

THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

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To escape from misfortune

DIVINE wisdom is sublime. It is perfect because it never deviates from the upright. It is unfathomable to mankind who, being in profound darkness, are incapable of seeing or understanding it.

Divine wisdom is in perfect harmony with love and with justice, and this state of things results in power, whichever way one looks. One of the attributes of this power is prescience, or foreknowledge, of all things.

Mankind possess great capabilities in many domains, but their wisdom is madness in the eyes of the Lord, because it is founded on selfishness, and this deprives it of any power it might otherwise have had. Instead of being an advantage to mankind, their wisdom is most detrimental because it only leads to destruction.

Divine wisdom is wonderful, and its power is invincible because it is founded entirely on goodness. On the other hand, at the beginning of our race in divine ways, our own wisdom is founded on selfishness and is therefore the exact opposite of divine wisdom. Hence, it is indispensable that in no case should we allow it to prevail. The Holy Scriptures say: "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil."

The fact is that our own experiences are not sufficient to give us true wisdom. We need to change our mentality completely, and this is the very thing which is so difficult. When we have become accustomed to a thing, having learnt to like this and that, and suddenly, with knowledge of the Truth, we learn that it is bad for us, it is hard to take the step that is called for, because it has become a matter of habit. A man who has taken great pains to accumulate a fortune, who has displayed great ability and perseverance in reaching his goal, has no great enthusiasm when it is pointed out to him that this has nothing in common with divine ways. He will have trouble to admit that he has been going the wrong way about things. Why? Because he has been banking on his own wisdom instead of seeking nothing but the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, everything else being added to him. It is clear that when one sets out to live up to divine ways in the way the Lord proposes, the whole fabric of human wisdom falls apart, because it is not founded on divine principles, which alone can stand.

To become a real child of God, one has to follow a line of conduct very different from that of the world. Needless to say, this costs some self-denial and some rectifications that hurt. For instance, a man who has al-

ways been in a position to command, with workmen at his beck and call, and who, when he becomes a disciple of Christ, has to submit to the Lord's yoke, to become simple as a child, wholly dependent on his Master, has to certainly make a deal of effort at the beginning of his race if he intends to achieve such a radical change in his programme. It means a complete transformation, for it is the opposite of what is the regular thing in the human race. Violence and brute force have much more effect on people, at present, than virtue, gentleness, kindness and goodness.

Mankind cannot possibly understand the true things, and for this reason, we cannot hold it against any who employ violence and reprisals, at present. The futility of the methods they employ will come to light in due course, and they will be obliged to admit that they have mistaken their way. In the past, the Babylonian and the Roman Empires were known for their violence. They did achieve certain results, but this did not last. What remains of their power and their glory? Nothing but ruins, because everything that is violent and brutal, is doomed to come to an end, not being viable.

That enables us to more and more clearly understand how idle and stupid, is the wisdom of men, not at the benefit of God's Holy Spirit. On the other hand, how glorious and sublime, is divine wisdom, the fount of life and blessing! People have to love one another, to give each other mutual assistance, to devote themselves for each other's sakes, and to make life agreeable for each other: that is divine wisdom. One has to appreciate and esteem one's fellow creatures, and to do one's best to give them pleasure, never, however, losing sight of justice with which wisdom has to invariably harmonise. For instance, man has certain rights, since he is on Earth, besides which, he also has duties, and he will neglect them at his own cost. If the benefits are respected and the duties performed, the result is magnificent harmony that will ensure a happy life and a lasting one, because, in this way, true wisdom has prevailed.

It is the wonderful wisdom of God that rules the motions of the solar systems in Space. These motions are regular, accurate and wonderfully smooth, free of shocks and jerks. This has been going on for thousands of millions of years, without ever a variation or a disturbance. This is a grand demonstration of the power and the perfection of the wisdom of God.

Colossal and incredible is the work the Lord is thus doing without interruption, work that we, with our limited intelligence, can scarce conceive of. One is able to estimate the extent and the value of some work only when one has undertaken it oneself. For instance, it is possible to esteem and appreciate the work of our fellows only when one is active and zealous in the performance of one's own ministry. One who never does anything cannot appreciate what his fellows are doing.

It is the same with respect to a feeling heart. To be able to sympathise with the sufferings of one's fellows, one has oneself to have suffered. One who has never had trouble in his health can scarce understand the pain suffered by a sick person. It is when he himself gets into physical trouble that he is able to feel for those who are in pain, and that he begins to realise how hard he used to be and how little commiseration and sympathy he has had for the pains of others.

Man's viability is subject to the cleanness of his heart. It is the sentiments we are animated with that make us viable or make us die. If we indulge in thoughts of our neighbour that are not very kind, if we indulge in feelings of bitterness, of jealousy or of anger, we do ourselves terrible harm, because our organism can only prosper when our sensory nerves are impressed with feelings of kindness and benevolence, of joy and of heart's contentment. Man needs to feel immersed in the wholesome atmosphere of kindness and love. And he, for his part, must contribute towards the creation of that atmosphere. Then, there is magnificent harmony, and there is life with felicity.

For all our responses and everything we express to be in keeping with beneficial harmony, we must not constrain our organism to things that are bad for it. We must not breathe evil smells. We must be able to digest thoroughly, and for this purpose, everything we eat must be properly masticated. Wisdom, as far as we are concerned, means that we shall behave in such a way that the result will be harmony in all respects.

The Lord has granted men all that is needful to sustain life in them. He has given them, of the abundance of his House, all sorts of good and beautiful things. If they were to make use of them with discernment and wisdom, everything would take place within them and around them with magnificent harmony. There would never be any frost, and neither would there be tropical heat. There would be a perpetual alternation of spring and autumn, the sowing and the harvest seasons. Snow would never fall and spread its cover over the ground, hiding it as one would a dead body. The plants would be in constant activity, and there would be no more

The Master is calling, fear nothing!

ON a bright and warm summer's day, Beatrice was walking along an avenue of plane trees, carrying an evangelist's satchel. The trees provided agreeable shade from the Sun, which was already some way above the horizon. Being happy at heart, she was proceeding blithely, and perceiving that she had the road to herself, she sang her favourite hymn as she went:

*By thy compassion, Lord, unfailing,
I feel thy Spirit's loving call:
The wondrous news to be retailing
To those who sorrow, great and small;
To soothe the hearts who, with their sadness,
Their pain, their worries, cannot cope:
To pour them out an oil of gladness,
To love them, saying to them: "Hope!"
A great and splendid time is nearing,
For Jesus did your Ransom pay,*

*And his Salvation is appearing,
There, in the dawn, at break of day.
Let your hope sing, and spurn dejection:
Glad are the days now drawing nigh.
God's mercy and his kind protection,
Receive most freely from On High.*

"What a blessing it is", thought Beatrice, "to possess such a splendid message in my heart, to fetch to so many sorrowing people, to make the true God known to them, and the good and wonderful news of the days of refreshing, which are on the way!"

Singing and thinking as she went, the evangelist eventually came to an intersection. A bus had halted there, just as if it had been waiting for her. With nimbleness and grace, she got in without wasting a moment, and the driver got under way immediately. On the seat facing her, there sat a girl of her own age in a nurse's uniform. She looked most attractive and pleasant. Beatrice thought: "I

must try to have a conversation with her." Her travelling companion's occupation seemed a favourable topic, so Beatrice addressed her, saying: "Yours is a splendid service. You must have numberless opportunities to do good to people, to comfort them and cheer them up."

"I have indeed," the nurse replied with a sweet smile. Then, her face returned to its serious expression, and her eyes took on a shade of wistfulness. She went on: "But it isn't always easy to be helpful. We often don't succeed as we would like."

"As for me, I have a splendid mission," Beatrice said, "and my whole heart is taken with it. I'm an evangelist, bringing the Good News of the Kingdom, from door to door. I have to tell all who are sorrowing and unhappy, that the Kingdom is on the way for their consolation. There is no end of those unfortunates, I can assure you. I come upon miseries of every description at almost every

door. How happy it makes us when we find someone who wants to be comforted by divine grace!"

The bus stopped at the hospital. "This is where I get off," the nurse said.

Beatrice had just enough time to hand her a *Monitor*, saying: "It would make me so very glad to be sure you will read this paper, for I know it would do you a lot of good."

"I promise to read it," the nurse replied, "for it's made me very happy to talk with you."

Beatrice was now the only passenger on the bus. "What a pity," she thought, "I've such a lot of good things to tell people."

At the next stop, a middle-aged man got on. Beatrice wasted no time in trying to get into a conversation with him. The man was somewhat intimidating. Beatrice offered him a *Monitor*. He refused it very definitely, saying irritably: "Please don't bother me with your nonsense!"

Beatrice comforted herself with the thought

dead periods, with desolation and mourning for both people and things.

Mankind have spoiled the Earth, they have damaged it incessantly. But the Lord grants us some wonderful glimpses into the time of the Restoration of All Things, made possible by our dear Saviour's Sacrifice. Accordingly, we are able, by faith, to make excursions, in advance, to the restored Earth, become the Lord's footstool through the Work of our dear Saviour, assisted by his beloved Little Flock.

We have a share in that sublime Work, and we must positively do our duty. For that purpose, we must acquire the divine sentiments. We must not preserve the slightest feeling against any one of our fellows. We have to forgive and to not be offended by any injury that may be done to us. Such is not the mentality of the world in general. In point of fact, mankind respond to injuries with retaliation, return evil for evil, whereas we are called to overcome evil with good. Our Lord gave his life for mankind. That is the expression of the noblest and loftiest part of the wisdom of God.

The plan the Lord conceived was inexpressibly glorious, but it also had to be carried out. The Lord Jesus had to voluntarily deliver himself up as the atoning Victim to redeem the fallen human race. There was a moment of great pain and distress to be gone through. Our dear Saviour was perfectly faithful in the mission he undertook. In this way, he became the glorious and powerful Saviour, who is the Prince of Peace, who made peace for us with the blood of his Cross.

God's plan is glorious. It is a monument of wisdom and of science, whose magnificence is beyond imagining. For one thing, the Almighty does not punish. He does not need to punish: to do so would show great weakness on his part. His wisdom is far too great and too perfect to contain the slightest particle of weakness. When you come to think about it, to punish would not be wise. If anyone does wrong and is punished in retribution, two have done wrong instead of one, and this does not mend matters at all, far from it. Therefore, God never steps in to punish wrongdoers. The equivalent of the wrong that is done arises automatically owing to the fact that man's organism is his judge and gives him pain to the extent of the wrong he has done. No one else at all has anything to do with punishing him, and so, no one else is injured thereby. This is wise beyond all expression; it is wisdom that mankind have never been able to understand. Divine wisdom appears as foolishness to them because it is beyond their scope to fathom it. But then, the wisdom of men is foolishness before God.

If — on one hand, the equivalent of the wrong done immediately recoils on him who does it, causing deficiencies that make themselves felt in his organism — on the other hand, the equivalent of the good done takes the form of gain, blessing in his organism. Every feeling in keeping with the law has a beneficial effect on the organism, giving it rest and promoting its viability. Hence, the good we do is never lost, even if no one has noticed it. It is always profitable to us, because what is good, ennobles us and makes us viable. Whereas the wrong we do, even if it sometimes appears advantageous, in reality, works in us as a power that rots.

As we can see, divine wisdom is inexpressibly lovely because it does not delude one. It shows things up exactly as they are, but then, once it has laid a finger on the sore spot, it is able to save and to heal. Thus, when we enter his school, our dear Saviour reveals to us all the shortcomings and blots in our character, but at the same time, he grants us the power to get rid of our wretchedness and to become children of God, who are perfectly viable. Moreover, when we understand the

Work of Redemption done by our dear Saviour — when the gift of faith, made by the Lord, enables us to feel divine justification and forgiveness — this must mean a great deal to our hearts, and constrain us to gratitude and attachment to the Lord and to our dear Saviour.

If we are unable to develop gratitude and attachment, Salvation can be of no use to us. Indeed, our dear Saviour's redeeming Work is a work of love, of tenderness, of mercy and of kindness. Divine wisdom, carried to its loftiest expression, is displayed in the love that can overcome death. Hence, God's Work is a work of love, and it has to awaken love in our hearts, for love is life. Where there is no love, life is impossible.

Divine wisdom is the exact opposite of worldly wisdom, because divine wisdom is founded on altruism, whereas worldly wisdom is founded on selfishness. Human beings think it hardly wise to devote oneself to one's fellow men, to forgive offences and to return good for evil. The truth is that the final result of doing these things is lasting life, joy and blessing. We will therefore go the way of divine wisdom, so that the equivalent we reap may be happiness, health and lasting life.

Human rights and duties

In the French newspaper *Ouest-France*, on the 15th of December 2022, the following article was published, which we reproduce in its entirety. It was written by university professor emeritus Jacques Le Goff and attempts to explain the universality of human rights.

A proof of the universality of human rights

Mr Xi Jinping recently stated again: our population has no use for Western human rights that are foreign to the expectations of the people who prefer bread and games, to idle chatter about freedom of expression, of opinion and of self-determination...which are secondary. Not to mention that security, threatened by terrorists of the Uighur type, requires flawless control. A similar speech was given in Iran, where the Ayatollah Khamenei doesn't have words scathing enough for the propagandists of the West, deemed to be agents of the epidemic women's revolt. And Putin's Russia...and El-Sisi's Egypt...

That is enough to justify Angela Merkel's skepticism expressed in 2018 on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "I ask myself often, imagine we, the international community today, would have to establish such a declaration on human rights [as in 1948]. Would we manage that? I fear, not." This was echoed at the time by insistent questioning on "the end of human rights", a victim of particularisms claimed in the name of "Chinanness" by China, of "Arabness" by the Arab Charter of Human Rights (in 2004), and of "Africaness" by the framework of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (in 1981). "There is no universally applicable model" (China's white paper on human rights, in 2019).

The World Conference on Human Rights (in Vienna in 1993) took note of that aspiration by admitting that it was necessary "to not lose sight of the importance of national and regional particularisms", not without recalling that "it is the duty of States — whatever their political, economic or cultural system — to promote and protect all human rights and all fundamental freedoms". An importance that Chinese, Iranian and Russian societies are confirming day after day by their protests and their resistance at the cost of their lives and their freedom.

Community of fundamental rights

Don't they demonstrate that there is a real community of fundamental rights across latitudes and longitudes, and across cultural, religious, social and political divides?

And don't they powerfully and bluntly highlight, first

of all, the disturbing fact that all the deniers of universality are, without exception, those States that trample on fundamental rights. It is only a short step from there to thinking that their rhetoric is nothing more than an advantageous strategy of self-justification and camouflage.

We have all the more reason to doubt that when the voice of the people manages to break the silence, the tone is very different. People call for the strict application of international conventions. People associate them with the universal suffering of men and women, imprisoned, tortured, and deprived of their social rights, as in Qatar. The generality of suffering, linked to the deprivation of essential rights, proves, in a nutshell, that they are indeed universal in scope.

And how can we once again fail to respond with Aung San Suu Kyi who was again deprived of her freedom in Myanmar [formerly Burma], and said that "if ideas and beliefs are to be denied validity outside the geographical and cultural bounds of their origins, Buddhism would have been confined to North India, Christianity to a narrow tract in the Middle East, and Islam to Arabia"! Convincing...

One could think that it is natural for all people to have the same rights, but as the above text shows us, the matter is not so simple, as there are many particularisms associated with various countries and cultures. 48 countries signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But one has seen that these rights have not always been respected in practice.

It is important to emphasize that the rights of one are the duty of another. Thus, everyone strives for freedom. However, our personal freedom ends when it hinders the freedom of others. And that applies to all aspects of life in society. War, for example, is a grave violation of human rights. Regardless of causes or reasons that one could give for a war, it is a matter of a transgression of all laws. Most of the time, it is personal interest that is imposed and that leads to the disregard of the rights of others.

Despite the will of certain idealists to establish the fairest rules and to ensure that they are respected, we can see from history that the best principles have often been transgressed. This is understandable, given that imperfect human beings are not capable of faithfully observing the rules proposed to them.

There are many examples in the Bible to support that assertion. The most convincing is undoubtedly the account of the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt, under the leadership of Moses. In the wilderness, the Lord entrusted Moses with the law and the ordinances of the tabernacle, which were to guide the people in their relationship with God and their neighbours. Unfortunately, very few people kept this law. Many began to study it and formed the most religious class in the nation. Those who understood the essence of the law, and put it into practice, became an elite among their contemporaries. They were the men of God, and the prophets.

The one who best observed and fulfilled the law during his time on Earth, was our dear Saviour, Jesus Christ. He is the one who put into practice the two greatest commandments of the law of Moses, which were to love God above all and your neighbour as yourself. And we know that this cost him his life as the Ransom for ours, which we lost in Adam. Our dear Saviour came to Earth to live, for us, the law that we were unable to keep. He took the place of the guilty, and thus became the merciful Judge who paid for us. From now on, there is no more condemnation for those who accept this Sacrifice and want to regain communion with God, which was lost in Eden through Adam's sin.

It should be pointed out that there is a law called "universal" because it applies everywhere, not just on Earth, but throughout the entire Universe. This law consists of two clauses: "Every being and every thing,

of the nurse's smile and of the agreeable talk they had together.

She prayed very earnestly for the man who was so rude to her, so that he might calm down. She was used to being rebuffed and felt quite kind about it. Was the influence of kindness she was endeavouring to make him feel, having an effect on him? Be that as it may, he suddenly turned to her and said: "Forgive me for being so rude just now. I'm sincerely sorry. Please give me your paper, and I'll read it."

"Gladly!" Beatrice replied as she again handed him the *Monitor*.

He opened it and read the first article to the end. It appeared to have moved him. Having thought a while, he turned to the evangelist and said: "The man who wrote this article has intimate knowledge of the human heart and of the terrible wretchedness of the present world. He must also be a very noble soul with a high moral character."

"He is, indeed," Beatrice replied. "That is why he was able to receive a magnificent message from the Lord, by which all people can be consoled. For the time has come when all must be informed of their wonderful destiny, and of the Kingdom of God which is coming with such great consolation and blessing."

"It really is a magnificent message. If only you might be right!" he said.

"The things that this man of God announces, are certainties. I have a very precious book in my bag. It was dictated to him by God Himself, and contains full knowledge of the divine plan and of the imminent setting up of the Kingdom of God on Earth. The explanations are so clear, simple and logical, that no one who is sincere can contradict."

"May I see the book?" he asked.

Beatrice passed it to him with alacrity, and he paid for it generously. Then, she reached her destination. She took kind leave of her

travelling companion who shook hands with her warmly and thanked her once more.

Beatrice got out. She was happier than ever. She was on the outskirts of a small town which she was about to evangelize. She took down the name of the first street she came to, and, as she told the nurse, went from door to door, announcing the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

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Now, for the nurse, Gertrude. She went to the hospital where the care of her patients called her. She endeavoured to put the best of herself into her nursing. She did all she knew to create an atmosphere of peace and optimism for the patients. However, many difficulties cropped up, which she found hard to cope with. In fact, many of them were beyond her, and she was unable to do as she would have liked.

Things were particularly difficult that day. The patients seemed very much on edge.

Now and again, she lost control of her temper. To make matters worse, the head nurse was jealous of her and sought to find fault for the slightest pretext. So, when she reached her room at the end of the day's work, her heart was heavy within her. After a while, she recalled her conversation with Beatrice, and she thought: "To go from door to door, as she does, must have its seamy side as well. Yet that young evangelist looked on top of the world. I would like to know how she does it. That reminds me! I could read the paper she left me. Besides, I promised I would."

Gertrude started with the short story from life, printed in the bottom part of the paper. She was deeply moved by it and quite unable to hold back her tears. Then, she read the first article. It told about the Universal Law, which governs everything in nature, including man's body, and requires everyone to exist for the good of others. The article demonstrated the favourable influence of

exist for the good of each other, and they all have communion with each other." This law is the complete and perfect expression of the declaration of human rights. Our lives depend on putting it into practice. One only has the right to live when one is a benefactor to one's fellow person. If one does not live for the good of one's fellow person, one is a lawbreaker and therefore does not have the right to exist. Sin, or transgression of the law, leads to death.

We can see that before enjoying certain rights, human beings must fulfil their duties. However, these duties are not onerous if one loves one's fellow person. It is therefore this Universal Law that will govern human society in the next dispensation, which will soon be introduced on Earth, by virtue of the Sacrifice of our dear Saviour and of the faithful members of his Church. To illustrate and make this law accessible to us, *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance) sets out the law and the constitution for the introduction of God's Kingdom on Earth. By following these principles, everyone can, under the merits of Christ, attain their destiny: eternal life.

Maternal instinct

The following story — published in the French weekly magazine *Maxi*, edition no. 91 — is told by Christine Navarra:

The cat "Duchess" is the mother of these little rabbits

An adorable white cat, which lives in the area of Saint-Jean-Saint-Maurice-sur-Loire in central France, transferred her overflowing and unfulfilled love, after the loss of her kittens, to a litter of rabbits...

Perched on the edge of a box, this cat gazes contentedly at her nine long-eared "children", snuggled up together, and there would not be a more attentive mother for this unusual litter. First of all, she gives them a vigorous grooming with the repeated and precise licks of her tongue. Behind the ears and under the feet, are cleaned thoroughly. One of the babies, trying to leave its shelter, is quickly caught. Duchess grabs it by the scruff of its neck, and with a well-applied swipe of her paw, stopped it from trying again. Then, the devoted mother lays on her side and holds out her swollen teats to her young, which rush towards her nourishing tummy. This spectacle would not be surprising if these little ones were not...rabbits!

It all started with Mr and Mrs Marion, who live in the area of Saint-Jean-Saint-Maurice-sur-Loire, with two happy and almost simultaneous events. In her enclosure, the rabbit gave birth to nine babies, while Duchess gave birth to two kittens. Unfortunately, the kittens had to be given away, much to their mother's despair. As for the rabbit, she was suffering from colic, was not doing well and was wandering around without any drive. She was found dead one morning.

Then, the Marions had an idea: would Duchess, which was mourning her lost children, adopt these little orphans? Two of the rabbits were as white as her kittens. Mr Marion took them to the cat. At first, she had no reaction. Then, after a few hours, she seemed to find these little balls of fur interesting, which reminded her of something... She began to lick them, thus impregnating their fur with her own scent. This was important, as mothers recognize their young by smell. To that, was added the sound stimulation made by the babies. This was very strong, because the bunnies were in distress. Nothing stood in the way of the substitution: the cat adopted the litter and offered her teats, which were not dried up. Hunger was stronger than fear.

Like the she-wolf of Romulus and Remus

The milk suited them perfectly. This is how Duchess found herself feeding nine little rabbits.

This might seem like an extraordinary case, but there are precedents. When it comes to breastfeeding, mammals can easily "swap". This was recently the case in Germany with the case of a bitch that breastfed a child. And who doesn't know the story [in Roman mythology] of Romulus and Remus being fed by a she-wolf? Substitute feeding is frequently practiced in zoos, as captive wild animals tend to reject or even kill their young. Female dogs, with their highly developed maternal instincts, then take over. A tiger, wolf, panther or lion that proudly stands in front of visitors today, might have had a simple dog as its nurse.

For their part, Duchess and her rabbits seem to find the solution quite satisfactory. The Marions, too. A beautiful love story between two very different species!

This story is illustrated with several colour photographs showing a pretty all-white cat with her many adopted offspring. The rabbits have already grown and are in magnificent health and vitality.

It was a happy coincidence for them that the cat was able to breastfeed them just as their mother had died, and that she was willing to accept them with the same tenderness as if they were her own little ones.

Furthermore, a female cat or dog willing to offer her teats to the hungry young of another species that would be doomed to die of starvation without this timely intervention, is a joyful sight and well suited to soften the human heart.

How much that should speak to those who, immersed in abundance which often leads to waste, know that young children are dying of deprivation! They undoubtedly look a little different from their own, at least in terms of skin colour, but have the same needs. And how much more to those who, holding the destinies of many people in their hands, do not hesitate to unleash a bloody confrontation that will leave a great number of little orphans in misery and tears! They do so for reasons that are unspeakable and demonstrate an incredible hardness of heart. That is the result of the terrible selfishness that governs human education today more than ever.

Animals, even carnivores, especially in cases like the one described above, are often far more spontaneous than humans when it comes to rescuing young lives in distress. In them, there are no calculations or petty interests like those found in civilized people. Duchess and "her" nine little rabbits, give us further proof of this, because we are certain that she will not harm them, even when they grow up.

The true meaning of Easter

With the occurrence of the Easter festival, a question has been asked about the origin of this movable feast. We understand that some concepts seem somewhat puzzling, but as we will see, they follow a simple logic. To support our presentation, we take from the Swiss French-language newspaper *Tribune de Genève*, on the 15th of April 2022, an article that deals with the death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We quote its text in its entirety:

The death of Jesus: The historical background of Easter.

Easter is unanimously considered the founding event of Christianity. However, the concepts of sacrifice and resurrection are still debated.

Did Jesus sacrifice himself for humankind by dying on the Cross? How should we interpret his resurrection, which, if it can be questioned in its physical form, sees its meaning and scope interpreted differently according to confessions and sensitivities. The concepts of sacrifice and resurrection are indeed pitfalls that successive generations of theologians have been struggling with for thousands of years. What is at stake? The understanding

of the message expressed by miraculous events and its meaning for our present lives.

A question of definition

*Firstly, what about the concept of "sacrifice"? The Swiss theologian Mr Guy Lasserre — the author of the French book *Les sacrifices dans l'Ancien Testament* [Sacrifices in the Old Testament] — explains: "The death of Jesus should not in any way be seen as a sacrifice in the sense of the Old Testament, or in the sense of Jewish practices of that time." However, this term was used by the first Christians "as an image to interpret Christ's death on the Cross, which was experienced as a terrible shock at that time", he further says.*

A very current concept

Is this reference to an indispensable sacrifice now outdated? For the Swiss theologian Mr Christophe Chalamet, a professor at the University of Geneva, on the contrary, this concept of sacrifice still has many resonances with current events: "In his dealings with a jihadist, the French police officer Mr Arnaud Beltrame substituted himself for a hostage during the terrorist attack on the 23rd of March 2018 in the southern French town of Trèbes, and sacrificed himself in the name of solidarity. Even if this gesture remains controversial, it would be a shame to see Christ's sacrifice as something obsolete and that has nothing more to say to us today."

The same goes for Mr Elio Jaillet, an assistant in systematic theology at the University of Geneva [in Switzerland], who links "the gift of self" with the biblical parable of the Good Shepherd who is ready to die for his sheep. For his part, Mr Guy Lasserre prefers to see it as an expression of the communion between God and believers, in which the believers can also offer or consecrate their lives to God. "By allowing themselves to be transformed by God's love, they can redirect this love to others."

The return to unity

But why did Christ have to die? "For some Christians, especially Catholics and Protestants, Jesus's sacrifice allows humanity to attain salvation: something in Christ's death gives us back a unity," summarizes Mr Christophe Chalamet. "In fact, for a group of believers, God must be appeased for the sins of humankind. By Jesus remaining obedient to the end and presenting himself as a sacrifice, he satisfies God."

However, that is not the viewpoint of a part of the current reformed theology, as Mr Christophe Chalamet points out. He defends the idea that "it is not God who needs to be appeased from potential anger, but it is the world that needs to be reconciled with God. Through this sacrifice, God manifests his love to the end". According to this Swiss academic: "Human beings have difficulty in consenting to this unconditional love and this relationship that God seeks to establish with them. Thanks to Christ's resurrection, in which the Father comes to raise the Son out of love, God reveals himself as the one who stands by our side and thus seals a relationship of love with the world."

Beyond the evidence

And what about the resurrection? The Christian tradition cannot do without the resurrection of Christ in order to understand who Jesus is," says Mr Elio Jaillet. Was it a physical or only a symbolical resurrection? "If we are concerned with knowing exactly what happened at that moment, we run the risk of missing the meaning," which is what Mr Christophe Chalamet confirms, adding that "words fail us" when we want to approach the phenomenon of the resurrection too closely. "For reformed theology, it is not a question of proving the physical resurrection, but of insisting on the insight it offers for the understanding of our human realities," insists Mr Elio Jaillet. He continues: "What matters is not the resurrection in itself, but rather to believe that

the Universal Law on the nervous system, showing that, when living it, one gradually lost one's selfishness, which tenses the nerves and hinders the circulations that take place in the body. One becomes altruistic, and this relieves the nerve tension, eases circulation and feeds the sympathetic nervous system, and this is a power of healing for sick people.

Gertrude was highly pleased with all that. "This is true medical science," she thought. "These teachings are of the highest value. It's going to be a great help to me in my behaviour towards my patients, to be more patient and more collected, affectionate and understanding. It's going to help me to also turn their thoughts in the direction of altruism and away from selfishness. If only I could have further instructions! The article mentioned *The Message to Humanity* (the Book of Remembrance). How can I get hold of one? Let's see if there's an address in the

paper." She looked and found one, and wrote straight away.

A week later, she was told there was a visitor for her. Someone was waiting for her in the entrance hall. Gertrude was an orphan and had no close relations, so she was very curious about who would be coming to see her. She thought it must be a mistake. When she reached the entrance hall, to her great surprise, Beatrice, the young evangelist, was there and explained to her: "You wrote to our headquarters to send you a *Message to Humanity*. As I am evangelizing nearby and have a stock of these books, they requested me to bring you one and to pay you a visit at the same time."

"How splendid!" said Gertrude. "I shall come off duty in half an hour. If you could wait till then, we could have a chat."

Gertrude had a long talk with Beatrice, and asked her to explain a number of things. Afterwards, she read *The Message to Human-*

ity. So, now she understood much better. She adopted the Universal Law as the basis of her calling. She cared for her patients with untiring devotion and magnificent love, which she drew from her knowledge of the divine programme. Her patients, being cared for and instructed in this way, made splendid progress towards being cured.

The doctor in charge of the hospital was delighted with the order that prevailed in the ward, and particularly with the splendid morale of the patients. He congratulated Gertrude, saying: "You surely have the art of maintaining optimism in your patients, and that is an essential thing."

"Yes, doctor," she answered. "I learnt it from a book that explains, very simply and logically, the working of the Universal Law. It demonstrates that one falls ill because one's morale is bad, so that one sins against one's own system and inflicts, on one's nerves, a deal of tension, which finishes by

causing great disturbances in the whole body."

"I must confess that your reasoning is perfectly sound," the doctor answered, "and I wish you every success with your method."

Shortly after this, the head nurse came into the ward and inspected everything in great detail, found fault with various things, and then said: "I won't have you pandering to all the patients' whims and fancies. That's got to change. If the patients like you, it's because you do whatever they ask you. And another thing, I forbid you to keep on talking about that Universal Law, it gets on my nerves."

That little outburst did not pass unnoticed by several of the patients. Seeing her furtively wiping away a few tears, they spoke: "Cheer up, Sister Gertrude. We are very grateful for the way you look after us so kindly, and we appreciate it very much. It grieves us that your devotion should give rise to so much spite."

Later in the day, the head doctor went to the

Jesus is the Risen One, and that it is possible for everyone to meet him."

Not all believers build their trust on the same foundation. "Some Christians base their hope in the resurrection on the 'reality' of the empty tomb," says Mr Guy Lasserre. Others, on the conviction of the first Christians who set out and spread the Good News." That means, according to this pastor, that "the resurrection of Jesus testifies that his death on the Cross is the way to life. This path to God, which can be ours, does not end in death."

Mr Christophe Chalamet also says: "The resurrection is not the simple return to life of a corpse, but access to another dimension of life. The Spirit comes to breathe life and to renew it here and now."

As the Bible teaches, the Passover festival was introduced into the nation of Israel when it was in slavery in Egypt. God, Who wanted to lead his people, under the leadership of Moses, out of Israel, introduced the symbol of the Passover in order to illustrate a covenant with his people. In the wilderness, the nation of Israel received the ordinances of the tabernacle, and the tables of the law. We don't want to go into the details of the Old Testament (Old Covenant) here, we only want to clarify that it was a symbol for what occurred later with the coming of our dear Saviour to Earth.

To return to our actual subject, two essential points are explained in the above article, which seem to divide the churches on the subject of the death of our Lord Jesus. They are the concepts of sacrifice and of resurrection.

We have carefully read the above-article's text and can see that a very important truth is missing, which is indeed essential for the understanding of our subject. We are, in fact, poor sinners. This concept is not mentioned even once in the article. And yet it is this concept that enables us, in association with God's love, to understand the nature of the death of Jesus Christ. The Prophet Isaiah, in the 53rd chapter of his book, makes it clear that our Lord Jesus took our guilt on himself, and also suffered and died because of our iniquities. He thus became the Author of eternal Salvation for all. He is consequently our Saviour: a term that has not been used even once in the article. He did not die the death of a condemned individual, as we do, but the death of sacrifice.

As we know, "the wages of sin is death". This is a matter of the equivalent of our line of conduct. We point out that it is not because of the Almighty that we

have to die. Sin produces sickness, suffering and death, without God intervening. On the contrary, He revealed Himself in order to save us by sending his beloved Son to Earth in order to pay our Ransom for us.

Now, we will respond to several passages of the article, which are worth examining in parallel to the teachings of the Holy Scripture.

"The concepts of sacrifice and resurrection are indeed pitfalls that successive generations of theologians have been struggling with for thousands of years." Why is this so? These concepts are clear if we, as mentioned above, are aware of our condition of sinners. We are like someone who is drowning. Our dear Saviour is like someone who sees us from the shore, approaches the water and extends their hand in order to pull us out. The reality goes even beyond this image, because in order to save us, our dear Saviour died "for us", he endured the equivalent that was going to strike us. Martin Luther expressed it like this: "He took our sins on himself, and placed his justice on us." That is why Apostle Paul could say: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8: 1). We will return later to the question of his resurrection.

"The death of Jesus should not in any way be seen as a sacrifice in the sense of the Old Testament." Yet that is exactly what it is, because the Old Covenant should have prepared the nation of Israel to receive the Messiah. The sacrifices in the law of Moses, symbolized the Sacrifice that was offered by our dear Saviour on the Cross. He even said: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6: 53), and thereby showed that he, Jesus, was sacrificed for our sins. To correctly understand the ordinances of the law of Moses, and the variously prescribed sacrifices, one must keep the New Covenant (the New Testament) in mind, which gives us the key to understanding.

"For a group of believers, God must be appeased for the sins of humankind." This is a claim that should be completely rejected. God is not irritated, and He is not angry or jealous. If He had these feelings, He would simply not be God. Apostle John gives us a beautiful definition of the Almighty when he declares: "God is Love" (1 John 4: 8). And as Mr Christophe Chalamet says, God does not need to be appeased, it is we who must be reconciled with God.

Before our dear Saviour finished his ministry on the

Cross, he instituted, on the evening he was betrayed, the Lord's Supper with his disciples in the upstairs room. On this occasion, he took the bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, with the words: "Take and eat. ... This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After the supper, he gave them the cup and said: "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

Apostle Paul gives us an interesting explanation on that subject when he says: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not communion [participation] in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not communion [participation] in the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10: 16). He thereby shows that the cup and the bread represent the blood and the body of Christ, and also the communion (participation) in this blood and this body of our dear Saviour. That means a participation in his Sacrifice and his suffering. That is what had to be discerned and accepted, and here, the symbol of the Passover becomes reality for us, as it was the case for our dear Saviour.

Therefore, the ministry of our Lord Jesus, and his death on the Cross, are no longer a mystery for all those who have associated in this Sacrifice. His resurrection is not either. Just as death is the equivalent of sin, so was the resurrection the logical consequence of the Sacrifice of our dear Saviour. David even prophesied: "You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption [to rot in the grave]" (Psalm 16: 10). Our dear Saviour was resurrected three days after his death on the Cross. He appeared to his dear disciples several times in various forms in order to strengthen their faith. Then, he disappeared before their eyes and assured them that he would always be with them until the end of the age.

We should clearly understand that our dear Saviour died for two reasons. Firstly, for the Sacrifice that he brought us. By doing that, he acquired sentiments, a character and a glory that cannot be contained in human nature. He had to die and be resurrected in order to receive the immortality of divine nature, not as a favour, but as the equivalent of his abasement to death on the Cross.

The result of that great ministry of our Lord Jesus, will be the Restoration of All Things, which includes the return of all people to perfection. They will be able to live forever on Earth, which will again be the Lord's footstool.

head nurse's office to inform her of something. Before leaving, he said: "I'm delighted with the devotion and the know-how displayed by Sister Gertrude. She's got the knack of bucking up the patients, and they're all getting on fine. She tells them about the Universal Law and encourages them to live up to it, which can only do them good."

Hearing him speak so, the head nurse became white with rage, and she answered with asperity: "This must stop. It won't do to have people here who obey the patients and have all sorts of ideas outside of our religion, the only true one: there is 'no salvation outside the Church'."

Perceiving how the head nurse had worked herself up, the doctor prudently withdrew, thinking: "Was there ever anything so hard-hearted and narrow-minded! Religion surely hasn't made her sweet-tempered. She's frightfully jealous of Sister Gertrude, who isn't constantly spouting religion, but does her best to cheer up the patients. And she succeeds magnificently."

Days passed into weeks, and conditions became more and more strained. The head nurse was constantly complaining of Gertrude, till one day, she criticised her even more bitterly than usual to the doctor in charge, and he was so vexed that, in spite of himself, he replied: "What I can see for myself is that this nurse helps the patients very capably, and that I can only take pride in having her assistance. There's no one in this hospital who can come up to her."

On hearing that, the head nurse flew into a violent rage. She ran upstairs, two at a time, and burst into the ward where Sister Gertrude was working. There, she vented her anger, exploding into a storm of invective, being quite unable to hold in her wrath and jealousy. She gave a clear and practical demonstration of Solomon's words: "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who can stand before jealousy?"

Gertrude received that flood of vituperation without answering back. She realised that she could no longer remain at the hospital, for if she did, it would be exceedingly dangerous for the head nurse. In one of her rages, she might easily have a fit. She entrusted

her future into the Lord's hands, for she had already made great progress in carrying out the divine programme and in the process of character changing.

A while later, she went up into her room, and on the table, there was a letter from Beatrice, with whom she had been corresponding regularly. "Splendid consolation from the Lord!" thought Gertrude. She opened the letter, and as she read it, her eyes became moist, and tears wet her cheeks. She was so happy and so relieved, that her nerves, which had been painfully strained by the trial just gone through, were fully relaxed. What could there be in this letter to make her so happy? It was a kind and affectionate invitation to join the ranks of the evangelists of the Kingdom of God. Gertrude had already contemplated this step on several occasions, but had felt so unworthy of such a great honour, that she hadn't dared to offer her services.

Beatrice wrote that a splendid opportunity had opened for Gertrude to take her first steps in the ministry in her company.

Gertrude was increasingly able to clearly grasp the Lord's kind way of treating his children. She realised that this invitation came from Him through Beatrice. She knelt down to thank the great God of Heaven, from the bottom of her heart, for kindly letting her understand that He considered her worthy of that great and noble ministry, and she solemnly promised to apply her whole heart and soul to it.

News in brief of the Reign of Justice

During this month of April, we will have the joy of celebrating the dear Host of the Lord, a people of God's "good pleasure". On this occasion, we will read an exposé by the dear Messenger. We happily quote its main passages below.

He whose spirit is without self-mastery is like a city that is broken down and hath no wall. Prov. 25: 28.

"The divine instructions contain a marvellous power of life. ... So, today's text is particularly appropriate for the birthday of the holy Host of the Lord. In fact, it can only acquire life by achieving stability and self-mastery...

For us, everything hinges on this point, whether we love God above all, or whether we love someone or something more than Him. This is what makes the wall or the breach. To come to love God above all, it sometimes takes long years of struggle and combat... this is the ultimate test, when it comes, which shows us our true situation.

The fundamental honesty to seek purity is a power against suggestion. ... So, if we have breaches of pride, let us fill them with humility. If we have gaps of jealousy, let us plug them by giving credit to those whom we are jealous of. That's the best way. The same goes for all the defects in our character. Let us be courageous people, who fulfil their vows. ...

Let us build our wall so that it can stand. To do this, it is necessary to use altruistic love as the cement, and give this all our attention and effort...to seek, with tenfold intensity, communion with God. Otherwise, we will not be up to the circumstances. If we are not ready, there is nothing we can do. Nothing in the world can replace the essential preparation of the heart, through the lessons we learn day by day, honestly and courageously. ...

The 'programme of life' is shown throughout the Book of Remembrance. It is neither complicated nor difficult. We just need to be sufficiently aware of the immense grace that is placed before us.

The Host of the Lord must become full of life and health. It is a group of magnificent people. To achieve this, one must obviously not stay in the old rut. The destiny and the vocation of a human being is to be a child of God. But a child of God is occupied with the affairs of its Father, Who is in Heaven. It seeks only one thing, the Kingdom of God, and knows that its heavenly Father will give it everything else on top of that. It works on the new things...

The Host of the Lord, is a victorious army, in which everyone is a victor in their own right. It is the victory of youth over old age, of good over evil, of health over sickness, of life over death, and of happiness over unhappiness. Of course, it's a constant fight to get there. It's a matter of grabbing the bull by the horns, and putting it out of action: 'the bull' is 'the old man'.

The candidates for the Host of the Lord, must, in order to overcome death, have, in their hearts, the sufficient power of love to follow the Little Flock, in order to endure, with it, through the present difficulties and all that which is still to come. In them, love must also be stronger than death and lead them to eternal life. Neither the flesh nor the sectarian family, nor comforts, nor fear nor anything else can make them bend. They are characters forged in fire, who fear neither combat nor the death of the old man. They are those who have put everything into the scale pan of life.

They are dignified personalities, who have only noble and lofty words. They do not compromise with the world. They acquire the stability of a Daniel and of the Three Hebrews. They are devoted to the Almighty, body and soul. Then, of course, they are adorned with the beauties of holiness, and present themselves as a majestic army of fighters, whose power is invincible, and who can perform the works of an Elisha.

That is the programme before us. This is building the walls of our Salvation. This is not difficult, but it requires faithfulness, sincerity and perseverance in effort. This is what we want to consider now, with all due seriousness, in order to become what the Lord expects of us: the Revealing of the Children of God, to the honour of the Lord and of our dear Saviour."

We admire the faith and faithfulness of the dear Messenger, which gave him a clear view of the Kingdom of God. We join with him to wish our dear brothers and sisters, every success in the Good Fight of Faith, to bear witness to the faithfully lived divine programme.

The next congresses will take place, God willing, in:

Sternberg Castle (Germany): 6th and 7th of April

Turin (Italy): 13th to 15th of July

Lyon (France): 7th to 9th of September

Sternberg Castle: 28th and 29th September

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