviour not say to his Apostle Peter, who wanted to defend him with a sword when men came to arrest him in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Put your sword back in its place, for all who take up the sword will perish by the sword"? Matthew 26: 52.

If it is legitimate for the world in general to defend itself in the case of an attack or of a danger, in a situation of "self-defence", it is not the case for a true Christian. For a true Christian, their defenders are the Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ. A child of God who personally defends themselves with or without weapons, only proves their lack of trust in their Master, who promised them: "I will never leave you or abandon you." Hebrews 13: 5.

That applies even more to a church that follows its Master, our Lord Jesus, as the Gospel teaches. It is therefore sufficient to consider the earthly ministry of our dear Saviour in order to have the Example whom we can follow. He told us: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5: 44). That means, to return good for bad. It obviously requires faith to consider such a line of conduct. One who follows it is put in the situation of a victim who takes the place of the guilty. One thereby associates with one's Master in one's sufferings and will also be with him in Glory (Romans 8: 17). That is the only way to belong to the true Church of Christ. All who have not acquired those sentiments, do not belong to it, even if they describe themselves as orthodox.

In contrast, the large churches in the world should have denounced and opposed the misdeeds of the civil and military powers of the various nations, which oppressed people. Instead, they entered into the culpable hypocrisy of compromises with the leaders of nations. That is done with the intention to rule. That is done to obtain a crown, but without the Cross, there can be no Crown. It is as our dear Saviour said: "They loved praise from others more than praise from God." John 12: 43.

The result of such line of conduct has been clearly shown in the course of history: nothing but wars and bloody conflicts! The Eastern Orthodox Church along with the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Churches and all the sects issuing from them, form Babylon the Great, the mother of prostitutes and abominations of the world. That is what the Bible calls that mixture. Revelation 17: 5.

One also understands the Lord's call: "Come out of her [Babylon], my people, so that you do not share in her sins or receive any of her plagues" (Revelation 18: 4). Babylon not only commits adultery with the leaders of nations, by associating with them in terrible compromises, but its teachings consist of disgraceful blasphemies, errors and abominations. The Bible teaches us that Babylon will be destroyed in the coming Great Tribulation. Revelation 18: 10.

Then, according to this promise, "the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays" (Malachi 4: 2). A new era will start for the humble and the gentle, who will be joined by those who died and have been resurrected. It will be the Kingdom of God that will be set up over the whole world and that will have no end.

Touching compassion of a crow

The German magazine *Die Aktuelle* reports this fact:

An extraordinary case of love for the neighbour: Charlie the crow takes a blind dog under its wing.

They make a curious spectacle. When Gruffy, an amusing mixed-breed dog, goes for a walk, a crow constantly remains at its side. That tame bird is Charlie, and it feels responsible for this little dog. Gruffy has been blind for four years. A snake bit its nose, which caused it to lose its sight.

Ever since then, Charlie developed protective instincts and never takes its eyes off Gruffy. When the dog is hungry, the bird feeds it.

Thanks to the care that Charlie lavishes on Gruffy, the bird has saved the dog's life. Because Mrs Bunty Sargent, the owner of Gruffy — and of the farm where they live in the area of Muldersdrift, in South Africa — had decided to have the dog put to sleep. This 48-year-old lady tells us: "This little dog was a picture of misery. It would run its head into everything that stood in its way."

It was then that Charlie understood what to do and stepped in: an unusual case of love for the neighbour.

What an encouragement and what a joy it is for us human beings to perceive such noble impulses of love for others in the animal kingdom! Such splendid reactions prove that, although to an inferior degree to that of humans, the Almighty has also given animals the possibility of developing kind and compassionate sentiments. And that is highly appreciable. We may therefore consider that, if such joyful proofs of devotion are already occurring now during the time of the Permission of Evil, then they will be something extra special when Paradise is restored on Earth. We know that there will be constant and wonderful relations of respect and devotion among all creatures.

In the beginning, when humankind was still in perfect harmony with the Almighty Who had established them as the royalty of the Earth, the blessed influence they gave out was communicated to the animals. Later, when humankind parted from God, their wretched mentality also overtook the animals, of which many became wild beasts.

Then, humankind started to kill animals, of which they should have been protectors, and eat their flesh, in spite of the fact that the Book of Genesis tells us that God had provided for humankind to be vegetarians. In the Restoration of All Things, when humankind is living up to the Universal Law, a beneficial influence will again extend to the animals. Neither humans nor the wild animals will kill for food. Delightful peace and beneficial family love will reign among all living creatures. That will be the blessed Restoration of All Things, which the Prophets foresaw by faith through the power of God's Holy Spirit, and which they already announced in the Old Testament (Old Covenant).

three-month holiday, he will be apprenticed for two and a half years.

William goes on seeking real satisfaction, but soon realises that, in reality, only carrying out the divine programme will provide him with a solid foundation for his life.

On the Sunday before Easter, he makes up his mind to accompany his mother to the meeting to get to know the brethren. What he sees and hears there makes such an impression on him, that he attends it again on the following Sunday. He also does so on Easter Monday, the 18th of April. A special meeting is being held where he is informed that the Almighty is calling the Host of the Lord (an army of holy warriors) into existence, who are fighting for the introduction, on Earth, of the Kingdom of God. Those valiant warriors fight for the promotion of life, of truth and of peace. In his 110th psalm, David describes a prophetic vision of that holy Host as follows: "Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your power. In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth."

Then, William feels transported into a delightful family atmosphere. He receives exactly the same impression, doing him so much good, that he had when he came into contact in France with the brethren who visited him. So strongly is his heart gripped by all that he feels, that he decides to follow the Lord, so that he, too, may become a holy warrior to introduce the Reign of Justice on Earth.

Now, William's one desire is to inform everyone around him about the things that have done him so much good. He distributes evangelical literature. To do that, he has to pull himself together, because timidity is a salient feature of his character. This work gives him great happiness. Thus, step by step, he comes to carrying the divine message from door to door.

And step by step, there ripens in his heart the desire to place himself completely at the Lord's disposal to collaborate entirely in his Work. However, his father insists he must first finish his apprenticeship, after which, he will not hinder him from associating completely in that noble cause.

At last, the day comes when William is able to place himself entirely at the disposal of the Divine Family to work as a bearer of the Good News of the Kingdom. All along his

many years of collaboration, his zeal and his joy have only gone on increasing, because his personal experiences have shown him, ever-more clearly, that the Almighty is the only real Refuge and the Source of life for all men, and that every honest effort to faithfully live up to the Universal Law, makes one accessible to divine blessing, and increases one's vital powers.

What is particularly encouraging to William, who is currently on a small Test Station of the Kingdom of God, is to perceive that to live up to the Universal Law also brings prosperity to the crops. Blessing makes itself felt everywhere, in accordance with the principles of that law: all exist for the real good of their fellows and of everything around them.

How thankful William is to the Lord for having directed the events of his life, even in his earliest childhood, and for having watched so kindly that, at the most favourable moment, He might lead him into the way of divine grace, which, to him, has become the only way to real and lasting happiness!

News in brief of the Reign of Justice

In our previous "News in brief", we brought a summary of an exposé, titled "Our conscience review at Easter", as a preparation for the celebratory feast of the renewal of our covenant with the Almighty. For this "News in brief", we have chosen a short commentary by the dear Messenger on the symbol of the Last Supper, titled:

A few thoughts on the symbol of the Last Supper

"I have given several different explanations about the Last Supper, and I have indicated how deeply this symbol must be felt in every heart.

The Last Supper and also baptism, the immersion in water, are only symbols that gain value in the measure that one can feel all of their holiness and importance. It is good to look at the glorious Model, our dear Saviour, to feel, with him, what the commitment, entered by him, represents, on the occasion of his symbolical baptism.

The Almighty's glorious approval and appreciation were shown by the Holy Spirit when John the Baptist heard these wonderful words: "This is my beloved Son, with whom

I am very pleased." Those words were expressed and heard in order to strengthen and rejoice the heart of John the Baptist. They were repeated on the occasion of the Transfiguration of our dear Saviour, by the Spirit that came on him, because it was necessary for Peter, James and John, Disciples of Christ, to hear the voice of the Spirit during that magnificent vision on Mount Tabor. The same at the Last Supper, which our dear Saviour had with his Disciples in the upper room.

If it was useful for the Israelites to sacrifice the Paschal lamb and to eat its flesh for the remembrance of the Passover meal, on that memorable night that passed and the firstborns of the Hebrews remained protected, then it was also essential that the New Covenant, among Disciples of Christ, was introduced by a symbol, that of the breaking of the bread, and of a cup that all the Disciples drank from.

If, during that sacrificial meal of the Jews, the firstborns were protected because of the sacrificed Paschal lamb, then it was not the same during the entire Day of Atonement, of almost 2,000 years, during which, the Disciples of Christ ate the bread and drank from the cup, not only symbolically, but in reality, in which they actually endured injustices without a murmur, blessed those who cursed them, and prayed for those who persecuted them, in order to have a part in the sufferings of the Master, in order to be one plant with him, and in order to participate in the same bread and in the same cup.

It is essential that all participants of this feast of the Lord's Supper, can participate by attaining the solemn ambiance that must be manifested when they are aware that it is the justified life, through faith in the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, which thus gives the Disciples of Christ, the possibility of drinking from the "cup of pain" and of eating the bread, in order to be nourished by the Lord's powerful grace, which lets them participate in the immortality of divine nature.

Let us therefore look at the Lamb of God. On the night that he was betrayed, he was solely occupied with encouraging and consoling his dear Disciples, and we, for our part, should be urged by the same thoughts towards the Host of the Lord, to encourage and bless them. It should no longer be necessary to tell us — as Apostle Paul had to write,

to make a new batch of unleavened dough for the bread — to put aside the ferment of malice and wickedness. That, so that all impurity is put away from our midst, and so that one prepares oneself in a worthy way by confessing one's faults before the assembly, and repenting before the Almighty, so that the power of divine grace can once again work powerfully and balance the hearts through the blood of the Lamb of God. That, so that the holy anointing of God's Spirit can come on each of us, because we all have to feel it in our soul.

Especially for the Royal Priesthood, the anointing consists of the denial of oneself, in the work of one's soul, given for the benefit of humanity. That, so that selfishness is completely eliminated from our heart, in order to be able to participate in Christ's sufferings, and in order to also participate in his glory, the glory and the power of a magnificent and transparent character that generously gives one's life for the guilty, by helping them in the opportunity, for their part, of running the race for eternal life by means of the Restoration of All Things on Earth.

We want to deeply feel those impressions in our heart, so that the Host of the Lord, who also partake of the bread, are encouraged to run the race in order to arrive at the Promised Land, on the other side of the Jordan River, where there are no more tears, crying, pain or death, because the former things have passed away."

They are a few impressions that are appropriate to help us and to become aware of the seriousness of the engagements that bind us to the Almighty. We know that He is marvellously faithful. As He has promised us, He will never leave us. It is up to us to achieve the same faithfulness, and it is important that we are reminded of the symbols of the Last Supper.

We therefore wish the last Consecrated (Disciples of Christ, Royal Priesthood) entire faithfulness in the gift of their life in the service of their Master, and the dear Host of the Lord, the perseverance and the faith in order to attain the promises that were made to them by divine grace.