

THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

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The solution to every problem

At present, when the social edifice is tottering, one may well wonder what ought to be done to mend matters and find the answers to the question marks arising on every hand. It is quite certain that all that men can plan, with their short-sighted views and their inability to judge things as they actually are, is doomed to utter failure.

So, something different is needed. Let us therefore examine, in broad outlines, what the programme of the Creator of the Universe, was, concerning the Earth and the human beings dwelling there. Therein, we shall surely find some wise counsel. What we are able to perceive right away is that mankind are quite out of harmony with the Almighty, Whose wonderful law they have broken, the law that governs the whole Universe. It indicates that all things in the Universe exist to do good; it testifies that every creature has been created for the good of all others, and that all things have intercommunion.

Since the human race has not kept that law, lamentable consequences have arisen. Wars have followed one another. This woeful procession of catastrophes and terrible misfortunes, these frightful conditions, so painful and crushing, are still being maintained today. Things get no better, far from it. The prospects ahead of mankind are gloomier than ever.

We are compelled to see for ourselves that today, at the end of the period called the Gospel Age, in the heart of the nations called "civilised" and even Christian, brutality and cruelty are prevailing on an ever-increasing scale.

That is a state of things which our dear Saviour announced long ago. Nevertheless, those conditions are only temporary. In the Acts of the Apostles, the "times of refreshing" are announced, and the Restoration of All Things is foretold, even as far back as the prophets of the Old Covenant. Moreover, in the prayer our dear Saviour taught his disciples, he clearly indicated that the day is coming when the will of God will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. So, we are well informed.

About two thousand years have passed since Christ came to start the glorious Work of the deliverance of the human race. The first step of that deliverance was the Ransom he paid for mankind, condemned as a whole, and doomed to extinction. That liberating Payment first had to allow for the calling of the Little Flock of courageous and zealous collaborators. In association with

their Master, those faithful disciples were destined to work on setting up the Kingdom of God on Earth. The education of that group of people, proved exceedingly laborious. It has taken the whole time, without a break, since Christ's coming to Earth, till today. We have entered the final phase of this glorious Work.

As is clearly demonstrated by the doings of Christendom, there have been very few, of all those who have called themselves Christian, who have entertained the idea of honestly living out the programme taught by the Son of God, when he was on Earth. It is for that reason that Christ himself announced that "many are called, but few are chosen". Those who decided to be disciples of our dear Saviour, did their best to live out the divine programme. They renounced self (denied themselves) and lived out the ministry the Master had entrusted to them, changing their characters and dispositions as they did so. They truly displayed the characteristics of the Little Flock (the Royal Priesthood, the small and faithful Church of Christ). They were entirely unknown to the world and to the big churches.

Side by side with the Little Flock, of which all people were ignorant, there developed a vast number of flocks, some of which were immense. They assumed the name of Christian, but their deeds denoted clearly that in no way were they imitators of Jesus Christ. They did not have the Spirit of Christ, so, they were none of his. Jesus said: "Love one another. Just like I have loved you, you should love one another. By this, everyone shall know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." All the great religious denominations have demonstrated that they do not love one another, because they have fought one another.

Thus then, disciples of Christ were exceedingly few all throughout the Gospel Age. As we know, human beings are selfish, being saturated with the devilish spirit. That selfishness is constantly opposed to the programme, altruistic through and through, that our dear Saviour presented to his disciples. It is certainly true that the denial of self that Christ presented to all who wished to follow him, as well as the sacrifice to be contemplated to be of the faithful Church, have found little favour in the eyes of most. Many were quite satisfied with a theoretical salvation, as cheap as possible, and with a gospel from which all the essential points were stripped.

The transformation of the character and the disposi-

tions, was particularly set aside. Yet, without directly employing the expression "change of character", the Bible is nevertheless explicit in saying that he who has the sentiments of Christ, is his, but that he who does not have those sentiments is none of his. This statement leaves no room for equivocation.

The task set present-day disciples of Christ, is the introduction, on Earth, of the Kingdom of God, to free the human race from the terrible situation in which it is placed. Such is this situation, indeed, that the Lord said that if that terrible time of trouble were not shortened, no one would be able to survive the disaster. Our dear Saviour described what that time would be like. His apostles spoke about it too and supplied many details concerning it. Everything has been sufficiently set in evidence for the true disciples of today to clearly recognise the times in which they are living and to realise that the Day of God is dawning. The dawn of that Day also witnesses the fall of Babylon (false Christendom), and the setting up, on Earth, of the Kingdom of Christ.

The Apostle Paul gives us many details concerning that. He also tells us that, amidst the general confusion that will arise at that time, the disciples will be neither surprised nor at a loss, because they are "children of the light, and children of the day". That is what we are able to perceive today. True disciples are constantly proclaiming that the time of setting up the Kingdom of God on Earth, has come. They warmly invite all well-intentioned hearts to associate in that magnificent Work, which is to establish peace, happiness and lasting life on Earth. The wonderful Kingdom of God will provide protection and deliverance to all the sincere and honest hearts that are also desirous of expending themselves, with might and main, to finally free the human race from the Adversary's yoke, from "the rod of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers".

They are the things to contemplate today. It is the one and only solution to the problem of the lamentable and inextricable situation in which the human race is trapped. The Apostle Peter spoke of the present time, saying that "the elements will melt with intense heat" and that "the earth and its works, will be burnt up". They are symbolical words, giving us to understand the intensity of the Tribulation that will rage on the planet.

In the midst of that fiery furnace, God's true children will introduce the New World. With everything crumbling around them, they will be able to stay on their feet because they cultivated the divine sentiments in their hearts, which is what will be their protection. It is clearly written: "They shall be mine on the day that I prepare," and further: "You will again see the difference

Seek refuge where kindness rules

FRANCE: April (in the Northern Hemisphere) has very much shortened the Earth's winter robe of snow till it reaches scarcely halfway down the mountain sides, and the lofty peaks shine dazzlingly white in the bright spring-morning sunshine. The mists are dispelled together with mental distress, and all the trees are dressed in green. In the fields covered with lush grass, the hand of the divine Artist has splashed broad and colourful patches of primroses, of lady's smocks, of forget-me-nots, of buttercups and many other flowers. Dandelions streak the hillsides, and the happy herds, with avid tongue, crop the food that the Creator generously dispenses to all. The newborn calves, lambs and colts, gambol and frisk to their hearts' content amidst it all, giving expression to the mood of gaiety which they share

with the rest of nature. A family of baby boars freely scampers along a woodland track, their tails curled up, and their sharp little eyes darting here and there, looking for last year's acorns hidden under the dried leaves. In the high pastures, cow and sheep bells scatter their tinkling notes on the breeze, in answer to the merry peals coming up from the valley below.

The waters, enclosed throughout the winter in their icy prison, have been set free by the Sun, and in many areas, torrents, cascades and creeks, rush and bubble in their zeal to fulfil the mission assigned to them by the Almighty's law, the great law of the Monarch of Heaven and Earth. All things are celebrating the resurrection and the victory of life.

In the heart of this great green land, the streets and houses of an old town are bathing in the warm spring sunshine. A songbird, perched on an ancient roof, is pouring out a

torrent of trills and warbles in praise of the Creator of all pleasant things.

Leaning out of a window, a bright-eyed woman looks up and down the winding narrow street filled with people heading in the direction of the market square, for it is market day. Mother, Catherine, is looking for her children. She thinks: "Where in the world could they be?"

It's no use looking for your kids in the street, mother, Catherine. Of course, it would never enter into your head to look for them on the roof! Yet isn't it the ideal place for playing in peace, far from the grumblers who always find children too noisy? And besides, up there, you get away from the damp shade of those narrow streets between their age-worn walls. And up there, in spite of the heat reverberating from the roofs, under that broad stretch of blue sky, you feel you have room to breathe, you are free, and you are little explorers on a great adventure.

Alas, at last, they are discovered, and our young explorers have to forsake the upper reaches of charm, and to reintegrate into the lower regions of the commonplace and humdrum world! John, Paul, Patrick, Guy, Francis, Charley and Mary. Six boys and a girl, they are all there, and mother, Catherine, is reassured.

Dad is a big man and very strong. When in a playful mood, he takes hold of John and lifts him right up to the ceiling. At the brick kiln, where he is employed, he is given the hardest jobs to do, which no one else is strong enough for. Dad is also a keen cyclist. But the trouble is that to get into shape for all this expenditure of energy, he falls back on a good glass of wine, and once the habit is made, he slides lower and lower on the slippery slope, which all goes to spoil the atmosphere at home.

It is becoming harder and harder to make ends meet. They are nine people living in two

between...those who serve God and those who do not." Only such people, as God's true children, will be able to collaborate on setting up the Kingdom of God on Earth.

The only thing that is urgent now is to permit our hearts to be transformed by following the Lord's directions, so that we may overcome the power of selfishness, which mows down mankind and leads them into the pit. That is what is ahead of all who wish for joy and life. The question therefore is to hasten that Day of deliverance and to shorten the time of Tribulation. It is quite certain that the Kingdom of God will be set up with or without us. However, we are being offered the possibility of taking part in the Work, of not perishing with the wicked, and of keeping going with "the meek". For that purpose, we have to allow our hearts to be softened by the goodness of God, and to not remain dried up religious creatures, who shut themselves up in their indifference and selfishness. That is the invitation we are receiving. Blessed are we if we respond to it.

What, then, we have to contemplate for finding the answers to all the question marks, and the remedy for all the world's difficulties that are unsolved, is to "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness" and to ardently work on its establishment. All throughout the Gospel Age, the sole representatives of the Kingdom of God, have been the members of the small true Church, all unknown and hidden. Now comes the general calling that invites all people to associate in the Work of the Restoration of All Things. When the destruction of Babylon is done with, when it has disappeared to make room for the New Heaven and the New Earth, the Spirit of the Lord will be poured out on all people, so the Bible tells us.

That will be the start of the blessed times mentioned by the various prophets, particularly by Isaiah. He says that, in the last days, the nations will crowd up to the mountain of the Lord, and that "they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall not learn war anymore".

The prophet also says that the Lord has divided the Earth with a measuring line and given it to mankind, so that they shall possess it for ever, and so that they shall dwell there for evermore. He says that "the wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like a rose," and that in those days, "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then, the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute shall sing for joy. Water will gush in the desert, and streams in the wilderness". He further says that "they will build houses and live in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They will not build houses for others to live in; they will not plant for others to eat. ... My chosen ones will fully enjoy the work of their hands. They will not work in vain or bear children doomed to disaster. For they will be a people blessed by the LORD. ... The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ... They will not harm or destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD".

That radiant vision of the New Earth will come true in the near future. It is the description of the Kingdom of God, so greatly longed for, and so often prayed for: "Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." It is to this sublime Work that the Apostle Peter exhorts us, telling us to apply every effort to it. He says, in those days: "The heavens [the religious powers] shall pass away with a great noise...the earth [the present social order] and its works, will be burnt up...and the elements [the world and military organisations] will melt with intense heat." Then, he continues: "But according to his promise, we are looking forward

to the new heaven [the new spiritual power] and the new earth [the new earthly social order], where justice dwells."

So, there are superb prospects ahead of us. They are the Restoration of All Things, which begins with the Lord Jesus's Second Coming, manifested in all his saints and in those who have believed, according to the words of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians. The Apostle Peter says that the prophets, ever since Samuel, have also announced those days. That is the answer to every question. It is the ideal solution, the only one. It is the announced "times of refreshing", which will be the wonderful "balm of Gilead" for groaning and suffering humanity, expecting deliverance.

With the explanations given above, the horizon is clearing up magnificently, and the divine programme appears in full splendour. The details of the divine plan, shown here in broad outlines, are given in the precious books titled *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance) and *Eternal Life*, written by the Faithful and Wise Servant, mentioned in Matthew, Chapter 24.

All things come at the appointed time, as we are able to see. The Lord has never left his children as orphans. He has always made his intentions and his ways, known to them. Admirably exact details are given in the book titled *Eternal Life*. They allow one to perceive how eternal life is possible and how it will make its appearance on Earth in a practical way.

A new mentality and dispositions have to be acquired to arrive at possessing eternal life. For that purpose, the human race has to be thoroughly re-educated. This will take place in the course of the Restoration of All Things. Having become altruists, people will be able to have the benefit of the Vital Fluid, which will regenerate their bodies. Then, they will have lasting life on Earth, and everlasting joy will crown their heads. They will be the redeemed of the Lord for ever and ever.

On the subject of identity

The Swiss French-language newspaper *Coopération*, No. 43 on the 25th of October 2022, published an interview by Myriam Geniert with Julia de Funés on the current subject of "identity". We quote it as follows:

"Identity misleads more than it guides"

For the French philosopher Julia de Funés, we are going astray by wanting to affirm ourselves through our identity, because we are doing it the wrong way. This is a sickness of our time, she writes in her new book.

In recent years, identity has become an inexhaustible and incessant source of questions, claims and wishes. However, it is not by that that a person can fulfil themselves, but by freedom and self-awareness, writes Julia de Funés in the book Le siècle des égarés [The Century of the Lost]. ...

In what way do we live in the Century of the Lost?

If the 20th century was the century of the advent of identity and of extreme individualization, the 21st century is the century of "identity obsession" with the "woke" and the "cancel culture" movements in particular. But identity misleads more than it guides.

Why is that so?

Identity can be a trap for individuals if they rush into roles, attitudes or patterns of life, in order to reassure themselves. It becomes a collective trap when the slightest differences become mini-imperialisms to the point of falling into an intransigent ideology (woke). And it is a conceptual trap because identity is one of the only concepts constructed so contradictorily (identity is both the same and different). In philosophy, this contradiction has always led to dead ends.

Some feminist, gender and other movements, based largely on identity, have the wrong approach and go too far, you write.

I am a feminist, but the current "neofeminists" seem to me to act more out of hatred for men than out of love for women, out of a desire for revenge than out of a demand for justice, and out of a narrow identity reflex than out of the wish for openness. Their movements seem to me to be more oppressive for men than liberating for women. There are still discriminations and injustices, but let us make a difference between just and fair defence, and moralizing persecution.

Your conclusion is that we should prioritize freedom and self-awareness.

The concepts of identity allow an identification, but without achieving individualization or singularization. Identity can never allow the experience of oneself in one's uniqueness. Only freedom allows a being not to be reduced to a copy or a sample, not to transform oneself into a planned-out comedy, and not to turn one's freedom into a stage production.

But you don't deny identity?

Even if the concept of identity seems unfortunate to me, something about this notion stands up. We all have the desire to be ourselves.

But it's hard to be free and to be oneself. What would be your advice to achieve this?

It's a life-long task. There's no recipe. I don't like trendy behavioural advice, like personal coaching or development. But to seek refuge in a planned-out identity, in an attitude, is one of the best ways to run away from oneself. The courage of freedom seems to be a more certain way.

You write that we imitate others and follow models. We all act, so we are not ourselves?

In every reality, be it private or social, there is a part of theatre and acting. We cannot completely disregard the gaze of others. Also, we play what we are, and we form ourselves. Over the years, a liberation is felt, and it makes it easier for us to get rid of borrowed identities, because the fear of displeasing disappears, and we dare to be ourselves.

Fortunately, because you write that "to imitate others, is to die to oneself"!

I borrowed that idea from Spinoza, who said that by always wanting to be someone or something else, one kills oneself. Don't expect perfection in an external element, but understand that we have our own perfection and that every authentic desire confirms it and increases it and gains in presence and reality.

Do you feel completely free?

Of course not. I have roles to play, which sometimes still burden me. Like everyone else, I've had periods by myself. Many people can spend their entire life away from what they are or would like to be. But there is always the urgency to seek freedom. We have no other life than our own. That is why this book is intended to be a liberation from identity. My PhD thesis was already on this subject, so I have been occupied with it for years.

You write that another error of our time is that there is no longer any morality, but only moralizing.

In his book The First Man, Camus says: "A man must restrain himself." This sums up what we usually understand about morality, namely, that others come before me, and that I am capable of selflessness out of altruistic reasons. Today, values relating to others — such as politeness, decency, modesty and tact — are replaced by private and individual values and by moralizing on the respect that others owe us as a person. From: "A man must restrain himself", we now have: "A man must gain respect."

rooms, with four children sleeping in one bed, and, at times, have to be satisfied with a few crumbs soaked in milk for their food. Mother, Catherine, does what she can to keep things going. She comes from a family of hard and energetic workers. She is not afraid to exert herself, particularly when it is for the sake of her little ones, whom she cherishes most fondly. So, the thought of them helps her to put up with a great deal.

John, the eldest of the children, is more particularly pained over the situation than the others. He loves his mother dearly and also feels very much for his poor father and his little brothers and sisters. He would really like everything to turn out right and all of them to be happy!

One day, however, some neighbours, perhaps thinking it for the best, inform the police with the idea that they will be able to arrange matters. And so they do, but according to the unfeeling justice of men. The unfortunate

father has to leave home and the town he has always lived in. Then, one fine morning, the representatives of the law, come and take four of the children away. One of them happens to be ill in bed. Mother, Catherine, has to get him up and dress him. Heedless of her protests, the officers take him away. The three others are at school and are picked up without ceremony. Then, they go to the girls' school to fetch the little sister. The head mistress, however, will not hear of the child being taken away. She is very fond of her small pupil and talks the officers of the law out of it. Finally, the child is permitted to stay with her mother.

The children are taken to an orphanage, thirty miles away. Mother, Catherine, is brokenhearted and lets everybody know it. John comes home from school to a half-empty nest. Four curly heads are missing from the dinner table, and mother is crying. John is indignant. He thinks: "If only I'd been there!"

With all those emotional shocks, John's mind is not on his studies. He has often failed to learn his lessons. The principal of the religious school he attends, frequently reproves him, and, to bring this lazy fellow to mend his ways, the principal makes him kneel on a sharp-edged triangular strip of wood for long periods, during which, John tries to understand what he is doing on this Earth, and why one has to suffer so much. In this school, they also canvass for children to go in for the seminary. But John thinks of his family, whom he has no intention of forsaking: "I wouldn't have let them take them away. But what's to be done now? We'll have to put up with it for the present, and get organised to rescue the little ones as soon as possible."

John and his mother go as often as they can to the orphanage, carrying big parcels of goodies to the children. Mother has found a job in a confectionery store, and is given many

advantages. The poor little children, being upset by the abrupt change, are quite bewildered. Several times, one or another of them has tried to escape. They have always been caught before getting very far and bought back ungently to the orphanage, which is run by a set of religious people.

John's heart is in revolt against all this. Since the children's departure, he has been like an angry lion. Woe to anyone who would attack any of his loved ones. All his energies are devoted to their defence. Though he is only fourteen, he feels responsible, and when he feels the occasion demands it, he is not afraid to go and confront the director of the orphanage in his office, to plead the cause of his brothers, often treated unjustly.

What he is taught about religious things remains foreign to his heart. On the day of his First Communion, he ignores the fact that there will be a Vespers (Evening Prayer), and in the afternoon, he is discovered in his

Are social networks partly to blame?

It is more structural than that, but social networks increase the phenomenon. Through the possibility of taking on a false identity, because one can have a pseudonym, it is possible to say the worst things and remain totally invisible.

Are we selfish?

We are experiencing the emergence of identity. That doesn't mean selfishness. It means that all the authorities that gave a meaning to the individual, which guided their existence, gradually collapsed (religion, metaphysics and politics). The individual is thus alone, facing himself. It's not for me to criticize the contemporary individual, but to understand that they have become their own reference.

Was it better in previous centuries?

I'm not nostalgic for the past. Our living conditions are incomparably more comfortable; we are spoilt because we live in France in the year 2022. As a woman, I really prefer living now.

You've dedicated your book to your parents and grandparents, who "taught you not to make an identity, but a requirement out of a name". What does that mean?

My family never wanted to live off the reputation of my grandfather [the French actor Louis de Funès ("Fufu")], to profit from his famous name. My brothers have their own jobs, my father had his own job, and my uncle, too. We were always taught to make our own way, to arrive at something by ourselves. A name is an inheritance (a happy one as far as I'm concerned), not a merit.

As Julia de Funés writes, the 21st century has become the century of the obsession of identity. In our opinion, this need to search for and to confirm one's identity, is a reaction to the abyss that society represents, which is inclined to let the individual disappear and dehumanize. Values that were previously recognized and appreciated, are no longer cherished today. Merit, courage, honesty, etc., are no longer admired, because there is no longer any morality, according to Julia de Funés.

Furthermore, and also according to Julia de Funés, identity will never allow the experience of one's own uniqueness. Only freedom enables one to not reduce oneself to a copy or a sample. In fact, identity is an abstract notion, which doesn't add anything to the quality of one's life; it is freedom that enables one to develop. But as we will later see, it is a long way to freedom.

We fully understand the fight of our fellow citizens to "not disappear", to leave a trace behind in our society, and to be recognized, because that's what it's all about. However, we must say that this fight is like someone running aimlessly and a boxer beating the air. Indeed, if we want to assert our identity and be or remain authentic, then our good points as well as our faults and weaknesses, will automatically appear, and this isn't really what we want. Furthermore, we only have imperfect knowledge of ourselves. It is therefore illusory to claim to assert our identity when we don't know who we are.

But in the analysis provided in the above article, a concept is missing, and that is the concept of sin. We are sinners. We therefore have a share in condemnation and death. To want to claim an identity as a condemned person, means to put the cart before the horse. The first thing is to let ourselves be delivered from our condemnation, by our dear Saviour. Of course, humankind are currently unaware of their true situation. But that doesn't change the problem.

As sinners, we have only one possibility to attain freedom, which is mentioned by Julia de Funés: we must recognize our real situation and accept the Ran-

som paid by our dear Saviour, and the precious merits that he wants to cover us with: justification by faith, which Apostle Paul explained so very well in his Letter to the Romans. That is followed by the long stage of sanctification, which is character change, because with the selfish sentiments that we are saturated with, we are neither free nor viable.

As one sees, the fight to defend our identity, is not the most important fight for us. The main fight is for our Salvation and for that of our fellow people, because we cannot exist as isolated personalities. We only have the right to exist when we become benefactors to our fellow people. We therefore need our fellow people in order to do good to them, so that we can exist, as the Universal Law indicates. A human being who lives as a perfect egoist, without considering or caring about others, is destined to disappear. That is furthermore the principal cause of our death. Moreover, a human being cannot continuously live without being in constant contact with God, from Whom they receive life.

As we can see from the above explanations, the concept of identity is relative. Some personalities have developed a wonderful character. This became their identity. They have, however, not fought with the goal of defending this identity. They have fought to overcome evil with good, for the benefit of their fellow people.

When Moses asked God to tell him his Name, so that he could tell it to the Israelites whom he wanted to lead out of Egypt, He answered him: "Say this to the children of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3: 14). Thus, He identified Himself, and that meant that He exists for eternity."

When Philip asked our dear Saviour to show him them the Father, Jesus said: "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. ... Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me? The words that I say to you, I do not say from myself; but the Father Who dwells in me does his works" (John 14: 9 and 10). That is a good answer to "the identity crisis" that we are going through. Our dear Saviour didn't want to identify himself as independent of his Father, and in this way, he could explain that he didn't exist without the Almighty.

In contrast to that example, we can quote Lucifer, who said: "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the far sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14: 13 and 14). We know what his end will be. Our dear Saviour said about him: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10: 18). To conclude, it is not important for us to assert whom we are, but we should seek to become a child of God, who can inherit the divine promises.

Exploits of the animal kingdom

While we hear of the saddest and most painful news about humankind, we also hear of the most agreeable news about the animal kingdom, even if we consider it inferior. A testimony of that is the following story, reported in several newspapers some time ago, about the bitch "Bena":

The faithful bitch Bena

Nothing could separate the dog Bena from her adoptive family, not even the war in the former Yugoslavia... As a result of the attack of Croatia against Serbia, her owners in the region of Krajina, had to quickly leave without her. She could not be taken along during the sudden departure. While the country was being bombed for 140 days, Bena walked more than 500 km to be reunited with her owners.

That is an extraordinary testimony of what the attachment of a dog to its owners is capable of, when they have been good to it. One can imagine the surprise of

Bena's owners after they had to quickly leave her behind and never thought they would see her again. What a determined will of the animal that absolutely wanted to find its owners and that achieved this exploit in the midst of the falling bombs and the machine-gun fire! We can only bow to such a demonstration that speaks to us of tenacity and endurance, and also of higher qualities, especially of love for those whom she had not forgotten in her grateful and faithful dog memory.

Also before us, we have a picture that speaks eloquently to us. It shows a young tiger that is inquisitively sniffing a chick. This is what the French magazine *Femme Actuelle* (*Today's Woman*) reported about it, also some time ago:

A new version Tweety and Sylvester

Khan, a five-month-old male tiger, and a three-day-old chick, have become inseparable. They are in the Paradise Wildlife Park in England. The chick had escaped from its coup and gotten into the tiger enclosure. Instead of being quickly devoured, Khan offered it protection and the pleasant warmth of his fur.

That report was published in several magazines and shows us how friendship is possible between animals that are different in behaviour and appearance. Let us rejoice over the prospect of them all being united in the time announced by the Prophet Isaiah. That will be possible through the Lord God's almighty grace and when humankind are reconciled with each other.

Brazil and soy

The Swiss French-language newspaper *Tribune de Genève*, on the 21st of July 2022, published, in its column "Économie" ("Economy"), an article that deals with the production of soy (also known as soybean, soy bean, and soya bean) in Brazil, and the associated environmental problems. We quote the article in its entirety:

New trade routes. Brazil is expanding its "soy route", but at what price? Bolsonaro's country is investing to export this valuable crop faster. New infrastructure is not without consequences for the environment.

On the Trans-Amazonian Highway [BR-230 (Rodovia Transamazônica)], one mostly follows a cloud of ochre-coloured dust. In the dry season, the visibility is almost nil when passing other vehicles on this road that crosses the Brazilian Amazon Rainforest from east to west. But then, 30 km before the port in the town of Miritituba, on the banks of the Tapajós River, the tarred road suddenly appears, and with it, a long line semi-trailer trucks. They are all coming from the south, from the agricultural state of Mato Grosso, and are loaded with soy or corn.

After five days and almost 1,000 km of travelling, they will unload their cargo at one of the many ports that have sprung up like mushrooms in recent years. "We unload at night, because it's less dusty for the nearby houses, and in the early morning, we load a different cargo, mostly pesticide and fertilizer, and drive back to Mato Grosso," says João da Silva, a driver who has been going back and forth for five years.

Export boom

It takes almost 24 hours to load a cargo ship, which then travels along the Tapajós River, then along the Amazon River, and then to the Atlantic Ocean coast, from where it continues to China or Europe. "It's a logistics that never stops and that increases every year," says Mr Flávio Acatauassú, the president of AMPORT, an association of river-port companies. Firstly, because the large rivers in the Amazon Rainforest are natural waterways that don't have to be dredged for large cargo ships. Secondly, because Brazilian agricultural production, especially of soy, destined for export, is booming.

Brazil is now the world's leading producer of soy, with 139 million tonnes produced in 2021. More than half

white robe with a big red cross on it, enjoying himself at a motor-scooter rink.

On leaving school, John looks for work, for he wants to lend a hand to his mother. In the course of several years, he goes through many experiences. For some time, he is employed in a garage, and then in a restaurant doing the washing up. After that, he goes to Paris and is apprenticed in a factory making motorcar covers. His employer goes to Spain to start up a new factory, and so our young friend finds himself with him in Barcelona. Through all this, John sees many things and meets with many dangers. Yet the idea of assisting his family keeps him from many temptations. It makes him so happy to be able to give all his money to his mother. Another thing that makes him glad is that his little sister, who is a gifted student, will be able to continue her studies. His brothers have been able to leave the orphanage, and now, at last, each of them is learning a trade.

Having come of military age, John heads unenthusiastically for the barracks to which he has been called. The atmosphere of the barracks goes very much against the grain, and he is greatly intimidated by this blind system which absorbs young men for the purpose — so they say — of making men of them. In a large room, he perceives a big group of young recruits, stripped to the waist.

A medical orderly walks around them and sticks a long needle in the back of each one, for the purpose of vaccinating them against certain diseases. The sight of it makes John feel sick, and his aversion for the whole system increases. He does everything he can to get out of this situation, and at last, after many attempts, he succeeds in obtaining his discharge and goes home to his dear mother, his heart brimming over with joy, with the feeling that he has been at the benefit of some miracle.

John finds a job in a furniture factory, and so has experience with moving-assembly-line production. He soon tires of this deadly dull life. For a time, he earns his living selling household appliances. What displeases him here is that you have to push your wares.

John has discovered in himself a gift for painting. He paints and draws whenever he has a moment to himself. He has also formed the bad habit of smoking, and he smokes cigarette after cigarette.

Next, our John gets a job in a large food store. There, they are under constant pressure. They have to work at a rate that wears their nerves down. So, John quickly exits the store for the last time. Now, his destiny sends him to work in Switzerland, where he obtains good employment in a shop in Geneva. The staff is made up of agreeable people, and John feels at ease with them. However, he has to go back to France every evening to sleep. He is given some responsibility: he has to

oversee the French staff members. John has never been able to get used to discipline, he is somewhat lackadaisical, and so he finally gets the sack and shortly after goes back to the land of his birth.

The result of all these experiences is that John begins to feel the need for an ideal, something to bring him out of the dull daily activity. He feels there must be something more than is to be found in this inhuman society, so unjust and blind, in which he has been living till now. He has become marked by the impressions of violence received from the world around him, particularly from the TV programmes of which he is a fervent fan.

John has an idea that he will find an answer to his aspirations in contact with some religious assembly. In the one he decides to attend, they go in for the laying on of hands for healing the sick, and they speak in tongues, and pray. They also read the Bible. John has always liked reading the Bible stories,

of this production comes from the western and northern regions. "Until 2011, we were confronted with a development mistake: soy production was being led in the south and was exported from the port in the city of Santos, an hour away from the city of São Paulo. It is much more profitable to use the rivers of the Amazon Rainforest, and that is why we logically supported the building of the Ferrogrão, a railway line more than 1,000 km long, which transports soy from the state of Mato Grosso, to the port of Miritituba, in 24 hours, instead of using roads, which take five days," adds Mr Flávio Acatauassú.

In the townhall, people are delighted about the investments: the population has grown, and taxes and jobs have increased. But the [former] mayor of the city of Itaituba, who is also responsible for the town of Miritituba, knows that there is also a flip side to the coin: "We know that the soy producers are eagerly seeking land here because there is no more land available in Mato Grosso. And this can lead to further deforestation," explains Mr Valmir Climaco. The advance of soy is already a reality in the southern Amazon Rainforest, and is a concern to the environmentalists, especially because this movement is widely encouraged by [former] President Bolsonaro.

Ecological disasters

Itaituba is already experiencing the worst signs of the environmental destruction of the Amazon Rainforest: from the loss of forest cover, to the illegal presence of gold mining on the banks of the Tapajós River. A recent study on the impact of port activities in the world's largest freshwater aquifer, the Tapajós Aquifer [within the Amazon Rainforest], has shown that pollution from chemical effluents is clearly rising.

This situation is well known to fisherman: since approximately 30 private ports have been operating in the region, their nets have been hopelessly empty. Mr Raimundo Ayres dos Santos says: "We are not allowed to approach their ports, and we don't have enough to

eat. Look at my catch," and he points to three small fish at the bottom of his boat. A similar observation has been made by the Mundurucu Indians who live on the other side of the Tapajós River bank. "The few fish we catch have their stomachs full of soy, and make us sick. But we are especially worried about the future because all this will only get worse," says the chief.

The arrival of the railway, new ports, and soy plantations, does not only worry the locals, but also the experts who denounce the effects of this export policy on the Brazilians. "Now, Brazil produces soy on an area the size of Germany. On the other hand, the agricultural land dedicated to feeding the Brazilians with rice, beans and manioc [also known as mandioca, cassava, aipim and yuca], has been reduced to a quarter of its original size over recent years. As a result, we increase the trade balance, but also the poverty," explains [Ms] Larissa Bombardi, a professor of geography at the University of São Paulo.

Brazil finds itself at the crossroads of drastic choices: confirm its position as the world's breadbasket while 33 million Brazilians don't have enough to eat — or give priority back to local agriculture, and no longer massively invest in infrastructure dedicated to export? The next government, which will be elected in October [2022], will have to make a decision in the context of rising prices and poverty.

It is easy to understand that soy production is a "cash cow" for Brazil. At this point, the land used for it is the size of Germany, which is enormous. Apart from the problems caused by monoculture and by the treatments for the eradication of parasites, one can easily understand the infrastructure that is necessary to transport the product from the interior of the country to the nearest port. The deforestation for the necessary roads is an environmental catastrophe.

Another problem that is added to the one mentioned above, is that Brazil is actually facing a choice: either the development and the trade of soy production — or

give legitimate priority to local agriculture, because there is the threat of famine. Industrial soy production will make a few rich, but many poor, for example, the fishermen mentioned in the above article. One can certainly talk about "drastic decisions" that the authorities are facing. One cannot please everyone. Which head of state, who makes decisions for the country, would be happy about 33 million people not having enough to eat? That is approximately one seventh of the population.

Global annual soy production is approximately 290 million tonnes. Of that, 250 million tonnes are used for the production of soybean oil for human consumption. The remaining soybean meal is compressed and used for animal feed. Nowadays, there is a very high global production and consumption of soy, but this can change, as we have seen with other products. In Brazil's case, it would be appropriate to have a long-term view in order to decide which strategy should be developed in the coming years.

In our humble opinion, the question should not even arise. It is unthinkable to allow one seventh of the population to be in poverty in order to enrich a minority of people, and to cause environmental catastrophes that might be irreparable. To focus on profit is always a bad calculation. It is a decision that one will pay for and that will be expensive in the long term. According to the principles of the Universal Law, which says that everyone exists for the good and the prosperity of others, one should first fix the problem of poverty and hunger that reigns in a country. People who can satisfy their needs in normal ways, are less likely to revolt and rebel. It is easier to govern.

That is why we rejoice over the coming Kingdom of God on Earth, which will solve all problems. Those of the governments and especially those of the people. All who aspire for a better world are invited to collaborate on the introduction of God's magnificent Kingdom, which will last forever.

though there are some things he does not understand. However, he leaves this assembly after a while because he does not find what his heart is looking for.

One evening, walking with a friend along one of the narrow streets of town, he hears a song being sung in a ground-floor room.

"Whatever could that be?" John asks.

"It's the Angel of the Lord (the Philanthropic Association)," his friend answers.

"We really ought to go and see what's going on there," John continues.

Sometime later, our two friends knock on the door, and they are invited to come in.

They are admitted into the only room, a very unpretentious room, arranged as both a living room and a meeting room, and kept very tidy. A young woman, sitting at a desk, gives them a welcoming smile and greets them very kindly. John feels this is a very agreeable welcome. They have a conversation, and in a voice that rings with sincere conviction, the evangelist explains the Work of the last Messenger, in "the time of the end". They are given some publications before they go.

John has been impressed by the way the evangelist received them, and his interest has been caught by what he has read in the papers and booklets. A while later, the evangelist pays John a visit, and he takes out a subscription to the literature of the Work. He also attends some of the meetings in a friendly spirit, even one in celebration of the Last Supper. On one or two occasions, he accompanies the evangelists in their work. All this interests him very much, but he is in need of further experience in the world.

There have been some changes in the activities of the evangelists, and the one who has been working here leaves for another town. She is replaced by a faith brother.

Around this time, John makes the acquaintance of a girl whom he decides to marry. Two children soon come to brighten up the little home, and John does everything in his power to make their little world happy. His wife, who is serious minded and well balanced, backs him up with all her heart. John realises that there are efforts to be made if one wishes to be a blessing to those whom one loves. He therefore undertakes a big fight against the faults he finds in himself. He gives up smoking, and this victory over himself encourages him to persevere. He reads *The Monitor of the Reign of Justice* assiduously and the *Paper for All* even more so, for he feels it contains solid food that his heart is in need of.

One day, during a meal, an idea comes to John's mind, which he becomes increasingly aware of, like a very clear invitation. He says to his wife: "I've a strong desire to attend one of the congresses of the Philanthropic Association." His wife agrees that he should go. So, he contacts the evangelist brother in charge of the local group. When they have become acquainted with each other, the evangelist tells John that it would be a good thing to attend a few local meetings before going to one of the big international ones. John very willingly agrees with this. His heart is avid for the divine influence to be felt in contact with the beloved Family of Faith, that true affection, which is not found in the world.

He now has a steady job in one of the town's services, but there are still many things for him to put up with. These things prepare him for more highly appreciating the noble and kind sentiments shown to him in the Lord's assembly.

When he is able to attend the congress, he finds great joy in it. He meets some very sensitive hearts, who, feeling that he is a newcomer to the Truth, are particularly kind to him.

John now becomes increasingly attached to divine things. His greatest joy would be to see all those he loves entering into the Lord's fold, so that they might obtain real happiness and joy. In spite of the humble job he does, he feels he is the town's richest inhabitant, for he feels the great value of the calling the Lord has given him to hear. He would really like to make himself worthy of it by purifying his sentiments to become fit to be employed in establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth, in which everyone will be comforted and happy.

He finds the opportunity to go and see his dear father, and soon after this visit, the old man departs this life. John is greatly comforted as he looks forward to the Resurrection, when all mistakes will be able to be put right, when all will be tears wiped away, and when pain and death will be no more, owing to the powerful influence of divine love, the conqueror of sin.

John is wholeheartedly grateful to the Lord for having watched over him with so much solicitude, for having kept the direction of his destiny, and for granting protection from so many dangers. With vibrant enthusiasm in his heart, he thinks of the great devotion of the Lamb of God, and of his beloved disciples. He also feels highly honoured in being permitted to fight in the ranks of the Host of the Lord.

News in brief of the Reign of Justice

We happily give below a summary of the commentary by the Faithful and Wise Servant of God, on the *Heavenly Dew* Bible text — from Sunday the 23rd of April, the second day of the congress in Sternberg Castle, Germany — from the Book of Job, 33: 23 and 24: "If there is a messenger [an angel], a mediator, one of the thousand, to show man what is right for him, then God is gracious to him, and says [to the messenger, angel]: 'Deliver him from going down into the pit [the grave]; I have found a ransom!'"

"... The beneficiaries of that immense and immeasurable grace are now here. They can easily assimilate the promises and the conditions. It all depends on their zeal and on their honesty in running the race. ... This means that if currently the visible testimony of rejuvenation has not yet been given, then it is simply because everything necessary has not yet been done, that is all. For all those who do not want to go down into 'the pit', there are also conditions to fulfil. One must be docile and honest, in order to live them. There is no other way. The programme is shown in the Book of Remembrance (*The Message to Humanity*), with a simplicity and precision that leave no ambiguity. It is therefore not possible to not succeed if we do everything that needs to be done. It is not complicated or difficult, but as kind and affectionate as can be. It only requires a heart sufficiently aware of the immense grace that is offered, in order to fulfil the conditions of 'the programme of life' ...

It is therefore a matter of monitoring one's sentiments in order to let go of everything that is not a support for life. Only altruistic sentiments are beneficial. So, one must put aside everything that is selfish, and this is precisely where one is not honest.

Those who want to have true faith must continually purify their heart. This is of utmost importance; otherwise, faith quickly declines. And if you no longer have faith, what good are the promises to you? ...

In the Book of Remembrance, there is everything for attaining eternal life...because the time has come when the mystery of God is revealed, since the Ransom is paid. Job's prophecy must now be fulfilled. One only has to rise to the occasion of the programme of life. ...

One who is still chasing a personal advantage cannot put oneself into the Lord's hands, because one fears that what one desires will escape one. Then, there is no progress, be-

cause an egoist will not have eternal life, it is out of the question. ... One who always wants to pursue one's will instead of merging into the community, cuts oneself off from the blessing. One cannot enter the Kingdom except through the door of the sheepfold, which is self-denial. ...

And if we do no harm, but also no good, we are still in deficit, because the process of life for us, obliges us to do good to ourselves, and we can only do good to ourselves by doing good to others, by devoting ourselves to those around us.

We can therefore only become viable by cultivating the sentiments of God's Kingdom, which crystallize into selfless love. These are the new things. It is therefore necessary to get rid of everything else. ...

How many of us are there who truly have the faith within them that they can be rejuvenated by doing what is necessary, and who have no doubt about the programme placed before us in the Book of Remembrance? ...

Our dear Saviour did not argue with people. They needed a Saviour, and he presented himself. He came to save that which was lost, with such love, such devotion and such a Spirit of Sacrifice! Therefore, every person will have the opportunity to come back to Earth and to choose life or death for themselves. ...

Our programme is clear, unambiguous and admirable, and ineffably grand and majestic. It is up to us to achieve it. What is it all about? Saving humanity. ...

It is now a matter of establishing the new family and of letting it live and prosper, which costs us everything. We must always give preference to the new family. And a few among us are sometimes under pressure when it comes to deciding to choose well and prefer the divine family in all circumstances. ...

We want to take the programme seriously in order to become one of those of whom it is said: 'Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom!'"

We understand from those lines that if the Almighty Lord and our dear Saviour have done everything to save us, then we also have our share of personal effort to make, so that we may have Salvation. We therefore wish everyone the necessary courage and determination to "take hold" of divine grace and become the happy recipients of the promises.

We again mention the congress in Lyon, France, which will take place, God willing, from the 2nd to the 4th of September.