The Restoration of Man

The first human beings God created were made in His image and likeness, bearing His attributes. (So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. Genesis 1:27)

Man was created by God to live in fellowship with Him, but he was deceived by Satan and, through disobedience, he died spiritually, and so lost the likeness and image of God.

Yet God foresaw this fall and had a plan even before He laid the foundation of the world, a plan that makes possible not only the restoration of His creation but also its perfection. (According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame. Ephesians 1:4)

The Bible tells us that man is spiritually dead toward God, and that to come back into a relationship with Him he must be born again.

The new birth is the beginning of a new, clean life, free from sin. This birth is not physical but spiritual, and it marks the beginning of a new life.

What does Holy Scripture say about the new birth?

The Bible says that to be part of the Kingdom of God we must be born again: a spiritual birth from God.

Here is what Holy Scripture says about this new birth: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:3-7)

In Holy Scripture, God's plan for this new birth is revealed to us.

The first step is to hear that this Kingdom exists. Then, in order to find it, a person must acknowledge that he is in a bad state and justify God; otherwise he cannot find this Kingdom. "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God… But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves." (Luke 7:29)

What does it mean to justify God?

– You must acknowledge that, until today, you have lived under the rule 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 3:10; "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing…"

Romans 7:18)

– You must accept the only solution God offers for your salvation and your reconciliation with Him, that is:

– You must be willing to give up the life you have lived and decide to live a new life by faith, under the rule of the Son of God. Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him."

– You must accept that in this Kingdom it is God's will, not man's will, that governs. You must give up your own opinions and your own will and accept God's will. (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; "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:20)

The Bible tells us that the moment a person, fully aware of what he is doing, turns away from his sinful life, accepts the values of God's Kingdom and receives the Son of God as Master of his life, he is born again, a spiritual birth from God. "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: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:11-13)

So at the moment of our decision, through this "birth from above," we are spiritually translated into the Kingdom of God, where peace, righteousness and joy in the Holy Spirit dwell. (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)

Just as every biological birth (whether of plants, animals or people) begins with a seed, so it is with *the new birth*: it cannot happen without the Teaching of Christ, the Seed, as its foundation. **(The seed is the word of God. Luke 8:11; Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. James 1:18)**

Three main elements take part in the birth of a plant: the seed, the soil and water. In the same way, Scripture speaks of three elements that take part in the new birth.

The human heart is likened to the soil. (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 teachings from which life springs, is the Seed. (The seed is the word of God. Luke 8:11; Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. James 1:18) The Holy Spirit is the third, indispensable element. Just as a seed does not sprout into a plant without water, so the new life does not begin without the Holy Spirit. (...by the washing of regeneration, and

renewing of the Holy Ghost. Titus 3:5)

The Lord Jesus tells us that only when we abandon the old things can we begin a new life, and that this will be *a life of discipleship*. The new birth does not happen unless I give up the old man and obey Christ. (Ye have put off the old man with his deeds. Colossians 3:9)

God begins this good work in us only when we are willing to give up a life lived in sin and agree to submit to the Teachings of Christ.

From that moment a life of discipleship begins. We become His disciples from the day we accept Him in all things as Teacher and Lord. To be a disciple of Christ means to be enrolled in His school, to learn from Him the new things that come from above and make them your own, because they are absolutely necessary for life in the Kingdom. We become His disciples from the first day of school, from the first day of the new life.

The Lord's command to the apostles was: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations… teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20) In other words, He sent them out to make disciples and enroll them in His school.

In Christ's school we are learners. We submit to Him in all things, so that we may arrive at *our sanctification*. (But now being made free from sin, 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 disciple's life, and the result of discipleship and of God's work will be a person in the image and likeness of God, who will dwell with God for all eternity.

So God has made it possible for man to be born again spiritually, from God, and He gives us the Holy Spirit so that we may grow to be like Him once more, overcome evil and Satan, and live forever in His presence. (And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 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 21:1-4)

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