

THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

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What leads to life, and what to death!

THE science of good" is a mystery quite hidden from mankind in general. That mystery is impenetrable to them because they are steeped in selfishness. Good is infinitely advantageous to all, but you have to be initiated into divine ways to know what it consists of.

In the course of our many expositions, we have shown that, in his organism, man is an exceedingly sensitive creature. His organism responds to cold and heat, and particularly to the impulses of goodness, and also to those of evil. The various organs of the body are sensitive to those contrasts. For instance, in contact with cold air, the skin responds and takes on the appearance we call "goose bumps". Warmth, on the contrary, dilates the skin, and if the temperature rises above a certain level, it brings on perspiration.

Goodness has a very good influence on the sensory nervous system, inducing it to pass on to the organs of the body, a sensation of well-being, of peace and of harmony. Evil has the opposite effect: it tenses the sensory nerves and causes stagnation all over the body. The obstruction caused by stagnation, of course, has to be dealt with by the efforts made by the heart. However, that nerve tension causes wear, and even death in the end, because, in the long run, it dampens the momentum and the power of the various circulations which entertain life in the human body.

For the sake of his organism, it is necessary for man to do good, and to do that is a great source of blessing: the good he does creates the animation that leads to life. The human organism works unconsciously to promote well-being, apart from its sensory nervous system. Man is a creature of the Earth. He is different from the animals because he possesses the faculty of receiving and developing spirituality. Man's spirituality, at present, is highly defective. The Bible declares that there is no one who does good, not anyone. That spiritual condition is due to the terrible devilish spirit working on him, which is simply "the spirit of the world", that is to say, the selfish spirit.

Man possesses a conscience, and it may be a good or a bad one. We have discovered that he not only possesses five senses, but also a sixth, which confers on him the faculty of receiving and emitting a spiritual energy capable of affecting those around him. The good conscience that a man ought to possess depends on him being in perfect harmony with his whole organism.

Just as the organs work for promoting the life of

the organism, so also the good conscience harmonizes magnificently with the direction given by the work of the organs of the body.

Since man has to be a benefactor, a doer of good, let us ask ourselves: "What is good, and what is evil?" Good is work of the spirit and body of man, that will create magnificent harmony with his environment, with his fellow men, with the Universe and, of course and above all, with the Almighty (the Lord, and the true God). To seek to have a good conscience is therefore the only line of conduct suitable to man. If he will do that, he will become a real benefactor, living for the good of those around him and consequently for his own good.

A human being was created for being a benefactor. As long as he is doing good, he is doing good to himself. When he does wrong, he is the first to suffer for it. This is what the Holy Scriptures call "sin". The Apostle Paul writes to the Romans that "the wages of sin is death".

The question then is to do good and nothing but good, so that one may be happy and viable on Earth, really doing oneself good. At present, mankind are constrained to be selfish. Some are so to excess, to the extent of destroying the lives of their fellow men. They are murderers. Others are, so to speak, ordinarily selfish; finally, others are the least selfish of all. They attempt to neutralize that terrible poison by practising philanthropy. In such cases, however, evil is still there, even if it is less accentuated, and as we know, a little leaven is sufficient to make the whole lump rise. As a matter of fact, evil is there, even if it is hard to see, because the conscience is attacked by that little bit of evil.

Thus then, life and death depend on a good or on a bad conscience, on doing good or evil, on altruistic love in practice, or selfish love, which is nothing but hatred in disguise. At present, all people are sinners and consequently evildoers. Many of them do a lot of harm to their fellow men. It must be clearly understood that, even though a man did a little good, practised a little philanthropy, if side by side with that, he only does a little wrong or does not love his fellow men enough, that is to say, as much as he loves himself, he still does himself terrible harm, which ends up in death.

Take the example of Apostle Paul, who did a lot of harm when he was still Saul of Tarsus. He was upholding his government and was religious. When he decided to change over and to become Apostle Paul,

he came to perceive all that he must do to overcome evil with good. As he perceived that to do evil resulted in a bad conscience, once he became Apostle Paul, he exercised himself to have a blameless conscience before God and before men. In his Epistle to the Romans, he also confessed that he did not do the good that he wanted to do, and that he did the evil that he did not want to do. So then, he exclaimed: "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" He then answers that question himself: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is indeed by obediently and faithfully following out the line of conduct that our Lord has shown us, and with his help — for it is He Who works in us to will and to work for his good pleasure — that we arrive at overcoming evil with good.

Our Lord Jesus Christ displayed only goodness in his thoughts, words and actions. Owing to this, he was perfectly viable, and for this reason, had he not given his life for us nineteen-hundred years ago, he would still be with us. However, the part he had to play as the Saviour did not consist in merely being in perfect harmony with the whole of the Universe, with the Almighty and with his own organism, but also in being mankind's Supreme Benefactor. That was why he went the way of the divine plan, giving his life as the Ransom for all.

After our dear Saviour's resurrection, the Almighty provided for the High Calling, which has now been going on for nineteen-hundred years. During that time, the Almighty has been looking among the human race for a body of people of goodwill, to be directed by our Lord Jesus and made up of magnificent benefactors. They are disciples who faithfully follow the Master's ways, giving their lives as a ransom with him. The Lord Jesus sets the Gospel before them, which they have to live up to, to perform a radical and wonderful transformation in themselves. Such a demonstration was obtained in a magnificent way in the race run by Apostle Paul. At the end of his ministry, he was able to say: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now, there is in store for me, the crown of righteousness." The disciples who are faithful are the Church (the Little Flock, and "the pillar and foundation of the truth").

Disciples of Christ are sent into the world to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth. Today, we are living in the time when this event is taking place. For this purpose, God's "chosen" people (the Royal Priesthood, the Little Flock, and the Elect) have to shape, in themselves, dispositions wonderful in purity, in justice, in truth and in altruistic love.

Christopher's conscience

FROM his desk near an office window, Christopher can unfortunately see nothing to remind him of the beauties of Creation. Here in the city, as in many other places, nature has had to give way to gradually make room for the ruthless implantation of the creations of man's cupidity.

Along an embankment, which used to be a pleasant place, some giant warehouses have been built and, of course, have been accompanied by a grotesque forest of cranes.

The city, for its part, is becoming surrounded by a shantytown and is crowded around a harbour in whose filthy waters dead fish and other debris are tumbled around by the ripples on the surface.

Between two walls, Christopher can just catch a glimpse of a patch of sea no larger than a handkerchief, and of a small piece of sky barely visible through the haze.

His engineering job absorbs him quite a lot, though much less than in former years, in the course of which, he used to devour technical books one after the other to keep up with the progress of knowledge. In those days, he used to get away every weekend to breathe the clean air of the peaceful hilltops, for there, away from his fellow men, he would feel he was nearer to God.

Christopher can think, without regret, of that period of experience, and of groping in the twilight when divine Truth had not, as yet, shed its light on him. During days of profound distress, he had greatly longed for the undiscovered remedy that might heal his soul, and the infinite grace of that Truth, entirely free of mystery, gently came to answer his desire. The whole matter was set out in *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance), which had been written for those who, like him, thirsted for justice and Truth, and the powerful vision of the prophets,

projected on to his own time, had gripped him. The prospect of seeing, in the near future, that Reign which has been expected for so many centuries — on the restored Earth and all people living harmoniously under the Lord's almighty protection — had irresistibly impelled him to join "the meek" (the gentle) whom the ideal of the Kingdom of God was recruiting to work on its introduction.

Several times during weekdays, and also on Sundays, Christopher would join his brethren in the faith, in order to fortify himself in divine ways. The edification of that Reign of peace and harmony, and of justice and uprightness, is carried out with the trowel in one hand and "the sword of the Spirit" in the other, in accordance with the allegory. So, it is indispensable to feed "the new creature" with the word of Truth and with prayer, in order to fit oneself to effectively fight the attempts to discourage, made by

the Adversary (the Evil one), and to always remain in the heat of the fight of good against evil.

While he is not yet completely freed from the obligations of the world, Christopher places all the time he can at the Lord's service, at the service of the cause of the Kingdom of God. In accordance with the divine Law of altruism, which he understands and is seeking to follow out with all his heart, he is making every effort to propagate the message of Truth.

Along the roads of France, from town to town, from village to village and from house to house, he carries the Good News of "the new age", to rich and poor alike, to the orphans and to the hearts of all ages, bruised by adversity. He travels to bring them the message of divine grace, the sovereign remedy for all ills.

Great is his joy and unshakable his assurance, for his steady faith in the splendid

All along the time of the High Calling, the shaping of the Little Flock was a hidden mystery. As Apostle Paul says, it was "Christ in you, the hope of glory". Such glory is preceded by the formation of the brightly shining dispositions of a benefactor who provides for the dying and groaning human race, the Revealing of the Sons of God, which Apostle Paul also speaks of.

That magnificent body of real disciples of Christ, is capable of overcoming evil with good, by faithfully following in the footsteps of the beloved Son of God. Evil results in death, and our dear Saviour is the Vanquisher of evil, by putting a spotlight on good, which overcomes everything that could harm fellow men. In this way, those real disciples would attain eternal life, but they surrender that eternal life, earned by a life of altruism, and put it towards the Ransom of mankind.

The calling and election of those chosen people, started from the moment our dear Saviour was raised from the dead, and has been going on till today. People — even those who, while calling themselves Christians, were not living out the divine programme — thought that evil was stronger than good. But our Lord Jesus Christ and the members of his Church of the Kingdom of God, live the way of benefactors. They thus demonstrate that good is stronger than evil, and that it is wise to do good, whereas to act selfishly, to do evil, is the height of folly, since it hurts others and particularly the one who acts so.

So, it is the Mystery of Godliness (the mystery of good in the living) that exposes the Mystery of Iniquity. It shows mankind that in the Kingdom of God, only good is done, that is to say, the love of justice, which makes everlasting life a sure thing.

We have come to the time when everyone has to make up his mind to live a good life, to be a benefactor, for all malefactors destroy themselves. Man's organism is his own administrator of justice. The man who is not of a kind and altruistic spirit, destroys himself, whereas the one who gives glory to the Lord and takes nourishment from his Spirit, and who is altruistic, provides his organism with blessing and lasting life.

The suffering in factory farming

The European newspaper *20 Minutes*, on the 24th of February 2022, published the following article about the suffering of "layer hens" (hens bred for egg laying) on "factory farms" (in "intensive animal farming"):

All layer hens have fractured bones because of increased egg laying.

Too many eggs and not enough calcium: the hens suffer.

Study: The University of Bern [in Geneva, Switzerland] has X-rayed layer hens: almost all of them had broken bones.

The study by the University of Bern is hardly reassuring for chicken and egg lovers. Researchers observed 150 layer hens for 10 months, and regularly X-rayed them. The result was alarming: 97% of them had breastbone fractures [the equivalent of the sternum in humans], reported the Swiss German-language consumer magazine K-Tipp and the Swiss German-language newspaper Luzerner Zeitung. On average, each hen had three broken bones, and some hens had up to eleven. This finding is not new. According to a recent Danish study, 85% of layer hens have broken breastbones because they lay eggs that are too large. But the X-ray method used the University of Bern, shows that the problem is much bigger.

A layer hen produces an average of 323 eggs per year, almost one a day. The calcium needed for the shell comes from its bones. Scientists assume that the

bones do not regenerate calcium completely and become porous, a type of osteoporosis. In addition, some hens start laying much too early, when their bones have not yet sufficiently developed. In this case, a violent wing strike or a collision with a perch, is enough to break the breastbone.

Professor Doctor [Mr] Hanno Würbel, the Director of the Animal Welfare Division at the University of Bern, criticizes: "With the current methods of containing and breeding chickens, pain and suffering are unavoidable for many animals. This is unacceptable." This phenomenon affects all layer hens in Switzerland, regardless of the type of farming.

It makes us sad when we think about the conditions endured by animals on factory farms. Locked in large sheds, they never see daylight, they never run around on green grass, and they never enjoy the benefits of nature. They are condemned to eat. That is their only occupation. Regarding layer hens, they have to produce an egg almost every day, and for that, they have to use the calcium in their bones, which is actually needed for the development of their skeletal strength.

Because animals cannot speak, they suffer in silence. Is that a reason for us humans to accept this suffering, for a bit of comfort? Should we really tolerate that animals are weakened and live in conditions that are undignified and that resemble torture, just because we want to strengthen ourselves by eating their eggs?

Elsewhere, again in the newspaper *20 Minutes*, this time on the 3rd of March 2022, there is another article about intensive animal farming:

[The proposed ban on] factory farming: The initiative was defeated without an alternative

Bern [the capital city of Switzerland]: Like the National Council, the Council of States has rejected both the text and its counter-proposal.

Parliament does not want the initiative against factory farming. Like the National Council in December, the Council of States yesterday rejected the initiative and its less restrictive counter-proposal, which the Federal Council would have liked to oppose. The Swiss people will therefore have to vote solely on the text of the initiatives who want to ban factory farming in Switzerland within 25 years, and to include organic standards in the Constitution.

However, the Left tried everything to get the initiative passed, or at least the counter-proposal. "Fifty percent of pigs never see the Sun, and each have only one square metre of space in Switzerland," said [Swiss politician] Adèle Thorens Goumaz (Greens / Canton of Vaud). "Ninety percent of the chickens we eat are crammed together in sheds, containing up to 27,000 animals, and will never see the Sun, and will never frolic freely in an orchard with a lovely traditional farmhouse in the background," as the advertisements would make us believe.

On the Right, the arguments against the text were rife. "There is already stringent animal protection in the law," said [Swiss politician] Peter Hegglin (Centre / Canton of Zug), on behalf of a committee, and seconded by [Swiss politician] Charles Juillard (Centre / Canton of Jura). "This type of [organic] farming would increase prices and tourist shopping," warned [Swiss politician] Werner Salzmann (SVP / Bern). "Both the initiative and the counter-proposal will reduce production. But they will not reduce meat consumption," added [Swiss politician] Johanna Gapany (PLR / Fribourg).

What we read above, is simply unacceptable. Is money therefore the only argument that decides the fate of thousands of poor animals? On the other hand, there is the question about the quality of the meat and the other products that come from factory farming. What are their effects on human health?

Progress, which we are so proud about, should extend to all areas of society, including animals. How

can one claim to be civilized if one squeezes together animals, destined to be our food, into places that one could call "concentration camps"? That is barbaric. Can one ignore so much suffering simply to eat a piece of meat, without informing oneself about the origin and the quality of life of the animal that it came from? Are we so unaware of, and indifferent to, the misfortune of other living creatures? They also have the right to a decent quality of life.

Fortunately, we know that the end of the present world is near. Not that we want it, but it is the inevitable result of human conduct. We have sown the wind and will reap the whirlwind. That whirlwind, also known as the Great Tribulation, was announced long ago. It will make room for God's Kingdom, which will be established over the whole world, and in which it is said that there will be no harm or destruction. Isaiah 65: 25.

Evolution or decline?

The Swiss-French newspaper *20 Minutes* on the 14th of March 2022, published an interesting article in which we are told that our brain is becoming smaller. We, who always think that we are more intelligent than previous generations, might be taught a lesson here. We quote its text as follows:

Our brains have shrunk by the size of a lemon

The loss of volume of our "thinking organ", intrigues researchers who are following several leads.

Is humanity sliding towards generalized stupidity? That question can be asked when we know that, after having grown during most of evolution, our brain has been shrinking for a few thousand years. "The decrease corresponds to the volume of a lemon," says American paleoanthropologist Professor Jeremy DeSilva, quoted by [the Swiss newspaper] NZZ am Sonntag. DeSilva is working on the thesis that the outsourcing of knowledge has led humankind to invest less energy in the brain. Many decisions are made by the group and no longer by the individual, so, important survival information is no longer stored in one's own memory, but in the memory of other group members, as well as in books. "The invention of writing, for example, apparently coincides with the beginning of brain-size reduction," explains DeSilva.

Biologist Sandra Heldstab, of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Zurich [in Switzerland], suspects that new infectious diseases require a stronger immune system, which drains some of the brain's energy. Experts agree, however, that we do not have to worry. "The link between brain size and intelligence, is very weak," says Heldstab...

That is information that we should seriously consider. And if we want to be honest, does it not also question the Theory of Evolution, according to which, we are always developing to become better, more capable and more intelligent, and in an upward, but never in a downward direction? How can it be explained that we are losing abilities, that our ancestors knew more than us, and that they were more capable than us in some domains? It is a good lesson in humility to acknowledge the capacities of those who preceded us.

But if we want to pursue those thoughts further, we must ask ourselves: "What factors have produced the shrinking of our brain?" Without making the claim of being able to give a complete explanation for this phenomenon, we will try to advance some hypotheses. Thus, new school-teaching methods promote understanding rather than acquisition. For example, there is not as much learning by heart, as there used to be. Learning by heart might not be the best education method, but it nevertheless has the merit of training and developing the brain.

Furthermore, the magazine article reports that the

divine promises brings to life, for him, the incomparable vision of the Promised Land, so bright, so beautiful to his mind, and bringing happiness to all. He sees the Earth rid of "the rod of the wicked", which today beats the backs of poor mankind, the victims of Satan. By faith, he can see the whole world enjoying the peace and calm of divine grace, in accordance with the words of a prophet, and can hear the shouts of joy of the children of the Resurrection. Thus, his heart, overflowing with joy, sings this verse of a hymn every day:

*As soon as daylight is appearing
And makes the purple shadows flee,
We are abroad, to all hearts, bearing
God's grace, his pardon full and free.*

From the mouth of the Rhône River (in the southern France Mediterranean region) to the lower French Alps (mountains in the southeast), the lay of the land has become quite familiar to him, so many times has he

crisscrossed it, carrying the Good News, "the precious seed of Truth". From the towns of Digne to Tarascon, and from Martigue to Castellane, he tends the divine fire in the hearts of all seekers of Truth, the meek interested in reading *The Monitor of the Reign of Justice*, the idealists and those whom life has disappointed.

In the town of Forcalquier, the friendly man he has come to meet this morning is absent.

"You'll find him in the town of Saint-Christol. He's working on the building site at the Apt-Saint-Christol air base for nuclear ballistic missiles," he is told.

So, Christopher crosses the high plateaus where lavender grows and where sheep graze. "This is most singular," he thinks as he draws near to the spot, for in his heart and conscience, he cannot conceive that a subscriber to *The Monitor of the Reign of Justice*, and consequently a supporter of universal peace, could lightheartedly work

on this building site for launchers of rockets with nuclear warheads. Yet so it is.

"Of course, it is not the ideal thing, but it pays well," is what the man tells Christopher.

To speak to the hearts of men — great and small, learned and unlearned, and rich and poor — which is a major object of the mission of one of God's servants, Christopher does not leave the spot before fetching out of his treasure chest those elements that will revive "the conscience of duty". He reminds this friend of the fatal consequences of the many practices of selfishness, and that only the heart's adherence to "the principles of love", in accordance with the Gospel, leads to peace. As for making sure of one's bread and butter, is it not written that if you "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness", then "all these things will be added to you"? Before continuing on his way, Christopher also reminds his friend that, concerning wages, to deceive men more thoroughly, Sa-

tan can pay lavishly well, so that, in the end, he may stage, for his own enjoyment, a final holocaust beneath a deluge of fire.

Having sown "the good seed" in this way from morning till night, Christopher sleeps peacefully and dreamlessly all through the hours of darkness, and awakes in the morning as cheerful as can be.

Monday morning finds him back at the office. In honour of the cause that is dear to his heart, he does his best to show magnanimous and fraternal love, in accordance with the ideal of the Kingdom of God.

The office manager is well acquainted with this big-hearted lad, this valuable workman who regularly sacrifices his leisure hours, for no material gain, for spreading the Good News and giving out words of consolation to hearts in distress. The office manager is even fond of him, in spite of the fact that Christopher's principles sometimes make things awkward for him. The fact is that Christopher

invention of writing apparently coincides with the start of the reduction of the brain size. Before we had the possibility of storing information in writing, we used the so-called "oral tradition". The memory was very busy. In that way, for example, books, like the Bible, developed. For a long time, orally passed down from fathers to sons, the Bible stories were eventually recorded in writing, firstly in scrolls and then in books. One can imagine how busy the memory was to store so much information.

Today, with all the possibilities that technology offers, it seems that even books have been superseded. With the computer and the internet, one instantly has all the required information and doesn't go to the trouble of memorizing it.

But in our opinion, all of that only incompletely approaches the phenomenon. We think that the shrinking of the brain is mainly caused by the appearance of sin. When one thinks that humankind, at the beginning of Creation, was in constant harmony with the Almighty, then all of their brain's capacities must have been required for that. Let us consider faith, for example. It assumes that one constantly feels the Lord's presence, Whom one cannot see or hear, and that one never thinks, says or does anything that could grieve God's Spirit. The same applies to all the divine sentiments.

They are abilities that have no longer been developed since humankind's Fall into sin. However, the Little Flock (the few chosen people), who followed our dear Saviour on the path of sacrifice, fully developed those sentiments and could therefore form his Church. And we know that all humankind are also called to achieve those sentiments, although in a smaller measure. To love one's fellow person as oneself, to which our Lord Jesus invites us, one must learn to love God above all, and for that, one must develop faith.

In contrast to that, selfishness, which is currently generally practised by humankind, limits their capacities. By thinking about oneself, and through disinterest in others, our brain loses certain capacities. Because this organ, just like all the other organs in the human body, was created to exist for the good of its surroundings. Humankind should follow this principle, which is the expression of the Universal Law. This is why we are here: to exist for the good of others, and to always have communion with them.

Furthermore, we can close this article with good news. The human brain will regain its original size, thanks to our dear Saviour's Sacrifice, which will enable the Restoration of All Things, in the near future. Thus, the prophets announced, long in advance, that humankind will regain their destiny: eternal life.

The result of progress

The Swiss-French magazine *Immorama* No. 50, Spring 2022, mentions the very interesting subject of progress. We quote extracts from it, as follows:

The lament of progress

Progress claims to lengthen our life expectancy by promising us a radiant and digital future, without pollution, and with comfort for all. But the novelties of progress are also a source of new difficulties.

Are our times really great? Of course, we live better, older and richer too? Progress has certainly eradicated some global diseases and responds at record speeds to new pandemics. It promises us colourful dreams in which there are happy people, radiant cities and breathable air. But that is not the whole picture. Like all advances, progress also has its pitfalls. Its speed does not particularly bother those who go slowly.

History shows us that the term "progress" originally described "a state of humanity". It was a basic tendency of morality that contributed to the improvement of humankind. Later, with the advent of "the industrial soci-

ety", the word was associated with technical and scientific developments. Although it always seeks to improve humankind's condition, it sometimes also contributes to degrade it by erasing certain professions and those who practise them, by imposing restrictive conditions on everyone, for example, by hurriedly responding to the climate emergency without necessarily measuring the consequences on the state of the world, or by not taking firmly anchored habits into consideration.

One might find that the price is too high to pay, but it is impossible to go against progress, which is part of the inevitable march of time. Without refusing it, we can also decide that it is too serious a matter to accept without blinking, in order to better reflect on its upheavals. Also keep in mind that some of yesterday's progress has become today's problems.

Progress on the march

From Mr François Rabelais [a French Renaissance writer, physician and priest] to "the metaverse" [an online computer network of three-dimensional virtual worlds], the notion of progress has evolved over time. The term started out to improve the human condition, but today it mainly describes technical advances that serve society...and that also harm it.

"As soon as it is born, the new is destroyed. ... Ruin is the very state of modern things." They are words by Mr Marcel Proust [a French novelist]. That writer — who spent his life in the past, and who locked himself up in his room with cork-lined walls — resisted contact with the present, and was devastated by the future: they were his thoughts about an evolving world, which terrified him.

Congested roads

In that respect, progress causes ambiguity: it promises a tomorrow full of music, but doesn't say how long it will play. Every change creates anxiety about an uncertain future. In the 1950s, the automobile was a good idea, a practical and fast way to go from A to B. Fifty years later, it is clogging up the city centres (from which it will soon be banned), it contributes to climate change, and due to its numbers, it suffers from the overloaded traffic. In 2019, the Swiss Federal Department of Statistics estimated that there were 30,000 hours of traffic jams on Swiss roads, which is the equivalent of three and a half years of congested roads. In the same way, the digital world [the internet] should simplify our lives by making them quicker. We should send an email instead of a letter, and the smartphone was invented to free us from the telephone cord and to make us available anytime and anywhere. But this technological progress has become restrictive, increasing the stress that innovation was supposed to eliminate, and making most of us addicted to our small screens.

Early transhumanism [to evolve by means of science and technology]

What actually is progress? The constant quest for human well-being? The cause of deep social and intellectual disarray? A political and economic ideology? A bit of all of that, depending on which angle one looks at it. Although the idea of progress can be applied to the development of agriculture in ancient civilizations, and to the invention of the printing press by Mr Johannes Gutenberg [a German inventor, printer and publisher] around the year 1450, the word did not actually appear until the 16th century and is attributed to Rabelais, who first used it in French. In 1588, Mr Michel de Montaigne [a French Renaissance philosopher] gave it a moral dimension and described it as an art of self-improvement, "a gradual transformation towards the better".

*With the emergence of science, the concept took on the meaning that we know today. In his novel *New Atlantis*, published around 1626, Mr Francis Bacon [an English philosopher and statesman] describes an*

ideal land, which is entirely devoted to science and technology, and where aging is delayed, incurable sicknesses are healed, and new species are produced. Bacon was an early believer in transhumanism, and launches the idea of progress as the means by which humankind ensures their domination over nature. This idea evolves until enlightenment, by which progress leads humankind to rise only by their thoughts, without God's help, to find their place in the Universe. For Mr Jean-Jacques Rousseau [an 18th century European philosopher, writer and composer], that faith in science can only lead to the corruption of morals. Wanting to change the world is good, but only if, at the same time, we learn to transform ourselves.

Enthusiasm und criticism

Progress — linked with technological innovation and its consequences, good or bad — emerges with the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century. But it is especially in the 19th century, when mechanization is in full swing, that progress announces "the modern man". The spirit of innovation enthuses the crowds and excites the competition among the nations. World Expositions [World Expos] are established, where countries compare their capacity of development. Few are the voices that rise to denounce the downside of progress: a source of considerable profit which breaks the workforce that contributes to it. The workers work themselves to death, and misery spreads out in the cities, where epidemics decimate crowded populations. "Progress — faith in progress — and the fanaticism of progress — is the trait that characterizes our time, which makes it so magnificent and so poor — so great and so wretched — and so wonderful and so boring. Progress and cholera — and cholera and progress — are two plagues unknown to the ancients," wrote Rodolphe Töpffer [a Swiss teacher, author and painter] in 1835. Mr Karl Marx [a German philosopher, economist, and social revolutionary] did not think otherwise. Mr Charles Baudelaire [a French poet] in 1885 asked this question: "Ask any good Frenchman who reads his newspaper every day in his café, what he understands about progress, and he will answer: 'It's about steam, electricity and gas lighting, it's about miracles that were unknown to the Romans, and it's about discoveries that bear witness to our superiority over the ancients. There was so much darkness in their unfortunate brains, and the material and spiritual things were bizarrely confused!'"

Mr Filippo Tommaso Marinetti [an Italian poet, editor and founder of the Futurist movement]... A nationalist and anarchistic revolutionary who then switched to the fascist camp, Marinetti belonged to the generation who cherished the hope that the First World War would give birth to a new world order, on the ashes of the old order. The horror of the trenches dampened the enthusiasm. That conflict, which caused 10 million deaths and 20 million casualties, did not keep its promise of better days.

As with the Second World War, progress at the beginning of the 20th century was a military affair. Aeronautics, surgery, chemistry, the automobile and most unfortunately the armament industry, experienced dazzling developments that transformed civil society.

... In 1714, Mr Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz [a German mathematician, philosopher and scientist] wrote: "Our happiness does not consist in full enjoyment where there would be nothing to be desired, but in a perpetual progress to new pleasures and new perfections."

The post-World War Two consumer society will fulfil this prediction: progress is an elixir of happiness. The race for miniaturization will push the limits of possibilities. In 1965, Mr Gordon Moore [an American engineer] said that the number of components in a dense integrated circuit [chip] doubles every year. At that time, progress revolutionized all fields of human activity. But mainly in the technological domain. "We came in peace for all mankind," says the statement on the plaque that

systematically refuses to lend a hand in anything that bears the image of Satan.

Mr Brown (the office manager) has no anxiety when, on the desk of Christopher (the philanthropist), he lays a file which implies nothing but peaceful aims, a way of promoting the common good. The measurements are worked out correctly, and the plans are drawn with meticulous care. But if he brings him plans in which there is the least suspicion of the presence of the demonic spirit of chemistry, or worse, of war, then there is nothing doing.

On Monday afternoon, just before knock-off time, raising his eyes by chance, Christopher perceives a project file that someone has laid on the left side of his desk, unnoticed by him. There's nothing out of the ordinary about this, though it looks like an important matter.

"Project to build ten hoists at the nuclear ballistic missile base in Saint-Christol," he reads on the first page. His hand, holding

the file, trembles a little. Suddenly, his legs feel a little weak. "The prince of darkness" decidedly casts his shadow everywhere.

That night, Christopher tosses from side to side in his bed. His thoughts tumble around inside his head and give him no rest. Those ten hoists, which he is going to have to refuse to look into tomorrow, are a load on his heart. Another piece of good business, a very important one, which, owing to him, will fall into the hands of a competitor. It is the workmen's jobs and the prosperity of the company, that are at stake. Once again, he will have to say "no" and display "a spirit of noncooperation" in the eyes of all: of his boss and of his work mates, who will not be able to understand that you cannot obey God and, at the same time, do the will of men. The project is to build ten hoists at the nuclear ballistic missile base in Saint-Christol, the very place where, two days earlier, he had so valiantly exhorted that subscriber of *The Monitor* to

uncompromisingly practise the justice of the Kingdom of God.

Christopher is assailed with worry, for the gap that lies between the faith accepted in theory and the faith which has to be acquired by practice, has to be bridged by hope. The invisible powers that govern discord here below, raise up waves of opposition on which "the frail boat of faith" is violently tossed around.

But even though Christopher has a sleepless night, he does not flinch. By the time dawn breaks, his decision still stands: "the voice of conscience" means "obedience to what is good". God's Holy Spirit pointedly reminds him of these words in a hymn:

*My voice doth exhort thee,
My ruling is mild.
My love doth support thee,
I watch thee my child.*

The next morning, at his workplace, the event which has caught everybody's attention

is an eclipse of the Sun. Near Christopher's workplace is good viewing point for witnessing this rare phenomenon. So attractive is the eclipse that almost all of the company's engineers go to view it. All except two: Christopher and the office manager, who incidentally passes by his desk.

"Christopher, aren't you going to see the eclipse?"

"No thanks, I'm not going!"

"Why not? You won't see another one for a long time."

"Why! You know as well as I do. This project file didn't come out of the blue. You are aware of my ideal and my conscience."

"But it's only a tender for a job, and there's nothing to prove that it will be accepted."

"Sir, the Devil will see to it that it is accepted. My conscience gives warning. Then, I shall be the most wretched of men for being the greatest hypocrite. Only three days ago, at that very place, a friend for whom it would

Neil Armstrong left on the Moon on the 21st of July 1969. This humanistic spirit of technological progress also animated the creation of the World Wide Web, in 1989, by which the internet was popularized, which is a universal exchange network, which should not benefit any particular person or country. But it's thanks to the internet that colossal new fortunes soon emerged.

New problems

In the last 50 years, progress has drastically transformed society by reducing world poverty and mortality, and by creating new economies, new solutions and new creativities, even in those countries that were once called "developing".

Driven at breakneck speed, progress must now solve all the problems of the 21st century: electric cars should save the climate, RNA vaccines will eradicate pandemics, wind turbines will shut down nuclear power plants, "cryptocurrencies" will escape banking regulations, and the metaverse will replace dull reality with virtual reality (VR). For some thinkers, this is the prelude to an announced catastrophe. For them, unrestrained progress today seeks less to improve the human condition and seeks more to gather profits, by increasing the inequality gap and ignoring climate change, and seeks less to provide solutions and lets new difficulties develop. Changing over to electric vehicles affects the middle class, who cannot afford vehicles that are still too expensive, and the environment, whose natural resources are being plundered by battery manufacturers. Other bad news: "the global digital ecosystem" — which drives the internet, social networks and all the connected objects — is responsible for 2 to 4% of greenhouse-gas emissions. Even worse, it releases 15 to 25 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent. That is twice as much as air transport. It's hard to see how this massive consumption could reduce in these times that are eager for bitcoin, online trading and much more computer power.

In 1955, Mr Boris Vian [a French musician and engineer] performed the French song "La complainte du progrès" ["The Complaint Against Progress"], which is a materialistic love song that mentions absurd, wacky and completely useless objects. Isn't it the curse of our times, that we satisfy our endless needs with disregard for the individual and for the inhabitability of the planet? ... Mr Ivan Illich [an Austrian Roman Catholic Priest and philosopher, 1926–2002]. Technology creates monopolies that prevent access to other means that could accomplish the same function. It is a bit like applying The Peter Principle to our industrial society: the higher it rises, the more incompetent it becomes. The automobile kills the pedestrian — the proliferation of means of communication, leads to no one listening or hearing any more — and employees waste their time in traffic jams.

We understand that progress can be fascinating through the possibility of automating some tasks, of modernizing some manufacturing processes, of speeding up travel and of improving communication. However, progress, like any coin, has two sides. Even if progress can arouse curiosity, excitement and enthusiasm, one cannot ignore its dark and harmful side. As the above magazine shows, progress nowadays is mainly technological. The applications and possibilities it offers have fascinated many researchers and scientists.

For us, progress is mainly social. We are happy that new machines make the work for workers easier, that we can travel quicker and safer, that we can enjoy the comforts of some innovations, and that people are contactable anywhere and anytime, but what is all that when there is still poverty in the world? Can we rejoice over the newest technological advances when we know that millions of people cannot satisfy their hunger and others have no roof over their heads? Are we so selfish that we only think about ourselves and ignore the misfortune of others? Furthermore, progress itself creates inequalities because not everybody has the means to access it. As the magazine example states: "Changing over to electric vehicles affects the middle class, who cannot afford vehicles that are still too expensive." One can therefore only talk about progress on the day when there are no longer any poor people on Earth.

There is also another aspect of this problem that must be mentioned. Just the term "progress" suggests our decline. In fact, it is necessary to make progress when one is imperfect. As we know, humankind was created perfect. When they were placed in the Garden of Eden, they had everything in abundance, and lacked nothing. They especially had something that is unknown to us: communion with Almighty God. That ideal situation was lost through the Fall of our first parents into sin. From then on, condemnation and death were the share of all humankind. However, the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ — who took the place of the guilty, and who paid our Ransom — enables humankind to regain their destiny: eternal life on Earth. That is true progress, which doesn't hurt anyone.

Androcles and the lion

Retold by the French veterinarian, animal-protector and author Dr Fernand Méry, the following is an incredible ancient Roman story about a slave who won the trust of a lion:

In the days when the Roman Empire extended beyond the seas, a consul who governed Africa became famous for his cruelty in punishing his slaves. One of them, Androcles, was the particular object of his abuses. Sentenced to be whipped for a minor matter, he decided to escape. Having succeeded in hiding and

in escaping through the city's gates, he walked for an entire day through the desert, and then sought shelter for the night. No sooner had he laid down in a cave, than a huge roaring lion appeared, dragging one of its paws. The slave froze with fear.

The lion slowly walked towards the man. While Androcles had already put up his arms to protect himself, the beast held out one paw. A thorn was deeply embedded in it. With a quick movement, Androcles pulled it out, freeing the predator of its problem. That was enough to create trust between them. More than two years passed. Androcles and the lion lived on friendly terms. The animal would bring back its prey and protect its benefactor from any outside attack. Then, one day, the slave, who had gone looking for wild berries, was surrounded by Roman soldiers. He was caught!

He was taken back to the consul's palace and then thrown into a dungeon, and the following day found out his sentence from his master: "Send him back to Rome, and throw him to the lions!"

A few days later, the slave was pushed into the arena. One by one, all of the other victims were killed, disembowelled and covered in blood. Each lion was devouring its victim when the crowd started yelling. The gate had been raised, and the last and the strongest lion was let in. With its flowing mane and exposed fangs, it impatiently ran forwards. In the arena, there was only one man left, trembling with fear. The predator was on him in a flash.

And then a miracle happened. The lion stopped and bent over the man. With tender purring, it licked the face and the hands that it suddenly recognized. It was the lion whose suffering Androcles had once relieved. All the spectators stood up and shouted for mercy, and Caesar granted it to him. Androcles had to tell his story. The crowd threw flowers and gold coins at his feet. The next day, Caesar freed him from slavery and gave him his lion for a companion. It was Apion, also known as Plistonice, who reported the event he had witnessed.

Assuming that that extraordinary occurrence was arranged for its presentation, it is not unreasonable to believe that there might be some truth to it. It confirms to us that a good deed is never lost and that the practice of good leads to liberation.

The animal's gratitude in that presentation certainly is impressive. What eloquent lessons humankind could learn from the simplicity and the spontaneity of the natural behaviour of those which they too often treat poorly!

The Restoration of All Things, made possible by Christ's courageous mission, will see the development of delightful relationships of freshness and grace. When humankind have forever regained their dignity of children of God, the whole world will be at rest and at peace, according to the prophetic word of Isaiah 14: 7.

seem that justice should come before self-interest, put forward that very problem to me. In this respect, he fell in line with the great majority of mankind. However, as he had a bit of an ideal in his heart, I was able to call his attention to the fact that these two things: self-interest and justice, are incompatible.

It is God or Mammon: it is God's blessing, or Mammon's. Now, everyone can see for themselves what the latter leads to. So, I invited him to seek the Kingdom of God, promised to the meek (the gentle), and for that purpose, to reject every thought, word and deed that does not lead to the good of all the families of the Earth. I even assured him that all else — that is to say, everything necessary — was guaranteed in addition. Can I then trample my conscience underfoot and act contrary to those divine principles? No sir, that's impossible!"

Visibly worried, the officer manager is caught in a dilemma between this conscientious idealist and the trouble it may all lead to with the company's management, whose one ideal is business prosperity. He fidgets around for a while and then goes back into his office and goes through several files. Suddenly, his face clears. He sits up and heaves a sigh that would almost appear to express relief.

"Hey, Christopher! Providence, as you say, appears to be on your side, for there is a few points about this project in which we cannot compete with other companies. I'm going straight to the director to have a talk with him."

Then, and only then, the eclipse viewers returned, full of enthusiasm. They are, to some extent, astonished to find, at his desk, the man who has so often described to them the universal harmony of Creation, for the purpose of illustrating the glory of the Great Creator.

But thoughts have wings, and Christopher's thoughts are so far away that he has scarcely

noticed the departure of the office manager, and the return of the workmen. To him, this first step towards freedom gives body to the promise: "My love doth support thee."

He is not astonished when Mr Brown brings him the good news: "Christopher, here's something to rejoice your heart: we're relinquishing the project."

Is his heart rejoiced? There are no words to describe the impressions that fill it with immense joy. In the perspective of this deliverance, he perceives the deliverance of others, of all who, in suffering, still have to wait for the coming of the Reign of Justice. He sees them freed from shameful oppression, from evil and from fear. This happy vision floods the horizon of his soul with dazzling sunshine.

Christopher also knows that the benefit of this decision extends to the whole company that employs him, for while "he who draws the sword incurs death by the sword", also "he who makes the sword is no less guilty".

There will always be enough work for all. But Christopher isn't going to wait for work to run short before employing his whole life in the introduction of the Kingdom of God!

He prays and perseveres with the assistance of Heaven, because he knows that, in accordance with his desire, total liberation will come for him, as it has come for all who, as they were invited to do by the divine Word, have knocked on the right door, at the right time and in the right way.

News in brief of the Reign of Justice

As a continuation of our February column, we give a summary of the presentation of the second day of the meeting in Sternberg Castle in Germany. The text of the *Heavenly Dew* was taken from Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 12: 12: "Be joyful in hope; be patient in tribulation." The dear Messenger told us

in his commentary: "Today's wonderful text shows us an ideal situation, that of a true child of God, whose joy, happiness and peace never leave them, even in the greatest adversity.

True joy is the greatest sensation that a heart can feel. It is, for us, an essential element of life. The organism has an imperative need for it. Joy begins with the peace that comes from faith in justification by the blood of Christ. It becomes definitive when we have humbly and docilely followed the school of our dear Saviour, who teaches us to completely change our habits. ...

One has to have one's back against the wall, by circumstances, in order to learn how to be happy. For this, one must deny self and fully fight against one's own selfishness, but not that of others. Then, one realizes the mountain of selfishness that is still within oneself. To overcome this selfishness, we must forget about ourselves and seek to bring happiness to others. ...

The time has now come when these sentiments of joy and peace must be stable in us, in order to be able to bring them to suffering humanity. That is why I always say that we should no longer allow ourselves to remain the same. Our heart must now completely change and become totally soft. Every day, there must be marked progress, in us, in the divine sentiments, and then the rest will happen by itself.

It is certain that the only way to achieve peace and joy of heart, is to show divine love, which means, to deny self for the benefit of others. That is the whole mechanism of God's ways. It is simplicity itself. Then, one constantly has something to be happy about. One is thus immunized against everything that causes suffering. ...

The only way to overcome in the coming days is to undividedly leave our fate to the Almighty's discretion. This requires a whole

process of constant effort and self-denial. But then, we enjoy delightful peace and calm, which are communicated to us by God's Spirit. ...

Peace of heart, and joy and happiness are there, very close and within our reach, but we do not know how to take hold of them. Yet it would be so easy: "Love your neighbour as yourself and God above all." When one loves, one masters all situations. ...

The difficulties are in us. We cause them by putting ourselves first and not the Lord, by keeping personal interests and particular plans. As soon as we put all this and ourselves aside, the difficulty ceases. ..."

We will be in heart-felt thought with all the Easter meetings that take place in the groups and on the Test Stations, and wish everyone awareness of the seriousness of the commitment made to the Lord, especially of sacrifice for the Consecrated. As Apostle Paul said, he was baptized into the death of Christ, a sacrificial death. Therefore, a Consecrated is a victim who agrees to take on to themselves the equivalent of sins of their fellow person and to pay for them. This ministry will purify a Consecrated of all defilements and will allow them to finally give their life, like their Master, and to receive, as an inheritance, divine nature, immortality and glory with Christ.

Regarding the Host of the Lord, they promise to live the divine Law, to deny (renounce) the world and its desires, and to exist for the good of their fellow person, whom they have learnt to love as themselves, in order to receive life. These feast meetings can then be followed by consistent effort in character changing. This is what we wish for all our dear brothers and sisters.

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