The true Baptism

A young practicing Christian couple asks us to baptize their 3 months old son.

Our response:

We have stressed on the uselessness, nowadays, in this end of times predicted by Jesus, of baptism by water, in favor of that in Spirit prescribed by Jesus Himself.

In History, the ritual that preceded the baptism was circumcision for the Jews. This practice is still and in vigor with them. It is unthinkable to a Jew, just as a Muslim, to not be circumcised. Therefore, it was not easy for the Jews who believed in Jesus as Messiah to renounce this useless practice for salvation. St Paul, after believing in Jesus, had trouble convincing the Jews of the uselessness of circumcision. He teaches the Galatians: "It dœs not matter if a person is circumcised or not; what matters is for him to become an altogether **new creature**." (Galatians 6,15). "If I were still preaching circumcision, why should I still be persecuted (*by the Jews*)" (Galatians 5,11). And to the Romans: "... Circumcision is more than a physical operation. The real Jew is the one who is **inwardly** a Jew, and the real circumcision is **in the heart** –something not of the letter but of the spirit. A Jew like that may not be praised by man, but he will be praised by God." (Romans 2,28-29)

Well before Paul, the prophet Jeremiah (VIth century B.C.) had invited the Jews to the spiritual understanding of the circumcision: "Circumcise yourselves... apply circumcision to **your hearts**" (Jeremiah 4,4). And what about women who are not subject to circumcision? Do not they have a right to Eternal Life?

Circumcision, from the get-go, like baptism, is thus a spiritual notion, not physical, a symbol. It represents the purification of the soul, of the spirit, our conception of life and our spiritual engagement. And yet, can we move ahead without knowledge? Blindly thrust ourselves by ignorance? Faith is not inherited, but a personal choice due to knowledge of the Truth. The ignorance of Christ led the Jews to the physical circumcision, and the Christians to be self-satisfied with baptism by water, ignoring the spiritual dimension uniquely acquired by knowledge: "And eternal Life is this: to **know you**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17,3). Can we honestly believe that all the baptized are automatically saved, no matter what they have done?!

The Advent of Jesus made us pass from circumcision to baptism, because water symbolizes purification. Those who believed in Him as Messiah, evolved towards the baptism by water. And yet, Jesus had already said to Nicodemus: "... no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born through water **and Spirit**; what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3,5).

Through Jesus, we have evolved towards a spiritual understanding of the soul's purification.

It is true that Joseph and Mary submitted Jesus to the circumcision. But they were not yet instructed by their Son. It is also true that Jesus said to the Apostles: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of **all nations**; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teach them** to observe all commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time" (Matthew 28,18-20). Jesus dœs not prescribe baptism by water but to "teach them", therefore, by the teachings that accord knowledge, as "eternal Life is this: **to know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" as Jesus says (John 17,3). The clergy is suffice with catechism, a false science that dœs not carry the solid spiritual nourishment of the true knowledge by the Bible. We have known catechists who were even ignorant of how many Gospels there were, the names, and their authors.

Today, we are invited to go beyond the baptism of water, to pass from it to that of **a personal choice through knowledge**. Christians no longer know how to respond to this simple question: "Why are you a Christian (born)?" They do not really know the Christ. Would they have freely CHOSEN to be Christian if they were born in a non-Christian family? Their baptism by water is of no salutary value whatsœver in their nonchalant spiritual life; and there are of the non-baptized who lead a pure life, who will judge them. Hence, Paul said to the Jews of Rome: "The man who, in his native uncircumcised state, keeps the Law, is a condemnation of you, by your concentration on the letter and on the circumcision, actually break the Law" (Romans 2,26-29). Likewise, we say, in this same spirit, that the one who, while not being baptized, accomplishes God's precepts, will judge the baptized who fails to accomplish them.

To this young, practicing Christian couple who ask me to baptize their 3 months old son, I say:

"It is up to you to baptize him by knowledge as he grows up. Look at little 7 year old L. who holds his little Bible in his hands. He was able to find Jeremiah, the Gospel of St. John etc... He read with us. This is the real baptism working in him through his parents, the Baptism (*with 'B'*) to which the Book of Revelation invites us to recognize the Beast's identity, the Antichrist: 'There is need for shrewdness here (*of spirit, of discernment*)! If anyone is clever enough, he may interpret the number of the beast...' (Revelation 13,18). This baptism of discernment renders the spiritual death powerless over us: '... those who refused to worship the beast or his image... reigned with Christ... This is the first resurrection... the second death has no power over them but they will be **Priests of God** and of Christ...' (Revelation 20,4-6). There are therefore no more distinction between man and woman: all men, and all women who have understood the signs of the times and the Antichrist's identity, become priests capable of welcoming the Divine Savior in their homes around his Holy Table (Revelation 3,20)."

Baptism today is in spirit. As those who struggle against this Apocalyptical "Beast", the Antichrist, "have the power to turn water (*of baptism*) into blood (*of their martyrs by witnessing against the Beast*)" (Revelation 11,6). Baptism is an adult's choice, to pass onto their children through the knowledge of biblical prophecies announcing the Advent of Christ, and then, that of his enemy: the Antichrist. A commitment of one's whole earthly life to merit LIFE eternal.

But how can one get to know the Bible? The Apostle Philip, seeing the Ethiopian reading the Bible, asked him: "'Do you understand what you are reading?'" The latter replied: "'How can I, unless I have someone to guide me?' So he invited Philip to get in and sit by his side..." (Acts 8,31-39). It is after having been instructed that the Ethiopian asked to be baptized. It is incumbent therefore, to the baptized in spirit, to assume their commitment by teaching as Jesus prescribed (Matthew 28,19-20).

John the Baptist's testimony should also be added: "I baptize you with water... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and Fire" (Luke 3,16).

It is underlined that Jesus dœs not baptize. It is his disciples who practice this rite: "though in fact it was his disciples who baptized, not Jesus himself" (John 4,2). This demonstrates that Jesus did not want to entertain the idea of a baptism of water, alien to our Father's Spirit.

"Peter", after his discourse at Cornelius' house (a non Jewish Roman), "was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the pagans too (*without being baptized*), since they could hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God. Peter himself then said, 'Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people, now they have received the Holy Spirit **just as much as we have**?' He then gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterward they begged him to stay on for some days." (Acts 10,44-48) It should be noted that the Holy Spirit was already spread on Cornelius and his like, **before** they were baptized! So, what did the following baptism with water serve? Had they not already received the Holy Spirit?

The Baptism in Spirit, in this end of times, was announced by the Holy Scriptures. In his discourse, Peter reverts to Jœl's prophecy (Acts 2,17-21 and Jœl 3,1-5): "In the last days –it is the Lord who speaks– I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind. Their sons and daughters shall prophesy... Even on my slaves, men and women (*no distinction between men and women*), in those days, I will pour out my Spirit... The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the Day of the Lord dawns, that great and terrible Day (Matthew 24,29 / Revelation 6,12). All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved." Who invokes the Lord, in the Spirit of the Lord, is already baptized, without passing through water, as were Cornelius and his people.

Jesus revealed this spiritual baptism when speaking to Nicodemus: "unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God... what is born form the flesh is flesh; what is born of the Spirit is spirit... You must be born from above... That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit." (John 3,3-8)

To be born of the Spirit, is whœver:

1. recognizes in Jesus the Messiah.
2. sits themself at his Table to answer to the divine invitation (Matthew 22)
3. recognizes the signs of Christ's Return and the identity of the Antichrist

These represent the true circumcision, and the true baptism, today.

"You are pruned (*purified, baptized*) already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you", said Jesus to his Apostles (John 15,3). The authentic baptism, the unique valid one, is the welcoming of the Divine Word. "Let us leave behind us then", says Paul, "all the elementary teaching about Christ and **concentrate on its completion**, without going over the fundamental doctrines again: the turning away from dead actions... **the teaching about baptisms**..." (Hebrews 6,1-3).

While we were talking, our friend D. (new among us), a baptized Christian since childhood, shows up to listen to what we had to say with regards to the baptism in Spirit. She interrupts us to tell us: "This night, I had a dream that shook me. I saw a person of light telling me: 'You have to be baptized'. I answered: 'But I have already been baptized!' Then she saw that someone grabbed her head and plunged it into a big basin". She understood, and we all understood that, through this dream, the Holy Spirit confirmed our teaching. The baptism of water that she had received has no spiritual valor. She has to pass through the authentic baptism: that of knowledge and personal choice.

We however baptized the child with a pedagogical spirit, especially because of the presence of certain persons among us. And this, in the same Spirit that Jesus himself submitted to at John's baptism; He, who had no need of baptism. Peter too, baptized Cornelius and his people, who already had just received the Holy Spirit.

Henceforth, the baptism for the forgiveness of sins, is to welcome Christ who is knocking at the door of the heart as He had announced (Luke 12,35-37 / Matthew 24,33 / Revelation 3,20). He desires that we open to Him the door, to let Him in and share his Supper with his people. Jesus had said:

> "This is my Body **for the forgiveness of sins**... Drink from this, all of you, for this is my Blood, the Blood poured out for you and for many **for the forgiveness of sins**" (Matthew 26,26-28 / Luke 22,14-20 / John 6,53-58).

And here is the authentic baptism which forgives our sins and gives Eternal Life.

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