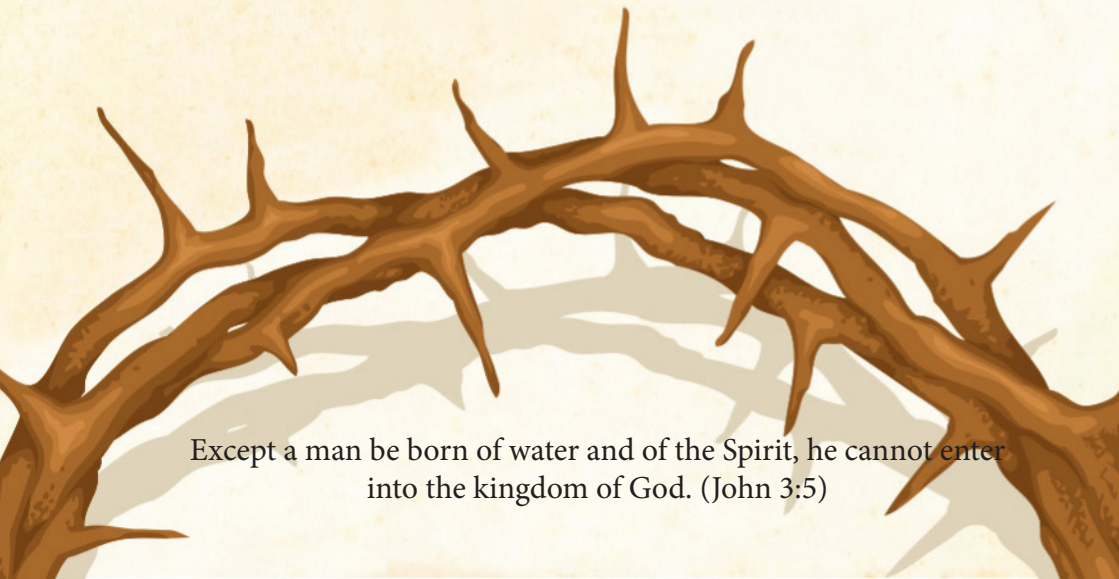
Petru Loga

THE NEW BIRTH



Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

Kiadó (Publisher):
Diriczi Tibor
2685 Nógrádsáp Május 1 út. 35
Hungary

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and
the Word was God. (John 1:1)
The seed is the word of God. (Luke 8:11)

being born again, not of corruptible **seed,**
but of incorruptible,
by **the word of God,** which liveth
and abideth for ever.
And this is the word which
by the gospel is preached unto you.
(1 Peter 1:23, 25)

București 2024

Contents

1. Introduction ..... p. 2

2. The Things on Earth ..... p. 3

3. The Kingdom of God ..... p. 10

4. The Things in the Kingdom of God ..... p. 12

5. The Righteousness in the Kingdom of God ..... p. 17

6. The Peace in the Kingdom of God ..... p. 23

7. The Love in the Kingdom of God ..... p. 27

8. The Joy in the Kingdom of God ..... p. 29

9. God's Plan for Man ..... p. 31

10. The Purpose of the Word of Christ ..... p. 33

11. Drawn by the Beauty of Christ's Character ..... p. 34

12. Entering the Kingdom - the New Covenant ..... p. 36

13. The New Birth ..... p. 39

14. Questions for Personal Examination ..... p. 47

Introduction

A "Country/a Kingdom with streets of gold", where there are no tears and no pain, where there is no more death, may draw the attention of many of us. (And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Revelation 21:4; the street of the city was pure gold. Revelation 21:21)

We can say without being mistaken that there is no man who, when shown a country offering a life full of joys, without troubles, without suffering and without death, would not desire such a Kingdom.

But this Kingdom, which has "streets of gold", also has things of a spiritual order, which hardly rise into the mind of man and are hard to understand, things which to most of our fellow men are foolishness. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14)

These things from above are totally different from the things found in the world into which we were born. For these reasons, for many of us "the Kingdom of God" remains a great mystery. (Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, Neither have entered into the heart of man, The things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9)

We notice that when we are asked to give an answer about what will come when this life is over, and what we must do to live forever in the Kingdom of God, the great majority of people live in great confusion.

Through ignorance of the Scriptures, one can see today how many multitudes of people are manipulated by various theories that explain to us how one can reach the Kingdom of God.

Most have come to be convinced that we will obtain salvation (which for many consists only in the forgiveness of sins) if we admire God for what He has done for us, if we believe in the sacrifice on the cross. Many believe that if we confess our sins and have a form of godliness that consists in thankfulness for what the Lord Jesus has done for us, this is enough to have free entry into His eternal Kingdom.

Most of us stop at repentance, at the work of the cross... at the covenant in the water of baptism, at the forgiveness of sins. So we are left to suppose that God will make us perfect by a formula unknown to us, which He will apply after a man's death.

And it is at about this first part that most of us remain. We went to church, we had our seat, we confessed our sins, we were baptized, we sang, we upheld the teachings of the church we belong to, we lived a religious life, and so we will enter

the Kingdom of God.

For most, the work of salvation stops here, without their realizing that in **God's plan** both the restoration and the perfecting of man's character are provided for.

Almost no one believes that, in order to be found worthy of the life that awaits us in His eternal Kingdom, we must grow until we come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, ... pastors and teachers; for **the perfecting of the saints,** ... till we all come ... unto a perfect man, unto **the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.** Ephesians 4:11-13)

The Things on Earth

Many of us would like to get there, to have a part in the Kingdom of God, but the spiritual values of this Kingdom are of no interest to most, being incompatible with our way of life. These values of God require us to give up many things that until now have been very useful to us in life.

Ever since we were little children, in order to reach the goal we set ourselves, we use, to a greater or lesser degree, the rule: "the end justifies the means". As children at school we use copying, plagiarism, lying... Then as adults we use many others: cunning, bribery, quarrels, anger...

We can say without being mistaken that there is no man who has never used a lie. It is used when one is late for work, when one gets home later, when we want to get a job, in trade... It is easy to see that those who give up lying will have to pay the price of losing the advantages it brings.

One more thing of great value for each one of us is selfishness/self-love. From the time we are born we want as much as possible only for ourselves, and then the whole course of life is focused on this alone.

But we must note that self-love is not found among the values of the Kingdom of God, being the opposite of the altruism/love that governs in this Kingdom. (Charity suffereth long, and is kind; ... seeketh not her own. 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5)

In the world, things are arranged by "someone" in such a way that, in order to manage in this life, we are tempted to use things that are not found in the Kingdom of God. Satan comes to us as he came to the Lord Jesus, and tempts us with various "advantages" in order to catch us in his net. (All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Matthew 4:9)

He acts in such a way that, when we hear the Word of the Kingdom and would like to exchange the old things for the new things of the Kingdom, we are caught/wrapped up in the old ones so tightly that we cannot exchange them. (... the sin which doth so easily beset us. Hebrews 12:1)

In order to get through in this life and to have a standard of living that is acceptable, many of us give in to Satan's offers.

He offers us the things we have no access to and that we desire, but on condition that we use untruth, theft, gifts/bribes, cunning. We will take a few examples that will show us how we are caught in Satan's net through the advantages offered by theft accompanied by lying. These advantages can range from small, insignificant ones to very large ones.

One example is undeclared work/work in the dark, which means working without an employment contract registered with the Labour Inspectorate, or with a smaller salary on the contract and an untaxed difference paid in hand. The advantage gained by taking up this "black offer" is earning a sum that is doubled. For those who are in this situation, giving up this "old" thing would be extremely difficult, because their income would be cut in half and life would become much harder.

To secure a better standard of living, almost all of us go through a school that ends with a diploma/qualification that will then serve us in life. We can observe that at the examinations during school, connected with obtaining the diploma, Satan comes with an offer to which many give in.

There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh ... or maketh a lie!

He will help us obtain the diploma if we use copying/theft, thus giving up the truth. Then he helps us find a good position on condition that, when we are hired, we present what we obtained by theft. But by presenting the diploma/certificate that attests that we have the knowledge needed to fill that position, we will live in a lie. (And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. Revelation 21:27)

By using and then enjoying what we have stolen and lied about, we will catch ourselves in a chain of iniquity from which many will no longer be able to get out. (every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it. Zechariah 5:3)

One more example in which we are caught in Satan's snare is the offer of retiring early (on a sickness pension) through the use of gifts and lying. But lying accompanied by cheating the state, and then by receiving income that is not due, has disastrous spiritual consequences.

If the one who is in this situation wishes at some point to repent, he will be in a great predicament, because he cannot enter the Kingdom of God without giving back the money he obtained by deceit and lying.

In fact the Lord requires all who wish to live in the Kingdom of righteousness

to give back the things that in their dark past they obtained by dishonest means. (he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD. Numbers 5:7)

Let us not deceive ourselves that we live in righteousness if we enjoy things obtained dishonestly, by which we have wronged the state or others. (Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house... Thou hast consulted shame to thy house... and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Habakkuk 2:9-11)

Another significant financial benefit that Satan offers us is the low cost of the many services done for us. The condition he sets is that we accept to work with those who steal the taxes/who do not issue tax documents for the service they render us. If these services were taxed legally, they would raise household expenses by 20-30%, which for many of us would be hard to bear.

We mention a few of them: building the house, painting the house, repairs to the heating/electrical/plumbing installations, the rent for a flat, car repairs, the work that belongs to farming: ploughing, sowing, reaping... buying and cutting firewood, drilling a well...

The word of Scripture tells us where we stand when we do such things. (But unto the wicked God saith, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, And castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, And hast been partaker with adulterers." Psalm 50:16-18; Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul. Proverbs 29:24)

Not paying taxes brings material advantages to each side, both to the one who pays and to the one who sells. If you buy firewood worth one thousand lei, but without an invoice, then the VAT of 19%, that is 190 lei, will stay in your pocket; a significant sum for someone with a low income.

We must note with sadness that many of those who declare themselves "born again" are caught in this chain of iniquity.

Not paying taxes shows that we do not love and do not seek the things which are above/the righteousness of the Kingdom of God. (For for this cause pay ye tribute also: <u>for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.</u> Render therefore to all their dues. Romans 13:6, 7)

If we do such things and say that we are children of the Light, we lie and do not the truth. (In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. 1 John 3:10; If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! Matthew 6:23)

Gifts/bribes are another old thing, practised today in many places, even

with the refuse collectors. If we give up gifts, this will bring us hardships of every kind, the hardest being in hospital, where neglect and suffering will come. But if we accept suffering on a hospital bed because we do not give gifts, it will be crowned with the fruit it produces, namely longsuffering. (the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:3-4)

To live in the Kingdom of righteousness, God requires us to give up the old things that belong to the course of the world, even if we suffer losses, and to replace them with the new things of His Kingdom.

To be motivated to give up the old things, we have the promise of eternal life and the values of the Kingdom of righteousness, values that will bring rest and peace to the soul. (for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17)

If we want to be in the Kingdom of God, we will have to give up stealing taxes, replace the old things with the new things of the Kingdom, and not covet what is not ours. (Let him that stole steal no more. Ephesians 4:28; Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. Matthew 22:21; neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's. Deuteronomy 5:21)

When we are determined no longer to use these old things/to crucify them, we will lose the material advantages we had. Hardships will arise in our life, situations will come in which it will be hard for us, but it is worth trying; (In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16:33)

When the troubles come, the Lord Jesus tells us that He will give us something of great price, namely His peace and rest. (And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. Isaiah 32:17)

All who understand the values of the Kingdom from above and are determined to give up the old things must trust that God will not forsake them and will give them the everyday things they need. (But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33; be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Hebrews 13:5)

Most of those called to benefit from the Kingdom of God are not willing to pay this price, which often seems to them too great. But we must say that these things will keep them far from the Kingdom. God warns us that he who sins does not know God. (whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 1 John 3:6)

There is a distance as from heaven to earth between the one who is content

to live in sin and the one who hungers and thirsts after righteousness.

If until now we are not subject to the authority ordained by God, if we do undeclared work or drive the car without caring about the traffic laws, if the television/internet of the world is our food, if we speak evil... it means that we are still in the old state, in which sin is a way of life, not yet being born of God. (Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. Romans 13:1; For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1 John 2:16)

We will have to understand that, even if we do many religious things: if we go to the congregation, pray, speak in tongues, prophesy, but without seeking after righteousness, God tells us that He does not know us! (Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? ... And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matthew 7:21-23)

If the Holy Spirit has not convinced us of our state of sin, it means that the new birth has not taken place. The first thing the Holy Spirit does in the one who receives the Word of God with joy is to convince him of his state of sin. This is the beginning. The Spirit cannot dwell in a man and not convince him of this state. (And when he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness... John 16:8)

Scripture makes a clear distinction between darkness and light. In the one who walks in the light, sin is no longer a way of life. He is marked by the fact that he gives up the old things and hungers and thirsts after righteousness/purity. (Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 1 John 3:9)

Let us be careful not to confuse the righteous/the one born from above who has a fall with the one who has not yet given up the things of the Kingdom of Darkness. Let us not deceive ourselves by saying that there is no man without sin, and by this be content to live in the things of darkness. (He that committeth sin is of the devil. 1 John 3:8)

There is a difference as from heaven to earth between the one who lives in darkness, not being subject to the authorities ordained by God, and the one who is subject but, through lack of watchfulness, falls into a fault/sin.

In the first case, one can speak of continual sinning and of walking in darkness in the old things, without God, even if we are among those who say that we have turned to God. (If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do

not the truth. 1 John 1:6; He that committeth sin is of the devil. 1 John 3:8)

In the second case, one can speak of accidental, unwanted sinning. In this case, through the confession of the sin, there is the promise of cleansing by the blood of the Lord. (but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John 1:7)

Scripture tells us very clearly how we can examine ourselves. If we are a new creature, the old things are passed away. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

The attitude of resistance One more of the old things that we find hard to give up, and that secures us a way of life without too many troubles, is the attitude of resistance toward the one who wants to do us harm. If someone seeks to take what is ours, to humiliate us, man has various solutions at hand so that this does not happen. These solutions may be simple gestures of resistance, a harsher answer, a fit of anger, or a call to the police or to the courts.

Let us take an example: If we come home from work in the evening and someone has taken our parking space, as a reaction of our displeasure we may lift his windscreen wiper. Perhaps he will not care and will put it back down. Then we will leave him a threatening note... or we will call 112.

To solve this problem, if we turn to the things of the world/to resistance, we will find the solution; but if we want to give up resistance and turn to the things from above/non-resistance, then nothing will remain for us but to be humiliated.

Perhaps in some things of little importance (someone going in before us at the doctor's) we agree not to resist, but if our financial stability or our physical safety is put in danger, then the priorities change and we no longer see clearly the values/the things of the Kingdom.

But if we desire to be in the presence of God, to have His peace, we must accept the price of giving up this old thing, which brings only turmoil, and replace it with the teaching of the Lord. (Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil. Matthew 5:38)

If we do not understand that we must work out our own salvation to the end with fear and trembling, and that we must grow to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, if we do not understand that in the Kingdom of God we must live in righteousness, be people of peace, longsuffering, have love, then we will still keep old things to shield us from troubles.

We will keep a little resistance, so that when we are pressed on every side we may make our life easier; we will keep a little cunning, a half-truth, undeclared work, bribery...

But to enter the Kingdom of God we must sell all that we have/give up all the old things so that we can buy that treasure/the new things with which to replace the old ones. (Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Matthew 13:45, 46; But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness... Matthew 6:33)

The one who decides for the Kingdom must give himself into the strong hand of God, and He will work. He traces out for us the way that will lead us to peace, to longsuffering, to love... (Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost. Hebrews 7:25)

Personal examination:

– Are the old things, from below, a way of life for you?

– Do you love the values of the Kingdom of God, do you thirst after righteousness?

– Have you sought the things which are above as a treasure, and have you given up the things below?

The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes ... is not of the Father, but is of the world.

The Kingdom of God

On a closer look we can easily see that the secular world in which we all find ourselves has a standard totally different from the standard of the Kingdom of God.

Holy Scripture points out to us some of the values of the world that are not found in this Kingdom: "... lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:2-4) "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:16)

Because of Adam's fall, man by natural birth is born in sin, being spiritually dead, and has no right of citizenship in the Kingdom of God. (at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, ... having no hope. Ephesians 2:12)

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

If we compare the righteousness of sinful man with **the righteousness of God,** we will see that this difference is as from the heavens to the earth.

In the sinful state in which man is born, it is not possible for him to enter this eternal Kingdom in which there is no sin. (Holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever. Psalm 93:5; And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. Revelation 21:27)

The heavenly Kingdom was brought to us on earth by the Lord Jesus, so that every man who hears the Gospel of the Kingdom and makes firm decisions to change his life may enter it. (He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. John 1:11-12)

This Kingdom is first of all spiritual, being described by Holy Scripture as a place of righteousness/justice, of peace, of love and of joy, being the opposite of the Kingdom of darkness in which sinful man lives. (for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17)

The values we find in the Kingdom of God, we also find in those who belong to this Kingdom. Scripture describes God as: Lord of righteousness, Lord of peace and of love. (Just and right is he. Deuteronomy 32:4; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace.

Hebrews 7:1, 2; God is love. 1 John 4:16)

If we search the Scripture, we will discover the traits of character that define both God and the Lord Jesus. These traits of character also define those who will be found worthy to dwell together with Them. (we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. 1 John 3:2; He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6)

An essential thing we must remember is that God is perfect, as indeed are all the things found in the Kingdom of God.

As God is perfect, so the Law that governs His Kingdom is perfect, as indeed His ways are perfect. Therefore we can say without being mistaken that everything that belongs to the Kingdom of God is perfect or flawless. (your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48; The law of the LORD is perfect. Psalm 19:7; As for God, his way is perfect. Psalm 18:30)

If, where God dwells, all things are perfect, it goes without saying that sinful man cannot dwell together with God unless he comes to the perfection required by His eternal Kingdom. (Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.)

The Lord Jesus was sent as the ambassador of this Kingdom, with the mission of bringing this "Holy Territory" into our hearts.

He was sent by the heavenly Father to bring to lost mankind the heavenly things/the laws that govern in it, with the aim of changing our life according to the standard from above, so that we may be worthy to dwell in eternity with the Father. (If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above... Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1, 2)

He was sent to make disciples, whom He would teach to live by these laws found in the heavenly Kingdom, so that by keeping them we may all come to the measure of the stature of His fulness. (I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also. Luke 4:43)

Then these were sent into all the world, so that they in their turn might make other disciples and enrol in the school of Christ all who wish to enter this school. (Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, ... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20)

This school of disciples has a single aim: that the disciple should come to be like the Teacher. (The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. Luke 6:40)

The Things in the Kingdom of God

The word of Scripture tells us that the man who loves God with all his heart, who denies himself and enters into the covenant of discipleship with Him, becomes a new creature and is translated into the Kingdom of glory. (who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14)

For that man all things are made new, these things being from above, from His Kingdom. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

The things from above, prepared by God for us to walk in them, are totally different from the things in the world; they are things that do not reach the mind of the spiritually dead man. (Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, Neither have entered into the heart of man, The things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9)

The things from above, though they are so simple, are opposed to the things that man seeks; for many of us they are foolishness. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14)

The Lord Jesus gives us as an example the city of Jerusalem, which did not know the heavenly things He brought, things which could have given it peace. (If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luke 19:42)

By this statement the Lord Jesus warns us in the most serious way that many of us will be in the same situation. For most, the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 remains a mystery. (Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1)

Most think that they must have an unshaken confidence in the material things that may exist in the Kingdom of God, or in the promises of God.

Few are those who understand that we must have an unshaken confidence in the heavenly things that concern the spiritual life in the Kingdom of God. (If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? John 3:12)

The things of the Kingdom of God are found in Scripture under the name of the things of God or the things of the Spirit. These things are a faithful image both of the nature of the Kingdom and of the heart of God.

The things from above fall into two categories. In the first category we find the commandments of Christ, which are the raw material, and in the second category

we find the things that define the fruit of the Spirit and which represent the final product. The Holy Spirit urges us to keep the commandments of the Lord, and if we let ourselves be led by Him, we will come to have the fruit of the Spirit. Many have heard about the fruit of the Spirit, but few have experienced walking after the things from above, which are the fruit of the Spirit. They can be truly known only if we experience them by keeping the commandments of Christ, which are part of the raw material of the things from above. (Now the end of the commandment is charity. 1 Timothy 1:5; And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. 2 John 1:6)

The word of Scripture tells us to seek the things of the Kingdom of God/ from above, not those on the earth/from below, because these things change our character and bring peace. (If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above... Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1, 2)

But in order to set your mind on the things from above and then to walk after these things, the main condition is to know them. With sadness we notice that for many, the Kingdom of God and the things in it remain a mystery, and they do not manage to know them.

On a closer look we can see that most of those who say of themselves that they are born again (a new creature) think about and walk only after the old things on the earth.

Reader, are you also among them? If you find yourself in this situation, you are in great danger!

The apostle Paul weeps over these people, because their end will be destruction. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. Philippians 3:18-19)

These things from above, which God has prepared for us to walk in them, are foolishness to the natural man; many do not walk after them because they do not understand that these lead us to the perfecting of our character.

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that only the one who does not know the Word of God is in the category of the natural man. The natural man is any man who rejects the things of the Spirit and does not walk after them, even if he has been baptized and says that he is born from above. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14; Matthew 13:19)

The natural man will not accept giving up an "old thing" (an example would be undeclared work, resistance) with which he manages in this life, for a new thing of the Kingdom, which will bring him many "troubles" (uprightness, which

involves paying taxes, non-resistance). The natural man will not give **"all that he has"** for a thing whose purpose he does not understand.

But we must all understand that, in order to be found worthy to dwell together with God, man must come to acquire the traits of character of the Lord Jesus, that is, to come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

We will take as an example **longsuffering**, which is a trait of character of the Lord Jesus, and one of the things of great importance in the Kingdom of God. Let us ask ourselves: How can we come to have it imprinted in our character?

Holy Scripture tells us that we must go through the school of patience, which has its perfect work, a school through which each one of us must pass, because only in this way do we come to the perfecting of our character. (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2-4)

To come to this beautiful trait of character, one of the things we must do is not to resist those who do us harm.

To be spiritually minded (on the things from above) is life and peace!

Non-resistance is one of the things from above and must become for us a new way of life. When trials and troubles come, we must put it into practice, walking in the footsteps of our spiritual fathers, who in their turn walk in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 4:15)

If we look more closely, we will see that many of those who believe that they know God and believe that they are "born from above" use "resistance" as a matter of course (from words to the courts). This is one of the things on the earth with which many solve their many problems in this world, and they do not see why they should give it up.

To know God truly, we will have to give up the attitude of "resistance", which is from below, and replace it with non-resistance. (And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Matthew 5:40-41)

To those who have not yet practised "non-resistance", which is a heavenly teaching brought by the Lord Jesus, we can say from our own experience that only in this way will they come into the blessed situation of experiencing longsuffering, this being one of the traits of character that define the Lord Jesus.

The natural man runs from suffering, from humiliation... but this is the road to knowing God and to the perfecting of character. Let us put ourselves in the situation of being the employee of a boss who insults us, cuts our salary, forces us to work more, beyond our hours. What would we do?

Would we count this opportunity to cultivate longsuffering in ourselves as great joy? Or would we be discontented and resist whenever we had the chance, telling everyone what hard situations we are going through? (count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. James 1:2)

If someone insults you and anger comes over you, what will you do? Will you take water in your mouth so that you cannot speak, as some teach today? Or will you not resist, cultivating patience, as the Lord teaches us? This is the solution for coming to know the longsuffering of the Lord Jesus. (but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 1 Peter 2:20)

If we do not understand and do not have a strong conviction that **non-resistance is one of the things of the Spirit** that have not entered into the heart of man, we will certainly not sell all that we have; we will not give up anger, which is one of the old things, from below, that secure the normal course of our life.

Only if we love longsuffering with all our heart, which is among the things hoped for, from above, and if we seek it as a treasure, only if we live according to the promptings and the leading of the Spirit, only then will we know it; only in this way will we come to know the heart of God and to become like Him. (And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God. John 17:3; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created. Ephesians 4:24)

If we do not love and do not keep the commandment from above, which tells us not to resist those who do us harm, we will not come to experience longsuffering, and still less peace and rest of soul. (For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Romans 8:6)

Without longsuffering you will not be able to bless the one who curses you; you cannot be a peacemaker, nor give your enemy food to eat. Nor will we know God, who is longsuffering, full of mercy, slow to anger, abundant in goodness. (The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; Slow to anger, and of great mercy. Psalm 145:8; The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Exodus 34:6)

If until now we have not loved the heavenly things found in the Kingdom of God, that is, the teaching of the Lord Jesus that tells us not to resist, not to go to law... if we do not find our delight in His commandments, then we are not drawn by the things from above and are not part of His Kingdom. (Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. Psalm 119:92)

If we have not yet sought and walked after these things from above, then we can be sure that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in us, because we do not walk after the things of the Spirit, and do not live according to His promptings. (Romans 8:6)

One cannot speak of a new beginning, of the new birth, if we have not put off the old things and do not love the new things of the Kingdom. (if any man be

in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

Personal examination:

- Do you walk after non-resistance, or is resistance your way of life? Do you seek longsuffering as a treasure? Do you want to have longsuffering in your character?

The Righteousness in the Kingdom of God

One more of the things from above after which we must walk, and which defines the Kingdom of God, is righteousness, or rather the absence of sin. (Holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever. Psalm 93)

The dictionary definition of righteousness (Romanian "neprihănire") = without sin, pure, immaculate, spotless, clean.

The Kingdom of God is described by the word of Scripture as a Kingdom of righteousness. (Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Peter 3:13)

The Son of God said that we should seek not only the Kingdom of God but also "His righteousness", which means that the Kingdom of God is much more than a place with streets of gold. (But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Matthew 6:33)

We find it written in Scripture that the Kingdom of God does not consist in pleasures of the flesh, in meat and drink, in the things that the natural man seeks. In this Kingdom we find the **righteousness** in which God lives and **His peace;** we find the things from above that define this Kingdom. (for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but **righteousness, and peace, and joy** in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17)

The word of Scripture tells us that all who are in the Kingdom of God love righteousness and hate iniquity. Only those who hunger and thirst after the values of righteousness of the heavenly Kingdom can dwell in this Kingdom. (Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Matthew 5:6)

The word of Scripture warns us that whoever does not desire righteousness and does not live in it is not received into this Kingdom of righteousness. (In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God. 1 John 3:10)

On a closer look we can see that there are many who believe that they are born again, who speak in tongues, prophesy, who work miracles, without living a **life of righteousness.** But at the end of their life they will have a great surprise. (**Many** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I **never** knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matthew 7:22-23)

So that we are not deceived, we have at hand a simple criterion by which each one can easily check whether he is part of this Kingdom. The word of Scripture, which does not lie, says that only he who lives in righteousness is born again of God. (If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. 1 John 2:29; Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth

righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 1 John 3:7)

Holy Scripture states categorically that if our righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, who lived by the standard of the Law of Moses, we will in no case be able to enter this Kingdom. (For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20)

The righteousness of the Kingdom from above is far superior to the righteousness in which those who kept the law of Moses lived, in which we find the commandments: "Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness ... Thou shalt not covet ... any thing that is thy neighbour's..."

To describe the righteousness of the Pharisees, we can look at the apostle Paul before his conversion. He was a Pharisee and lived a very strict life according to the law of Moses, so that he could state, concerning the righteousness which the Law gave, that he was righteous. (circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ... touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Philippians 3:5)

Holy Scripture tells us that the Kingdom of God is entered during this present life, not after we depart into eternity, as most believe. (who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13, 14)

We are called to live in the righteousness of the Kingdom now, not after we leave the earth. Only those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be able to see it and to enter this Kingdom. (God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. Acts 10:34-35)

God's plan is not limited to a cheap salvation that consists only in repentance **(putting off the old man)** and in the forgiveness of sins, but provides for **the restoring of the image of God** in us **(putting on the new man)** and for bringing us to the measure of the stature of the fulness of the righteousness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13)

Putting on the new man is the boundary between the Kingdom of Darkness and the Kingdom of God. (and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:24)

We will list a few of these things from above that are found in the Kingdom:

Honesty/uprightness

He who loves righteousness and hates iniquity receives the right to enter this Kingdom. The one who receives the right to enter the Kingdom of righteousness does not live in sin, does not rejoice in iniquity, does not cheat, does not use gifts/bribes, does not deal craftily, does not slander. (Whosoever abideth in him sinneth

not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. He that committeth sin is of the devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God; 1 John 3:6, 8, 10)

Those who are in the Kingdom of righteousness covet nothing that is their neighbour's. They do not use or take for themselves the things of others. They do not rejoice in things that do not belong to them.

Let us take an example from life: They do not take for themselves things from their workplace that do not belong to them. They do not use the car, the telephone or other things that belong to the company for personal purposes. They do not have stolen/pirated software on their computer. (neither shalt thou covet ... any thing that is thy neighbour's. Deuteronomy 5:21)

They do not do undeclared work, they do not steal taxes from the State, they covet nothing that is not theirs. (Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. Matthew 22:21; For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Romans 13:6)

When they have to take examinations, they do not use copying/they do not steal what they have not learned. If they have in their possession things they acquired by dishonest means at the time when they lived in darkness, they will stop using them, giving them back and making amends where possible. (then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. Numbers 5:7)

They keep themselves from all greed for money. They are citizens of the household of God, for whom the heavenly Father cares through the church, which is the body of Christ, and they do not ask for social benefits from strangers, such as from the State (from the Philistines), for heating, electricity... They follow the example of Abraham, who did not accept the cave of Machpelah free of charge from the Hittites. (But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33)

The one who is in the Kingdom of God does not use lying, cunning/deceit, and does not rejoice in iniquity by taking the State's money for childcare leave for a newborn up to two years old, when in reality it is the mother who takes care of the little child.

Likewise, he does not collude with the employer to obtain unemployment benefit on purpose, in order to enjoy money he has not worked for. (Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; ... evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:5)

Check: Do you have things from work, or from elsewhere, that you have taken for yourself and are using? Do you have unlicensed programs on your computer? Do you do undeclared work, do you steal the taxes you owe to the State? When you want

to obtain money from the State (subsidies, unemployment benefit, social aid, childcare leave...), do you use lies when filling in the forms? If you do such things, do not deceive yourself into believing that you are in the Kingdom of God.

The citizens of this Kingdom **"hate iniquity";** they hate every way of lying, every occasion of sinning. They hate the practice of gifts/bribery. (But he that hateth gifts shall live. Proverbs 15:27) Scripture tells us that those who practise bribery have a corrupted heart. (a gift destroyeth the heart. Ecclesiastes 7:7)

Bribe, according to the **dictionary:** a sum of money, or objects received, offered or promised to a person with the aim of making him break his official duties, or carry out his official duties more conscientiously. (and took bribes, and perverted judgment. 1 Samuel 8:3)

Perhaps few of us are in a position that gives them the opportunity to receive gifts/bribes, but most are in the situation of giving them. Many, in order to solve their problems, are put in the situation of using gifts/bribes.

Perhaps until now giving bribes (gifts) has not been regarded as sin, but we must understand that, when we take the initiative to reward a service already paid for, whether public or private, we give the other an occasion of sinning, of falling into sin.

By our gesture, we are the ones who provoke the other to break the Word of God/we are the ones who corrupt his heart.

The teaching of the Kingdom warns us in the most serious way; it shows us how grave it is to tempt souls and to corrupt their heart. (It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck. Luke 17:1, 2)

To corrupt our heart, Satan brings many occasions of this kind into our life. (one example being at the hospital, at the doctor's) When we are in a hospital bed and are in need, if we induce the nurse (or sister) to be kinder by putting something in her pocket, then we are the ones who tempt her, bringing her an occasion of sinning. And it may happen that this nurse or sister is also a believer.

By our gift we ask her to attend to us more, and she will thus come to neglect the one who has nothing to give her. By receiving these gifts she will corrupt her heart and will wrong the one who has nothing. She will break the Word of God, which forbids her to receive gifts. (And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous. Exodus 23:8)

God commands her not to receive gifts, and we tempt her to break the Word of God. Let us ask ourselves: If we do this, are we not in the service of Satan?

To understand the gravity of this sin, it is good to note that even the laws of the secular world condemn more severely the one who tempts another to take a bribe than the one who takes it.

The citizens of the Kingdom must be on the alert all the time so as not to be

among those who bring the occasion of sinning, so as not to do the work of the evil one. (but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. Romans 14:13)

We are aware that those who decide to live in the righteousness of Christ will lose the advantages that gifts/bribes bring. But they will be rewarded with the peace and rest from above, a peace that certifies their belonging to the Kingdom. (And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. Isaiah 32:17)

A pure heart

Those who belong to the Kingdom from above do not defile their heart with unclean things. They do not walk in the counsel of the wicked, they set no evil thing before their eyes, they shut their eyes so as not to see evil and stop their ears so as not to hear unseemly words. (Isaiah 33:15)

They do not love the things that feed and awaken the lusts of the flesh, and do not use them; some of these being the publications of the world (magazines, books, newspapers), the radio of the world and the television/internet of the world. (Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15; Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners. Psalm 1:1)

Those who are in the Kingdom/in the body of Christ watch that there is no one among them who corrupts his heart with the things of the world and so contaminates the others. (looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God... lest there be any ... profane person. Hebrews 12:15, 16)

They watch over one another, so that each of them may have a pure eye and heart. They watch that the internet is used only where it is needed (at work, bank payments, online payments of taxes and local council dues), in a controlled and filtered way, so as not to give Satan the possibility to tempt and to feed the flesh/to awaken its lusts. (Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. Psalm 119:37; make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Romans 13:14)

Those who are in the Kingdom of God are called to wear modest clothing; they will not wear scanty clothing, so as not to bring an occasion of sinning to our fellow men. (... adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. 1 Timothy 2:9)

Therefore they do not go to places such as the beaches by the sea, or other public places where people are indecently dressed, so as not to defile their eyes by looking at those who are undressed, nor to give others occasion to lust after their bodies and sin.

They are very careful about the lust of the eyes, because it affects the whole body. (The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole

body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Luke 11:34; I made a covenant with mine eyes; Why then should I think upon a maid? Job 31:1)

They keep their heart pure, because only in this way will they see God. (Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8) For this reason they have removed from before their eyes everything that makes them fall into sin. (I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside. Psalm 101:3; And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. Matthew 18:9)

They keep away from/flee the lusts of the flesh that harm the soul. (Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. 1 Peter 2:11; For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1 John 2:16)

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

In conclusion: If we are greedy for money and covet the goods of the "Egyptians", if we do not want to pay our taxes, if we do undeclared work, if we give bribes at the hospital and in other places, if the television/ internet of the world (facebook, youtube...) is our food... if until now we have not loved the things from above, that is, the commandments of the Lord Jesus that require us to live in the righteousness of the Kingdom... if we do not delight in them, then let us be sure that we are not part of the Kingdom of righteousness.

Personal examination:

– Do you seek the Kingdom of righteousness as a treasure of great price? Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness, do you strive to be immaculate, without sin?

– Do you live by the laws of righteousness that govern the Kingdom of God?

The Peace in the Kingdom of God

One more of the precious things found in the Kingdom of God is the peace and rest that reign in it. The dictionary definition: Absence of disturbance, of conflict, of enmity; harmony, reconciliation, understanding. To break the peace = to come into conflict with someone.

The peaceful Kingdom of Christ has often been misunderstood, even by those who say they are believers. Very few are those who understand, who accept and live by this heavenly standard.

Many do not see that the Lord of peace came to bring to earth the peace that governs in the heavenly Kingdom, a peace found on the way of God, which is perfect. (To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace. Luke 1:79)

Many do not notice that the Gospel of the Kingdom is in fact the Gospel of peace. (The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. Acts 10:36; Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. 2 Thessalonians 3:16; And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

When the Lord Jesus says: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven", He tells us that the peace that is in heaven will have to be on earth too, among those who belong to Him. (Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:14; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. Luke 19:38)

It is extremely important to understand that the law of peace that governs in the heavenly Kingdom also governs on earth among the people who belong to the Kingdom. (they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Isaiah 2:4)

All the citizens born of God must keep it, and therefore must no longer learn war/resistance; they must live in perfect peace with one another, be gentle, easy to be entreated, bless one another, not speak evil of one another, not be angry, not quarrel, not be enemies to one another, not go to law with one another, not resist their fellow men, do harm to no one.

All who have chosen to keep their feet on the way of peace do not start conflicts and do not enter into them. They do not resist in order to obtain justice for themselves. (That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. Matthew 5:39, 40)

When they interact with citizens of the kingdom of darkness, situations of conflict may arise. To solve the problems that arise and to keep the peace as far as it depends on them, they will apply the law of the Kingdom from above, which will

take precedence over the law of the Country below. (If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Romans 12:18; Let him eschew evil, and do good; Let him seek peace, and ensue it. 1 Peter 3:11)

When they are wronged, to keep the peace from above they have only one possibility: to turn to their Master and then to submit gladly to His decision. They do not have at their disposal the police, the courts... as the citizens of the other kingdom have. (who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. 1 Peter 2:23)

This law of peace will bring troubles and suffering to those who enter the Kingdom of God. When a conflict is started by those of the world, the attitude of non-resistance they show will bring them losses and humiliation. Often it will happen that they are humiliated and mocked even by those of their own household.

So as not to spoil the peace and rest of heart to which they have been called, they will follow the example of their Lord. (For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. 1 Peter 2:21; Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14)

This peace keeps their hearts and minds in Christ. They will do nothing that troubles their heart, that spoils their rest of heart. (And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7)

The only things they have at hand when they are persecuted are longsuffering and flight. (But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another. Matthew 10:23)

Peace and rest are a result of the attitude of the heart, of living in righteousness, of giving up resistance, anger and going to law, and this is obtained by keeping the teachings of Christ. (to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Romans 8:6; If thou hadst known, even thou... the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luke 19:42)

To come to the rest and quietness of the Kingdom of God we must put into practice the teaching brought from heaven by the Lord Jesus. (Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain; Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away; if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also; whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matthew 5:39-42; of him that taketh away thy goods... Luke 6:30)

Even if we are innocent, resistance produces conflict/not peace and can give the other occasion to be troubled, to be angry, or in other words, to sin. (but judge

this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. Romans 14:13; It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! Luke 17:1)

In practice, the one who brings the occasion of sinning does the work of Satan, and this is very grave in the eyes of God. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. (Luke 17:2)

We must be attentive in every situation of conflict and be peacemakers. If we are at peace, we must do all that depends on us so that the other may be at peace too. (If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Romans 12:18)

Those who belong to the Kingdom from above pursue/seek the peace that comes from walking after the things from above. (to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Romans 8:6; Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9)

The Lord Jesus, as the representative of the Kingdom of God, was the first to keep this teaching of non-resistance/of keeping the peace in an absolute way, and He taught us too to live as He did. (And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23; He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6)

We can see the attitude of the Lord when the tribute for the Temple was asked of Him. Although He was not obliged to pay the tribute, He did all that depended on Him to avoid conflict/disturbance, so as not to give others an occasion of sinning. (What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea... Matthew 17:24-27)

When He was seized to be put to death, He did not resist, He did not let the conflict/disturbance grow, letting Himself be led as a lamb to the slaughter. (He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. Isaiah 53:7)

The Lord had a heart full of peace, at rest, which was not troubled when that conflict arose. The absence of an attitude of resistance shows us what the citizens of the Kingdom of Christ must be like. (Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. Matthew 26:50)

At the opposite pole we see the turmoil and anger present in His disciple, Peter. He resisted, he took an active part in the conflict that arose. The turmoil that showed itself in Peter belongs to the nature of the Kingdom of darkness. (and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Ephesians 2:3; "There is no peace, saith

my God, to the wicked." Isaiah 57:21)

As citizens of the Kingdom, the natural instinct of resistance must be crucified, to let peace and rest come into our soul. (Come unto me ... learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:29)

Personal examination:

- Do you follow peace with all men, as a treasure of great price?

- If a conflict arises, can you say like the Lord Jesus: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"

- Do you remain at peace like the Lord Jesus? Or are you troubled like Peter? (And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7)

The Love in the Kingdom of God

One of the fundamental values/of the things from above that define the Kingdom of God is love. (God is love. 1 John 4:8; Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11)

Many of us do not understand that without "the love from above" we will not reach the goal set before us of dwelling together with God.

Scripture tells us that we will not enter the Kingdom of love if we do not love God, who is love, with all our heart, and do not desire this trait of character. (He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 1 John 4:8)

Love is the binding that joins together all the citizens of the Kingdom of God. (And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Colossians 3:14)

To reach this standard, we will have to make our own the law of love that governs in the territory of the Kingdom. (... seeketh not her own... 1 Corinthians 13:5)

Love is altruistic; it seeks not its own profit but that of others. The love from above does not come into our heart by chance, but is the fruit of the Holy Spirit if we keep the teachings of Christ. (And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. 2 John 1:6)

Whoever follows the school of the disciples of Christ will in the end have as a result the love from above. (Now the end of the commandment is charity. 1 Timothy 1:5)

Between the love that comes from above and natural love there is a distance as from heaven to earth. The love from above: Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

To be able to learn and experience this perfect love, God places us in His family, in the Church; or in other words, He places us in the Body of Christ. (But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 1 Corinthians 12:18)

The Church is the school of the Lord, who cherishes us with love. (For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. Ephesians 5:29)

The Body of Christ, which is the Church, is part of God's plan for the perfecting of the saints. It is the place where the love from above is learned and

practised, where the infants, children and young people learn from the older ones to put on longsuffering, kindness... to walk in holiness; they learn to forgive, to love or in other words, they learn to walk after the things from above/after the things of the Spirit. (... for the perfecting of the saints, ... for the edifying of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:12)

Here we learn to live in righteousness, in peace, to seek the profit of others, and no longer to live for ourselves. (But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 1 Corinthians 12:7; For none of us liveth to himself. Romans 14:7; Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. 1 Corinthians 10:24)

We learn to be closely joined to one another and to bear one another's burdens. (from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body. Ephesians 4:16; Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2)

In the Church we are taught to love those outside it as well, even those who will do us harm. When we come into contact with those outside the Kingdom of love, we must follow the example of the Lord: to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us, to do good to those who hate us, because we are sons of our Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:44)

Obtaining this love, which has not entered into the mind of the natural man, is possible only by following the school in which the teachings of Christ are taught. Otherwise, however hard we may strive to obtain love, it will not happen.

With Him is the recipe for love, and whoever keeps it will come to obtain it. (And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. 2 John 1:6; Now the end of the commandment is charity. 1 Timothy 1:5)

We will come to have love for our fellow men if we learn to keep the Word of Christ. (By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 1 John 5:2, 3; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matthew 28:20)

Love will be poured into our hearts in the measure in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, we accept and keep the teachings of the Lord Jesus. (the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Romans 5:5)

To understand this better, we will point out a situation that each of us may face at some point. Let us suppose that, when an inheritance is divided, which may be a piece of land, a house..., a brother demands that we give him part of the share that falls to us too.

If we belong to the world, to refuse him we have at hand the solutions that the world gives. These may be resistance by words, by anger, or through the courts...

But if we are citizens of the Kingdom, we will have to take another position; we will have to act toward him according to the solutions that the law of the Kingdom gives. The requirements for those who are part of the Kingdom are: to live in peace with all men, to have longsuffering, to be full of kindness. (Follow peace with all men... Hebrews 12:14)

The first thing we must do is, as far as it depends on us, not to give the other occasion to sin, to do all we can so as not to provoke him to anger/turmoil. For this we have at hand the commandments that lead to peace. (Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9; If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, *live peaceably with all men.* Romans 12:18)

To remain in the peace of Christ, we must not resist the one who wants to take from us by force what belongs to us. (That ye resist not evil. Matthew 5:39; him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Luke 6:29)

Then we will have to do one more thing, which to the man of the world is foolishness. To heap coals of fire on his head, we will have to be willing to give him the "cloke" as well, not only the thing he wants to take from us. (And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. Matthew 5:40)

This teaching, which makes us leave him even more, does not belong to human logic but comes from above. (if thine enemy hunger, feed him... Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:20, 21)

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me!

If he wants to take from us part of the land that is due to us, let us show him that we are willing to give him more than he wants to take from us. (And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Matthew 5:41)

This attitude of being ready to give more when something is taken from us by force is not of human nature; it does not come by itself, but only by keeping the laws of the Kingdom from above. Keeping the commandments of Christ will bring us to the perfect love that casts out fear and gives us full confidence in the day of judgment. (And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. 2 John 1:6; Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. 1 John 4:17)

The Joy in the Kingdom of God

When we are admitted to the school we dreamed of attending, or when we

are hired for a position we greatly desired, we cannot help but rejoice.

But it cannot be compared with the joy of knowing that you have been admitted into the Kingdom of heaven, of knowing that your name is written in heaven, so that you may dwell for eternity together with the righteous. (Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Luke 10:20)

It is a great joy to know that you are admitted into the school of Christ, that you are chosen by the Lord so that He may work with you to make you perfect/ to make you like Him. (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2-4)

For many it is unbearable to be persecuted/mocked, but for those who have chosen the values of the Kingdom it is a joy to know that they are counted worthy to be shaped in the school of suffering. (And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Acts 5:41)

Likewise, for most it is a great misfortune to have the things they have gathered taken from them, and this brings many to the edge of depression; but for those who have chosen the Kingdom of God it is a reason for joy when the Lord counts them worthy to suffer the loss of the goods needed for life. (... and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods. Hebrews 10:34)

The gospel of Christ, who is the image of God!

Unlike the joy that the world gives, which may come after a gain (after a promotion), those who are in the Kingdom rejoice when they go through troubles, with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. (having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. 1 Thessalonians 1:6; who now rejoice in my sufferings. Colossians 1:24)

When we keep the Word of peace and of righteousness, then persecution will come, but joy too! (Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:10)

The full joy that comes from the Holy Spirit is the thing we will find in the eternal Kingdom, and it will be permanent. (and the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isaiah 35:10)

Joy is the result of keeping the Word of Christ. Joy is a crown of the fruit of the Spirit; the joy of having gone through trials in order to come to longsuffering,

kindness, gentleness, love... (looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Hebrews 12:2)

God's Plan for Man

From reading Scripture we can see that in His eternal plan God had in view not only the creation of beings superior to the angels, but His aim was to make a being in whom His nature would be manifested; who would be in His image and likeness. He created a being altogether different from everything He had created until then. (And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. Genesis 1:26-27)

We can state with certainty that when God created man He had a purpose totally different from the one concerning the angels, who were created with the status of servants. God decided to make brothers for the Lord Jesus, to people His Kingdom with beings who would be like His Son.

We have a soul, a spirit; He has endowed us with the capacity to think, to reason, to believe, to make decisions, to admire, to love and to choose. This is because He decided beforehand in His plan that we should be like Him. (For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:28-29)

God created us and endowed us with these capacities so that we would use them, and it is our responsibility to put them to good use, to work together with Him, so as to come to the stature He has determined. This is the highest thing to which man can aspire. (put on the new man, which after God is created. Ephesians 4:24)

If the first man was deceived by Satan and his sin passed upon all, this does not mean that a mistake crept into God's plan. All things happened as was foreseen in this plan made in eternity, which God worked out with great care down to the smallest details.

God begins this work of restoring the image of Christ in man at the moment of the new birth, and He has all power to bring us to the perfection required by the standard of His Kingdom. (being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6)

God's plan is not limited to a cheap salvation that consists only in repentance **(putting off the old man)** and in the forgiveness of sins, but provides for **the restoring of the image of God** in us **(putting on the new man)** and for bringing us to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13)

To illustrate this, we can think of the building of a house, in which the

builder begins with the foundation of the house. At the end of the building, the house appears finished down to the smallest details.

So it is with the school of God: He begins this work of restoring His image in man, and He completes it down to the smallest details. (And he gave some, ... pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, ... till we all come ... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13)

If man, created by God, can complete down to the smallest details what he begins, how much more can God. God has the most excellent school of disciples, in which He works together with every man who answers His call.

He causes us to be born again and transforms us step by step according to His image, until we come to the stature of His Son. (But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18)

It is a perfect plan, drawn up with great precision, point by point, without the smallest detail missing. What He begins, He brings to a good end. (who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:8)

... are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord

All the things that come into our life are appointed by God to work on our character until we come to resemble the Lord Jesus. (all things work together for good to them that love God, ... to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28)

God, in His eternal plan, decided to make us His sons, so that we grow and come to be like Him (we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him.** 1 John 3:2)

The Purpose of the Word of Christ

In the world, mankind is in the darkness of sin. There is no man who does good. Because man is inclined toward evil, the secular world has laws that make it possible for us to live together. They condemn and punish evil deeds, but they have no power to work at the perfecting of man.

Scripture tells us the same about the law of Moses, which was "added" because of transgressions. (Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions. Galatians 3:19)

But in the heavenly Kingdom things are not as they are in the world. Those who are in the eternal Kingdom of God live in the light and are perfect, as He is. (we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. 1 John 3:2)

To come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, the law of the Kingdom/the law of Christ was brought to us, which addresses the inner man in order to change our heart, this law being far superior to the Law of Moses. (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. 1 Corinthians 9:21)

We draw attention to the need not to confuse the Law of the Kingdom, which is also called the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, with the Law of Moses (Romans 8:2). The Law is holy and just (Romans 7:12), but it could not make man perfect. (For the law made nothing perfect. Hebrews 7:19; For the law having a shadow of good things to come, ... can never ... make the comers thereunto perfect. Hebrews 10:1)

The Law of the Kingdom/the Law of Christ is far superior to the moral law of Moses, and its aim is to make us be like Him/to make His traits our own. (for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Romans 13:8; Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2)

So the one who fulfils the Law of Christ will not make void the Law of Moses, but will establish it. (Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. Romans 3:31; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk ... after the Spirit. Romans 8:4)

On a closer look one can see that the laws of God express His way of thinking/ His way of being. (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1; the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4)

It is essential to understand that all the commandments by which we must live are a faithful image of His character. His commandments show us how He lived; they show us His ways. All, absolutely all His commandments in fact represent Him.

Every teaching (commandment) of the Gospel has hidden in it a trait of the Lord Jesus; it hides in it the perfect beauty of His character.

Just as in the human embryo all the traits of the one who is to be born are hidden, so the traits of the Lord Jesus are hidden in the seed of God. (The seed is the word of God. Luke 8:11) That is why we cannot neglect any commandment, because the traits of the Lord are found in His commandments.

So we can consider, without being mistaken, that the Lord puts His laws in our heart with the aim of rewriting/imprinting His image in us. (I will put my laws into their hearts, And in their minds will I write them. Hebrews 10:16; But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:16)

Drawn by the Beauty of Christ's Character

Looking at His ways, at His teachings, we are in fact looking at the beauty of Christ, who is the image of God. His commandments must be a delight to us, because they represent Him. (And I will delight myself In thy commandments, which I have loved. Psalm 119:47; Yet thy commandments are my delights. Psalm 119:143)

That is why the Lord Jesus says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments..." (John 14:15), that is, whoever loves Me also loves My commandments and finds his delight in them, because My commandments express My character; they show what I am.

Without receiving with joy the Seed which is His Word, there will be no new birth!

God does not call us to appreciate Him only because He offers us an eternal Kingdom with streets of gold, because He saves us from hell, since this will not make us fall in love with Him, nor desire to follow Him so as to be like Him.

He calls us not only to appreciate Him for what He has done for us, but He calls us to be like Him. He calls us to fall in love with Him, and for this He reveals to us the beauty of His character, which is perfect. (And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. John 12:32)

That is why, in His love for the crown of His creation, God uses His messengers to speak to us about the Lord Jesus, to show us the traits of character of His heart. He uses His disciples to describe to us the image of God, to show us the beauty of His heart and to draw us to Him with His perfect beauty.

No one can be drawn by His beauty if he has not heard about Him and does not see the traits of His heart, if he does not know His ways, His way of being. (and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? Romans 10:14; No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. John 6:44)

If we have been called only to repentance, so as not to end up in hell and so as

to walk on streets of gold, without the beauty of the Lord's heart having been shown to us, if it was not presented to us that His aim is for us to have His traits of character, we must be careful, because those who presented this message to us have brought us a false, incomplete gospel.

These were not sent by God. If we have received such a gospel, we have been deceived by Satan.

Let us acknowledge sincerely: What gospel was brought to us? Were there people who preached to us a single message, namely that if we do not repent we will have our part in eternal hell? Did they teach us to appreciate Him, to be thankful to Him only for what He did for us on the cross?

Or were they messengers of God who also presented to us the beauty of the Lord's heart? Was I drawn by His traits of character? Was love awakened in us, and did we desire to have the same beautiful traits as His?

God draws us with all His beauty and will make all the beauty of His heart pass before us. As He showed Moses the beauty of His heart, so He will show it to us too. (I will make all my goodness pass before thee. Exodus 33:19) He does this so that we fall in love with the traits of His heart, so that love may be awakened in us.

The fervent desire of David (which must be that of everyone who is in love with the Lord) was to dwell all his life in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord. (One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD. Psalm 27:4)

If we come to God out of fear of hell, we have not had a part in the radiance of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

If we are drawn by the beauty of the traits of the Lord Jesus, and admire them, then we too will desire them, this being the starting point. (I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, If ye find my beloved, That ye tell him, that I am sick of love. Song of Solomon 5:8)

No one will be able to admire Him and love Him with all his mind out of fear of the punishment of eternal hell, but only if he is drawn by the radiance of the Lord, by the radiance of His Word. Only in this way is the fervent desire to be like Him set off. Only in this way can the purpose for which we were created be reached, that of being like the Lord Jesus, our Bridegroom.

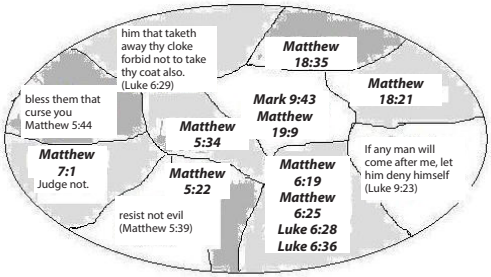
If we have not started from here, if we are not drawn by the beauty of His heart, if His commandments and His ways are not our delight, then the new life has not begun. (No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. John 6:44)

If we are drawn by the beauty of His character, which is perfect, this will lead to admiration and to love. In this way love will be stirred up in us, and with it the desire to be His betrothed and His bride. (I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, That ye stir not up, nor awake my love, Until he please. Song of Solomon 8:4)

He draws us with the beauty of His character, with the beauty of His Kingdom, and has longsuffering toward us, until admiration and love are awakened, both toward Him and toward His ways. (And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. John 12:32)

When He is for us like a treasure of great price, and we give up the old things, then the Lord will enter into a relationship with me by making a covenant of love, so that I may be His. (Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure

The Seed
The Word of Christ



hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Matthew 13:44)

It is not a covenant as in business relations, but a covenant of marriage, of love. (Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Ezekiel 16:8; ... Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Jeremiah 31:3)

God knows our heart. He knows when we find and admire His beauty, when love comes with all our mind. (And God, which knoweth the hearts... Acts 15:8) Only then are we ready to follow Him and to keep the Word of the Lord Jesus. Only then does the covenant between Him and me come about. (If ye love me, keep my commandments. John 14:15)

The beauty of the heart of the Lord Jesus must be for us the greatest treasure that man can ever find. (What is thy beloved more than another beloved, That thou dost so charge us? My beloved is white and ruddy, The chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold... This is my beloved, and this is my

friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Song of Solomon 5:9-16)

Our relationship with the Lord Jesus must be like the betrothal relationship between a young man and a young woman, which can be entered only because of mutual admiration, because of love with all the heart. The Lord Jesus does not enter into covenant with us because we do not want to end up in hell, or because He offers us streets of gold in His eternal Kingdom.

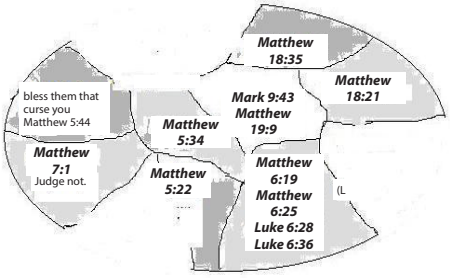
He will not enter into this relationship of love with us if we are not drawn by His beauty, if we do not love Him more than anyone. (He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew 10:37)

Only a person in love can delight in the words spoken by the one whom he admires and loves. (My soul failed when he spake. Song of Solomon 5:6; And I will delight myself In thy commandments, which I have loved. Psalm 119:47; My soul breaketh for the longing That it hath unto thy judgments. Psalm 119:20)

Only in this way will the Lord enter into covenant with us, if our aim too is to live in a relationship of love and to prepare ourselves as a betrothed for the wedding with our Bridegroom. (for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. Revelation 19:7)

Scripture tells us that the Son of God agreed to die on the cross so that we could be set free from the dominion of the devil, cleansed from sins, reconciled with God and redeemed, and to make possible the new birth and our translation into His Kingdom. (... and to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28)

The work of the cross is God's gift for every man who, on hearing the Word, falls in love with Christ and regrets his evil deeds. The sacrifice on the cross makes



Seed that lacks part of the genetic information, part of the teachings of Christ

possible the forgiveness of sins and redemption for the one who denies himself and trusts fully in Him. (who ... hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13)

The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus makes this possible, so that we can be placed

in a new state, in which He can work with us through the Holy Spirit at our restoration and perfecting. (... through sanctification of the Spirit. 1 Peter 1:2; are changed into the same image ... even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18)

God commits Himself to begin the work of perfecting the character only with those who love Him with all their heart, who deny themselves and enter into covenant with Him.

Self-denial is a compulsory requirement that every man who wants to begin this new life must fulfil. (And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, **and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23) It is easy to see that self-denial is the starting point in the plan of salvation, without which there is no new birth.**

This is the moment of entering the territory of the Kingdom, of the new birth, a birth that few people have part in and that will remain a great mystery for most of us. Many want to get into the Kingdom of God for the things found there, but without making a real change in their life.

The word of Scripture is very clear on this. The Lord Jesus tells us that many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. (Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke 13:24)

The New Birth

Scripture tells us that to see the Kingdom of God and to be able to enter it we must be born again of God. (Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ... Ye must be born again. John 3:3, 7)

To dwell together with God in eternity, man must be born again and come to the level required by the righteousness of the Kingdom, that is, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48)

The new birth, or receiving the right of entry/citizenship in the Kingdom of God, is the greatest event that can take place in a man's life. It is the moment when all things are made new. (if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

Just as every biological birth has a seed at its root, so Scripture tells us about the new birth: it has a seed at its root, and this is "the Seed of God"! (Whosoever is born of God ... **his seed** remaineth in him. 1 John 3:9)

In this way "the Seed of God", which has the genetic code of God, is planted in the heart of man, and from it a new creature is born, which will have the nature of God/His way of being.

If we are born of God, of His Seed, it is extremely important to know what this seed contains/what is imprinted in its genetic code, to understand what the new life springs from. Every biological seed has in its composition, on a microbiological scale, all the basic components of the image of the one from whom it comes.

If we follow the same rule, then the Seed of God too will have in its configuration all the basic components of His image.

The first chapter of the Gospel according to John describes/identifies God as being one and the same with His Word. (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and <u>the Word was God</u>. John 1:1)

In the same way the Lord Jesus is described as the Word made flesh, who is one with the Father. (And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... John 1:14; I and my Father are one. John 10:30)

If God is identified as being the Word, as indeed His Son is too, then the seed from which we are born will also have the Word in its configuration. (The seed is the word of God. Luke 8:11)

Just as in the biological seed we will not find the eyes, the heart... but only the cells corresponding to them, so in the Seed of God we will not find longsuffering, kindness... but we will find the embryonic words corresponding to their formation.

If we search Scripture carefully, we will see quite easily which are these words:

"I will put (the seed) my laws into their hearts, And in their minds will I write them." (Hebrews 10:16); "... the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Corinthians 4:4) In this way the Word of Christ/His Laws is sown in the heart of man, and it will grow, coming to maturity in the fruit of the Spirit/the image of Christ.

For example, in the configuration of the seed we will find the teaching: "That ye resist not evil", which will grow through the Holy Spirit and will develop into longsuffering, which is a part of the image of the Lord.

This truth is extremely important for understanding how our new birth takes place; why we must be born of His Word. "The Word/His laws" will have to be born in us and to grow, so that in the end we may be united with Him/be one with the Word made flesh. (... that they also may be one in us. John 17:21)

Let us not deceive ourselves by believing that it is enough to believe only in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. Without receiving with joy His Seed/Word that is planted in our heart, there will be no new birth. Such a faith is dead and does not save us!

The inseparable link between His Word and the new birth is shown to us by the Lord Jesus in the parable of the sower, as in many other places. In this parable, the Gospel of the Kingdom/the Word of Christ is described as the seed of God, which is sown in the heart of man and from which the new life springs. (The seed is the word of God. Luke 8:11; read also Matthew 13:19)

The apostle James takes up and confirms this teaching of the Lord, which tells us that man has a part in salvation only if he receives the Word planted in him. (receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21)

The apostle Peter likewise reminds us of this seed, which is the Word/the Gospel of Christ. (being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. 1 Peter 1:23, 25)

Likewise the apostle Paul, like the other two apostles, tells us that the birth from above is through the Word of Christ/the Gospel of the Kingdom. (yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 1 Corinthians 4:15)

Just as three main elements naturally take part in the birth of a plant, namely the ground, the seed and the water, so in "the new birth" too we find three main elements: the heart of man, the Word of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The heart of man is likened to the ground. (But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Luke 8:15)

The Word of Christ/His Teaching is the Seed from which life germinates. From this seed the new life springs, and it has in its composition the elements from which we will grow to come to the stature of a perfect man. (I will put my laws (the

Seed) into their hearts, And in their minds will I write them. Hebrews 10:16)

Attention! Let us not confuse the Word of Christ, which is the Seed that Scripture tells us was to come, with the Law of Moses, which was given because of transgressions. (Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the **"seed"** should come. Galatians 3:19)

The Holy Spirit is the third compulsory element that takes part in the new birth. Just as the biological seed does not sprout if it has no water, neither does the seed of God germinate without the Holy Spirit. (... and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Titus 3:5; ... born of the Spirit. John 3:8)

The ground/the heart of man

In the parable of the sower there are four kinds of soil/ground:

1. Those who hear the Word of the Kingdom and do not believe it because they do not understand it. In this case the ground is trodden down/the heart is hardened. (Matthew 13:19; Luke 8:12)

2. Those who hear the Word of the Kingdom and receive it with joy, but keep it only for a while. (he that received the seed into stony places. Matthew 13:20)

3. Those who hear the Word of the Kingdom and receive it, but the cares of this world choke the Word (the Seed) and they bear no fruit. (He also that received seed among the thorns. Matthew 13:22)

4. Those who hear the Word of the Kingdom and receive it with joy in a good heart. The last case shows us ground that is broken up, clean. (he that received seed into the good ground. Matthew 13:23) In the first category of people the heart is hardened and the Seed does not sprout.

In the second and third categories of people all the elements needed for germination are found. The soil, the Seed and the Holy Spirit, who produces the germination of the new life, are present.

But in the second category the soil does not have enough earth to bring the new life to maturity/to fruit-bearing, and in the third the ground is not prepared/ broken up.

The fourth category is a good heart that receives the Seed/the Word planted in it, and then, through the renewing and the work of the Spirit, grows and bears fruit (has the Fruit of the Spirit).

If Scripture speaks to us of several kinds of soil, it is very important to examine ourselves to see what kind of ground we are, and if it has thorns, to break it up. (Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Jeremiah 4:3)

The Seed of God, its composition

As we know, the human embryo contains all the cells that together form the future man who will be born: the heart, the eyes, the brain... all on a microbiological scale, and all set in their place, with not one missing.

We will see that it is the same with the seed of God. In this divine seed all

the primary components of the Image of God are included. (... the new man, which after God is created... Ephesians 4:24)

It has in its make-up all the genetic information/the Laws of the Kingdom, or in other words, the commandments of Christ. Every teaching of Christ is a primary component of the Image of the Lord. (... the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4)

God plants in our heart the Seed "that should come"/the Word of Christ, or in other words, He rewrites the genetic configuration of His image. (I will put (the seed) my laws into their hearts, And in their minds will I write them. Hebrews 10:16)

Below we give some of the genetic information/teachings of the Kingdom found in the configuration of the Seed of God:

1. That ye resist not evil... (Matthew 5:39)
2. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat... (Matthew 5:40)
3. Judge not, that ye be not judged. (Matthew 7:1)
4. Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's. (Luke 20:25)
5. Take heed that ye despise not... (Matthew 18:10)

The Holy Spirit will make this seed planted in us germinate, that is, He will make each teaching germinate individually and will work at our growth and perfecting. In this way the teaching of non-resistance is sown in us, which through the Spirit will produce as fruit: peace, longsuffering, gentleness, kindness. (are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18; when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. John 16:13)

All the teachings of the Lord are essential/are part of the "embryo" from which a son of God will come forth. No teaching can be set aside. Each one is a primary cell, like the cells of the human embryo, which by growing will be a part of the image of the Lord, and not one has been put into the seed without having a purpose.

Every teaching contributes its part to the forming of the image of Christ in us. The Holy Spirit will not leave any of them aside and will work with us according to our growth. Let us understand well! God will not take us into His eternal Kingdom only on the basis of a mental belief in the sacrifice of the Lord, as most believe; but we must be born again, of His seed, and grow until we come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, as it is written. (... till we all come ... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; Ephesians 4:13)

Let us ask ourselves: What would happen if we broke the seed into fragments and took a few teachings out of it? Could one still speak of a birth from God? Let us imagine what could happen if we broke off a small piece of a biological seed. If we took out the cells that correspond to the liver, the heart or the brain? Would there still be a birth?

It would be good to understand that, if we do not accept the lordship of Christ in all things, not receiving all that He said, the seed will not be whole and will not sprout. (When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. Matthew 13:19)

If we disregard even one commandment, the Spirit will not be able to use that teaching to complete His image in us/the fruit of the Spirit. (Now the end of the commandment/the teachings of the Gospel is charity. 1 Timothy 1:5)

If we do not receive the teachings of the Lord about non-resistance, judging, self-denial, idle words, blessing... the seed will not contain the things needed for the life from above to germinate.

God renews through the Spirit only those who receive "the whole seed" into their heart and who obey Him. (And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. Acts 5:32; ... and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Titus 3:5)

The word of Scripture warns us that today, as in the past, most corrupt the Word of God, which is the Seed from which we must be born again. Satan's aim is that this new birth should not take place any more, or that it should be a birth from men. (For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God. 2 Corinthians 2:17)

We believe it is quite clear to everyone that new life cannot start from a corrupted seed. Likewise, we all know that from a genetically modified seed comes a plant that looks like the one from the unmodified seed, but it will be a plant modified in its whole structure. So it is with us: if we receive a modified teaching, we will be born of that teaching, not of God.

Below we give a few teachings that are missing from the heart of many, not being accepted by many who believe they are "born again":

1. Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's. (Luke 20:25)
2. That ye resist not evil... (Matthew 5:39)
3. bless them that curse you. (Luke 6:28)
4. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery (Luke 16:18)
5. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. (John 13:14)

Check: Are these teachings too hard for you too, so that you cannot bear them? (Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? John 6:60)

We must understand that the new birth, of God, cannot take place if we disregard the Word of Christ that is planted in our heart. (receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21; ... I will put my laws into their hearts. Hebrews 10:16)

No teaching can be set aside. Each has its purpose; not one was given at random. Some are for cleansing/breaking up the ground, such as: judging, condemning, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes... and others are for obtaining longsuffering, kindness, peace, love...

Only by keeping the commandments of Christ will we be able to put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man, made in the image of God. (and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created. Ephesians 4:24)

The clothing of the new man must have woven into it kindness, patience, gentleness, love... (*Put on* therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; ... And above all these things put on charity... Colossians 3:12, 14) This is the wedding garment/ the qualities of the new man that I must put on in order to be like the Lord Jesus.

We encourage you not to read Scripture at random, but to study it. Seek and keep the teachings with which you will be able to break up the ground, and then seek and keep the teachings with which to cultivate in yourself the Fruit of the Spirit/the image of Christ.

Ask the question in the most serious way: Is the seed that has been sown in

your heart the seed of God? Have you received the commandments/laws of the Lord about slander/blessing? If you have received them, do you keep them? Have they borne fruit? Examine yourself thoroughly for a week or two and you will see where you stand.

Examine yourself carefully: When you speak evil, are you rebuked by the Holy Spirit? Consider whether you are living the new life to which you have been called, for many of us are called to bless, but so few are those who actually do it. (but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:9)

If you speak evil of the government, of those in politics, of the people in the health system, of your neighbours... and of those who do you harm in one way or another, it means that things have not yet been made new; it means that the new life has not begun! (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

We must understand that, for the man born from above, of God, slander or any other sin is only an accident, not a way of life! (Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. 1 John 3:9)

The Word of God is very clear on this. (Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him. 1 John 3:9)

The Lord Jesus tells us that only if we hate the old man, if we abandon the old things, will we be able to begin a new life in the Kingdom of God, and this will be a life of discipleship/of being His bondservant. (If any man come to me, and hate not ... yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:26)

The Lord will enter with us into the New Covenant only when we give up our own will and accept Him as our Master and submit to His teachings. From this moment the new life starts, a life of discipleship. We become His disciples from the day we accept Him in all things as Teacher and Lord.

When He is for us like a treasure of great price, and we give up the old things, then the Lord will enter into a relationship with me by making a covenant of love, so that I may be His. (the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Matthew 13:44)

It is not a covenant as in business relations, but a covenant of love, of marriage. (Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Ezekiel 16:8)

He makes this covenant with us when we give up our own will and accept Him as our Beloved and Lord and submit to His teachings. From this moment the new life starts, a life of discipleship. We become His disciples from the day we

accept Him in all things as Teacher and Lord.

This is the moment when God begins His work of perfecting, and He will bring it to a good end only if we remain faithful to Him. (being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it. Philippians 1:6)

To be a disciple of Christ means to be enrolled in His school, to learn from Him the things from above and to make them your own, since they are strictly necessary for the life of the Kingdom. We become His disciples from the first day of school, from the first day of the new life.

In the school of Christ we are bondservants to God, and we are subject to Him in all things, so that we may come to our sanctification. (and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Romans 6:22) The new birth is the beginning of the life of a disciple, and the result of discipleship and of the work of God through the Holy Spirit is the man who has come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Questions for Personal Examination:

Examine yourself: Are you born again? Do you fulfil the conditions needed for the new birth, from above? Have you given up the things of the world? Have you entered into covenant with the Lord? Are the pleasures of the world still in your life: the television of the world, going to the seaside...? (Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1 John 2:15, 16)

Examine yourself: Are you subject to the authorities ordained by God? Do you avoid paying taxes, do you practise slander or blessing?

Have you sought the Kingdom of righteousness, of peace and of love as a treasure, have you come to the Door of the Kingdom, have you heard the teachings of Christ and accepted/received them?

Have you received the whole Word that was planted in your heart, or only fragments?

If you have entered into the New Covenant, have you told Him that you will obey and do all that He said? Have you promised that you will keep the laws He has planted in your heart, these being the laws of righteousness, of peace and of love? (Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, When I will make a new covenant with ...; ... I will put my laws into their mind... Hebrews 8:8, 10)

Have you denied yourself, emptied yourself of yourself, letting the Word planted in your heart work? (Luke 9:23) Or was it sown among thorns? (Jeremiah 4:3)

Is He the Lord of your life, or are you only at the stage of saying to Him, "Lord, Lord", without doing all that He says?

Is there any teaching of the Lord that you do not keep? (examine yourself with: Matthew 12:36; Matthew 18:9, 10; Titus 3:2; Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 9:23; Luke 14:26)

Is there any commandment you do not agree with? (examine yourself with John 13:13-17; Mark 10:11, 12; Matthew 19:9; Matthew 22:21)

Do you fulfil the condition needed to be a disciple of the Lord? (And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:26, 27)

We ask you, just as you are, alone with yourself, to examine yourself and see what situation you are in at this moment. Your eternity will depend on it!

It is good for each of us to examine ourselves in the light of the Word and to ask ourselves what kind of covenant/new birth we have had. Are results seen? Is the image of God in us? Are we working consciously to become more and more

like the Lord? Are the fruits of the work of the Spirit seen?

Do not deceive yourself by believing that if you practise the teachings of the group you have joined, you will please God. He will sit at table only with those who will have come to the stature of His Son!

If you have not yet sought righteousness as a treasure, begin now. Then let God guide your steps into a pure congregation, so that you can grow healthily toward perfection! (Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22)

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The purpose of creation was that man should live in communion with God, according to the laws that govern in His Kingdom. This is the highest thing to which man can aspire. (and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created. Ephesians 4:24)

We have a soul, a spirit; He has endowed us with the capacity to think, to reason, to believe, to make decisions, to admire, to love and to choose. This is because He decided beforehand in His plan that we should be like Him. But He did not limit Himself to this likeness alone.

God created us and endowed us with these capacities so that we would use them, and it is our responsibility to put them to good use, to work together with Him, so as to come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (And he gave some, ... pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, ... till we all come ... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13)

