

Religious Education. Ground for Soul Recovery

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ABSTRACT: Religious education is an action specific to human spirituality and corresponds to the inner hope of the man to perfect himself morally and continuously reach for the resemblance with God through a clean and holy life, free from desires and sins. This action is developed progressively and consciously by the educator, according to the Christian moral principles and to a well-organized plan. It is sustained by love, trust, freedom and by the gift of God and, through its functions of improving and guiding the Christian soul, seeks the making of the moral-religious character with its perfection in the Christian personality.

KEY WORDS: education, morality, soul, virtue, perfection, holiness

The dogmatic teaching of our Holy Church defines man as being the crown of the creation or microcosmos, because he unites in himself, harmoniously, the elements of the material and spiritual worlds. Being the face and the icon of the Creator, man always reaches for the resemblance with Him, since he was made for this, as David, the psalmist, says: "Just like the deer wishes for the waters of the springs, so does my heart wishes You, God" (Psalm 41:1). When God made him, He said: "Let us make a human after Our face and appearance... And God made man after His face; after God's face he was made; He made man and woman" (Making 2:7).

From the previously created matter, God took the body, and from Himself, He gave His divine breath, which is called by the Holy Scriptures rational and speaking soul. Man - the crown of the creation - was made king o

the earthly things, but submitted to the mastery from above. "God places him on earth, as on a second big world in a small one, like another angel, mixed worshiper, watcher of the scene and initiated in the understanding, emperor of the things on earth, mastered from above, earthly and heavenly, passing and eternal, seen and understanding... and, the thing that surpasses the secret, godly through his natural inclining towards God" (Tilea 2002, 27). Only for the fact that he has deep in himself this propensity, the man unites in his person the elements of the sensitive world and of the supernatural one, even from the moment of his creation. So, the human being is perfectible, having the exact destination and the mission to complete spiritually, to achieve the ideal of perfection and to inherit the eternal life (Mathew 25:34; John 17:3). "You made us for You and restless is our soul until it will rest in You" (Barbu 1985, 63), once upon a time a great Christian educator said.

Arts and the possibility of education is a characteristic feature of the human nature and the Great Saint Vasile often high lightens it: "In us, the humans - says the holy priest- there are natural virtues which our soul achieves not through a human teaching, but are born within our nature. For instance, nobody teaches us to hate disease, but, naturally, we despite what bothers us, just like the soul, without anyone teaching it, dodges evil. Evil is a disease of the soul, while the virtue, the health of the soul. Health was well defined by some people: equilibrium of the natural energies. You wouldn't be far from the truth if you defined the health of the soul in the same terms. Because the soul, naturally and without being taught, wants something that is already its, and that is why everybody praise chastity, approves of justice and crave skill. These virtues belong more to the soul than health belongs to the body" (Fecioru 2005a, 262).

If man still keeps his propensity towards evil, he can be educated, meaning corrected, in order not to prevail in evil, but to stray from it and do good. Education is a delicate and systematic work pointed at the entire human being to wake, develop and strengthen all the powers of the soul, freely and consciously.

Man is passing and immortal, visible and invisible, earthly and heavenly, he is body and spirit. The rational soul is the being element of the man which separates him from other terrestrial beings, and its functions are: mind, sense and willingness or free-will. The soul is the divine nature of the human being

by which man can be educated, meaning that he can be molded, climbing the stairs of the virtues until reaching the shore of perfection. The mission of the soul is to dominate the sinful urges of the body, in order to keep itself clean from all sins. *“What is the coachman for the wagon, the captain for his ship, the musician for a musical instrument that is what the Maker made the soul to be for this earthly recipient. The soul has the brakes, it turns the stir, it strokes the strings; and when it does this well, it produces that harmonious song of virtues, but, when it weakens the strings or overuses them, it hurts the art and the harmony”* (Fecioru 2005b, 262).

The educational process has as primary purpose the improvement of the soul, and through this, the improvement of the body, because the body collaborates with the soul to make good deeds. *“The body is the tool, is like a coat and a cloak of the soul... If it will live together with a holy soul, it will become a temple of the Holy Spirit”* (Fecioru 2003a, 61). So, education is possible, and imposes itself absolutely, like a necessity. Education is imposed like a remedy for the consequences of the sin. Through sin, the light of the wisdom has weakened, the feeling changed, the will softened and Adam’s sin became spring of all possible evil.

In the pre-fall human nature there was, naturally, the after the law will, meaning, after God, which pushed us away from evil. This harmonious functionality was interrupted by disobedience. But, by showing His endless love for humans, God restores the human nature in Christ, which is flawless God and flawless Man. But man, after falling into sin, remains with the memory of perfection, missing it and feeling attracted to it. It is a long process of healing, a permanent education.

Religious education has triple theological motivation. The first ground of the education is man’s dignity of being God’s image, a rational, spiritual and free being. When the Savior reveals to the Samaritan woman that *“Spirit is God and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and truth”* (John 4:24), He tells her, with different words that man also, essential and defining, is a spirit, consciousness; that fundamental in the human condition is the spirit and not the matter. This fact is essential for education. Moral, civic, physical and intellectual education finds its foundation when the spirit is postulated as fundamental and formative essence of man. *“What’s man’s use in winning the entire world, if he loses his soul? Or what could man give, in*

exchange, for his soul?" (Marcus 8:36-37). The moral teaching of the Holy Gospel doesn't teach us to neglect our duties towards the body or towards the biological necessities of the material life, but It teaches us to care, first of all, about the soul, the dearest treasure of our being, whose value is equivalent to the price of eternity. "Let us strengthen our hearts, tense our soul, and prepare our heart! We run for our soul; we ought to aim for eternal things. (Fecioru 2003b, 17) Just like the body feels the need for food, equally the soul needs the spiritual food of God's word and of prayer. The clothes of the soul are the adornments of the virtues and of good deeds. "Just like you provide for your body different kinds of clothes and you mind the weather in choosing them, do the same for the soul! Don't let it wonder around empty of good deeds, but dress it with its proper clothes. By doing that, you will soon give it courage and bring it back to its usual healthy state", (Fecioru 1987, 225-226) says a great priest of the Church.

The seed that cultivates the health of the soul and maintains unaltered its moral purity is faith, but not the simple or rational one, but *"the one that is born in us from the work of the virtues"* (Stăniloae 1948, 262). This faith accelerates and ennobles the spiritual powers of man. The mind, darkened by sin is the ruin and the perish of the soul, and the one made wise by the flame of the right faith is *"the eye that illuminates the entire consciousness and gives birth to understanding"*, *"If the created mind comes in the world with the urge to know The Eternal One, this urge is the proof that it is made for eternity, that he exists before her, if from the first moment of her awakening she assumes he exists. And somewhere, must be found an object greater than her. An infinite object if there is, in her, a desire so strong for knowledge and if none of the finite objects satisfy her, disappointing, thus, her expectations"* (Saint Chiril of Jerusalem 1993, 24) Faith develops in the atmosphere of the prayer and through the reading of the Godly words of the Holy Scriptures. Our Orthodox Church has made, from Its divine cult, an important factor of deepening the faith and of religious education, a true school which forms Christian behaviors and characters.

The entire liturgical life of Church, concretized in traditions and religious institutions, in prayers, hymns, teaching words, Secrets and continuous summons of the Holy Spirit, represented the proper spiritual

environment, the strength of the religious feeling and the fortification of his entire soul structure. In the sacramental environment of the Holy Liturgy has been drawn the profile of the true religious personality, because *“The Holy Liturgy gave birth and raised the true Christian religiosity”* (Vintilescu 1943, 43), and *“the Christian virtues without one cannot conceive the manifestation of the moral-religious character are mirrored in Liturgy and they fully develop by taking part at it. It is a spring and a promoter of Christ’s life”* (Spiridon 1939, 154).

The permanent wish and striving of Church was *“having an educational school system which would pulsate the faith and Christian life and shape Christian consciences”* (Mihail Bulacu 1928, 2) since *“it is not enough that God reveals the teaching in order to know it, but we must get close to Him with the warmth of our soul. Through the lifting of our heart towards God we get close to Him and, in order to be able to see Him more clearly we must open our heart and have it cleaned by the power of prayer. Only through the cleanness of our heart, we can deepen and guess the unspoken mysteries of the Christian faith”* (Mihail Bulacu 1928, 79). In order to achieve this, our Orthodox Church prays without stopping each Holy Liturgy, saying: *“The Union of faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit asking us to give, ourselves and one another and all our life to Christ God”*, because *“the soul, enlightened by faith represents God, sees God as humanly as possible, walks the edges of the world and sees, even from now the future judgment, before the ending of this century and the rewarding of the promises”* (Fecioru 1993, 77-78). *“Happy the ones with their heart clean, because they will see God”* (Mathew 5:8), said the Savior, because these, *“by shaking off the dirt of the eye of the mind they see the One that is and they light up when knowing the Holy Spirit”* (The first Song 1987, 345), feeling God’s presence and work in their life and in their souls, illuminated by grace and warmed by the flame of faith. As the believer separates himself from lust and the meanness of the sin and increases in virtues, his soul becomes more beautiful after the pattern of the divine Archetype and fills himself with God’s knowledge light. That is why, repentance, as a means of rebuilding our state of soul, doesn’t ever have to stop. It must become a constant preoccupation of our entire life, a tense fight against sin, a continuous moral-religious education. *“Work your soul just like a ploughman - says a saint priest - rip out of it the thorns, put in it the word of good faith, plant the good plants of wisdom, take care of it with all your attention and you will be like Pavel”* (Fecioru 2007, 66).

A second reason is man's mission of achieving the resemblance with God. *"Be, thus, perfect yourselves, like your Heavenly Father is"* (Mathew 5, 48) The resemblance consists in the development and the limitless perfection of "the face" and, at this stage one gets through persistence in virtue and joining efforts with the divine grace. Saint Chiril of Jerusalem says about this: *"God's work is, thus, planting and watering, and yours, to bear fruit. God's work is to give this gift, and yours, is to take it and keep it. Do not despise the gift just because it was given to you. But, once you got it, keep it piously"* (Fecioru 2003b, 21). The ones that have been working with this gift, at their full potential, freely, actively and consciously, have reached the stage of moral perfection, reaching the resemblance with God through good deed and clean life, thus, becoming authentic religious personalities. These are the saints that embodied in their deeds the ideal pattern of holy and pure life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Corinthians 4:16), because, the supreme personality after whose stature our personality must be made is our Savior Jesus Christ, the only one that could say about Himself: *"Which one of you reveals me from sin?"* (John 8:46) *"Only when the Christian gets to be "man of Christ", can he be considered a Christian personality educated after Savior's teaching and deed".* (Călugăr 1955, 13). The Savior taught more through His personal example cause, everything he promoted through word made true by deed. As a Christian teacher said: *"The great lesson from Jesus consists in the fact that the example is above words and that the superior must place itself in the service of the inferior, and that the superior ought to devote itself to its inferiors"* (Thibaut 1940, 146).

Due to this fact Christianity has promoted the most successful educational system of the human soul (Bulacu 2009, 2), making the synergetic action of spiritual transformation of humans and of the things from the interior and not from outside, through persuasion, through the creating example, through honest love and pure prayer, through the union of the souls and not by force. *"All the teachings of the Holy Gospel were taken from a life lived, like a model, on earth, in order to initiate the human soul of every Christian generation"* (Bulacu 2009, 8) towards a faithful identification with our Lord Jesus Christ, for the deeper living of the moral practiced by Him in the most authentic and sublime manner. *"Christianity means the eternal religious truth, means love and creating deed. This is how the true believers interpreted and lived it and especially, the Christians that lived in the first centuries"* (Călugăr 1955, 20).

The third motivation of the religious education is free-will, which must be, in turn, in a continuous shaping. *“God Himself respects the moral liberty given to man and He does religious personalities only from those Christians who collaborate freely and by their own will with his saving grace”* (Călugăr 1955, 9). This freedom definitely involves a moral responsibility which makes the believer persist in a hard struggle, developing an uninterrupted activity of defeating the evil, of ripping off the sin inside and channeling his will towards constant moral good, since *“the one that does not unite his will with God, stomps in his deeds and falls in the hands of the enemies”* (Stăniloae 1947, 265). This is about liberty, in the sense of Revelation, which stands like an exit from under the “wings of being”, raising the divine spirit. It is being free from sin, when the will does not watch and only chooses good, with sin not existing for it, the that is being referred to by Saint Apostle Pavel, when he says: *“Stand still in the freedom with which Christ has made us free and do not enslave yourselves again”* (Galatians 5:1).

The guidance of will towards practicing the Christian virtues has as foundation the knowing and assuming the truths of faith and the moral life rules, which make the object of the religious instruction and education. *“The religious knowledge, strengthening itself through the feeling of the heart, steps into action with the help of will... Unless the consciousness gets into contact with the will, it remains something like a stereotype, and the clueless will becomes something instinctive, without the light of the eye of the consciousness”* (Bulacu 1928, 81).

People have been preoccupied by education since the beginning. This matter is well defined in the Holy Scriptures, in the Old and also in the New Will. The educational principles of the Old Will are given under the form of written commands. They are transmitted directly by God and revealed to Moses through the Tables of Law (Exit 20:12-17) or under the form of disciplinary measures that Moses and some other biblical characters mentioned in *Pentateuch* used to give in order to correct and right the individual or the social group (Exit 21, 12, 15, 17; 23; 24).

The patriarchs and the prophets have exerted a powerful educational influence. The most educational books of *the Old Will* are: *Psalter* (the first book translated from the biblical canon of the *Old Will*), *Ecclesiastes*, *Solomon’s sayings*, *The wisdom of Jesus Sirah*, *Tobit*, *Job*. *The New Testament* contains extremely important moral-educational principles which, our Savior Jesus

Christ, the perfect Teacher and the absolute model of Christian life, deepens and spiritualizes them, *“because the Law through Moses was given, and the grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17).

The Savior’s teaching and deeds have as purpose and main objectives our guidance on the road to salvation. *“Man’s Son came to search and save the lost one”* (Luca 19:10). Salvation involves a long process of struggling and inner transformation. It is achieved through repentance, which means the change and the illumination of the mind by the flame of faith and by divine grace, modifying the way of thinking, feel and live, giving up at the previous life and beginning a new one, made through a steady and prolonged work of education of the soul. Christ, the Savior of the world, *“by being a Teacher, cares for people’s education, not their training; His purpose is to make the soul better, not to teach it; to give pieces of advice for a wise life, not for a life dedicated to science”* (Fecioru 1982, 167). The profound wisdom that comes from His tales about repentance and doing good deeds constitutes the foundation and the fundament of the divine teaching, the purpose of saying these paradigms and phrases being the urging of the will to learn the Christian virtues and cure the soul from the injuries of the sin. *“The healing of the desires comes from there, where the Teacher, through encouraging tales, strengthens the souls, and through behavioral rules, full of love for people, like some tasty medicine, rights the sick ones towards the perfect knowledge of real faith”* (Fecioru 1982, 167).

Piousness, love, wisdom, peace, patience, forgiveness and other virtues and evangelical ideas stated by the Savior, are the pillars of the Christian education initiated by Him during His messianic activity. He is the Doctor of our souls and bodies and the Teacher through excellence. *“Just like the ones with sick bodies need the doctor, the ones with sick soul need the Teacher; first, for our wounds to heal, then lead us to the Teacher to prepare the clean soul and ready to obtain knowledge and make it able to receive the revelation of Word. Trying hard to perfect us by climbing gradually towards salvation, the Word, Which, in everything It does is a people lover, has a beautiful plan, according to an instruction with good results: first, He urges us, then He educates us, and at the end of everything He teaches us”* (Fecioru 1982, 167).

The model of Christian education is, thus, Christ, Who said about Himself: *“I am the way, the truth and the life”* (John 14:6), meaning, the spring of graceful life and the full revelation of the divine wisdom, because He

showed us the path that we have to follow, the truth we have to believe and the life that we have to live. He sacrificed Himself for our salvation, showing us that “a greater love than this no one has, a love that makes one place His friends before His life” (John 5:18). That is why, He could also say: “Learn from me that I am gentle and pious in my heart” (John 11:34). Jesus Christ is the foundation of the human existence, of salvation, and, implicitly, of our education. On Him, on His life, in His Church humanity can be rebuilt and can reside because, he revealed to us the new human-divine way of life and, towards this supreme ideal that the entire humanity aspires to, who cannot be spiritually complete, unless it is in Christ. “This is for us like a spotless icon and we must try with all our might that our soul resembles Him” (Fecioru 1982, 168). In the New Testament, education is a godly command drawn and applied by God’s Son Himself, embodied. He “is thus, our Teacher, The Word, The One that heals through His advice, the torments of our soul, which are against nature... Medicine is an Art that is taught through human wisdom. The Father’s Word is the only doctor who heals human weaknesses; He is a healer and a saint wizard of the sick soul” (Fecioru 1982, 169). He offered us the model and the principles of education, He takes into consideration the elements of the old testamentary education, but the religious education overtakes this on by promoting limitless love, including enemies. The law of the Talion is destroyed by the law of love that acquires a universal character. It must embrace all people regardless their social or religious condition (Luca 10:27) because, in Jesus Christ, we are all like one. “He is Jew no more, nor Greek; no more slave, nor free; there is no male part nor female part, because you are all one in Jesus Christ” (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11), says the apostle of all nations, because, Christian life levels asperities, puts out conflicts and destroys all the barriers and dividing tendencies between people. “Love greatly endures; love is benevolent, love does not envy, does not brag, does not pride, doesn’t behave improperly, does not care for its own, does not get angry, does not think of evil ... it goes through everything, it believes everything, it hopes for everything, it endures them all (I Corinthians 13:4-7). Love is formative when does the moral good and struggles to share it with the others. Love is “the enforcing of the law” (Romans 13:10) and the crown of virtues. It names the relationships between people and transfigures the entire human life, because it is divine. God is absolute love (John 4:16), and, because “he rules

us, with love, towards the most wonderful life, it is only right that we answer with love; it is right for us to live according to the rules of His will, but only fulfilling the commands and guarding us from doing the forbidden, but also running from some examples and imitating others as much as we can, to fulfill, by resemblance, the Teacher's deeds and the weird of the Holy Scriptures: "After face and resemblance" (Fecioru 1982, 171).

In the post-apostle period, the religious education grows along with the spread of Christianity and the appearance of new Christian communities. The Holy Priests built the edifice of education on the foundation of evangelic established by the Savior. During this period of time, Christian Church met numerous obstacles regarding her catechetical - educational, due to ideas, attitude and very often contrary to the missionary work. The Savior's teaching and person have generated numerous controversies and disputes in the pagans' rows and in the circle of the heretical groups. This situation calls urgently the necessity of establishing an institutional religious learning. The educational process must be organized and systematic according to the necessities of the time.

The patristic teachers of the UV and V developed a prodigious activity of lifting Church's fame and christening the habits of the Christian society. The biggest role in the process of education had the institution of catechumenate which prepared and trained the newly converted to Christianity, initiating them in the secrets of the Christian belief. *"Catechumenate didn't just build an instrument for sharing the knowledge in the domain of Christian religion, but, especially, one for the moral-religious of the catechumen. The fact, and not only knowledge decided one's admission for receiving the Secret of the Holy Baptism. Fast, prayer, spiritual exercises and some other similar religious acts helped the Christian accomplishment of catechumen and their passing from one class to another"* (Călugăr 1955, 24). So, the catechumenate sought the radical transformation of the catechumen's life after Christ's face and stature. The ancient man should have been crucified along with Christ, in order to kill the body of the sin (Romans 6:6; 1 Corinthians 2:14).

In the bosom of the Church it was performed, starting with the second century, the preparation *"of the called ones"* or catechumen for the receiving of the Secret of the Holy Baptism. The catechumenate had a popular character in the beginning. It prepared, for catechetical schools, the proper conditions

for their foundation. These schools have got, in time, a scientific structure, after the example of pagan universities, because the new Christian teaching was supposed to be presented in a more elevated manner.

The catechetical school of Alexandria stood out, through its sobriety and its philosophical and academic approach, due to the erudition of the great coryphaei, Origen and Clement Alexandrine, focused on the method of allegorical interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. A new orientation is adopted by Antioch school, characterized by its pragmatism, since, opposed to the first one, it uses the literary and historic-grammatical method of the biblical exegesis. Religious education, made in these schools, extended to all ages, all classes and all levels of the social life, its main purpose being the discipline of the body and the molding of the soul, according to the principles of the Christian moral. Children were also involved in this educational system because, at their tender age, they can foresee the first shy desire towards building a new inner self. And today, *“in a principled manner, this age needs our teachings: as it is tender, the teachings that are given penetrate easily to children’s soul, and print themselves, just like the wax seal, in their souls; this is the critical moment if which their entire life depends: choose vice or virtue. Thus, if, from the beginning and from the early years, children are turned away from sin, and set on the right path, a good habit will be printed on them, that will remain there like a second nature; they will not be easily driven, by their own selves, to do bad things, the habit will restrain them and it will urge them to do well. Through those, we will make them more useful for the state, more than even the elders, and we will instill in them, even from youth, the virtues of the maturity”* (Băbuț 1997, 16), says a great Christian teacher.

The catechists of the first patristic period use, wisely, all the persuasion, conviction and guidance teaching means. By receiving the Holy Secrets and attendance at religious services it was sought the appearance of the predisposition for prayer, and, through the listening of the teaching words they sought the planting of religious beliefs and Christian habits. Catechetical schools made a scientific religious education, establishing linking points between the profane and Christian teaching.

Starting with the Renaissance, man was hit by two destroying periods of time: atheism, which encloses it in the boundaries of nature, inferior to man, depriving him of the example and the superior goal of the existence and,

sentencing him to a spiritual weakness, and the materialism that subordinates the spirit to matter. Having an anthropocentric foundation, deprived of the God Creator, this materialism makes man a slave of the basic instincts, through a disastrous transformation manifested by sensualist, obsessions and sexual aberrations, drugs, deadly illnesses, robbery, violence, murder. These devilish orientations overthrow the order of the soul values and the entire logic, thinking and human sense.

Man forgot the sense and the purpose of his existence on earth, and the religious formation comes to remind him and to justify his existence. It constitutes the means and the condition of fulfilling the purpose of life. The entire education, with its multiple aspects, must have as objective and purpose, the man's ennobling, his religious molding, if we want to build, wisely, "on stone" and not "on sand" (Mathew 7:24-27). This instructive-educational action always wants "to embody in the believer's personality the true Christian consciousness with pure consciousness; the knowledge of the religious truth with the holiness of life, with the living of the Christian life n dependence of a sensibility purified from desires and sins" (Călugăr 1955, 239).

Church was not and will never be wrong when trying to influence for better the activity of all the human education factors in Its spirit, in order to shape the man as man, not only as a scholar, as artist, technician, worker, etc., and this is because the religion does not only pursue the maximum development of man's natural skills, but, above all, the accomplishment of the man involved in the supernatural order of the Sacred. For this, "we need new Church, a living Religion, a Religion with apostles convinced of the role of the Christian love, and not apostles with great and famous relatives and with empty and difficult to understand words" (Bota 1929, 84), meaning, a missionary and active Church with apostles- catechists, priests, teachers of religion and Christian educators - boiling followers of the evangelic teaching, with a strong theological culture, crowned by a spiritual experience, as one cannot speak about God, unless one lives by God's will. "The educator is a person that must read in a soul, the beautiful poem that God has written, to read it, to understand it and make it appear written in the letters of life, like the scholar reads the divine work in the star that shines on the sign. The educator is suddenly a magus and a prophet" (Posard 1937, 46). Accordingly, "God must live in you, for you to be able to know him. You have to find Him first and, afterwards, you must preach

Him to others, saying, like Pavel, what you know, what you feel, what you are, what you can, now, when God lives within you and works in world through you. Do you seek Him in ratiom? You will never find him and you will stray away from Him even more. As a while, if He lives in you, He Himself will speak to men through you” (Cristescu 1928, 21). Today, more than anytime, it is required that the Christian teacher, regardless whether he is a missionary priest or a teacher of religion, to teach through his personal example, to be like a flame that lights in the candlestick (Mathew 5, 16). “*Verba volant, exempla trahunt*”, said old Latins. Teaching words do not echo and do not stir man’s interior, unless the one that sends them lives accordingly to them. The priest, among his parishes, and the teacher of religion, in the tight circle of his apprentices, must make the undoubtable proof that he lives “*as a man of God*”. On the contrary, his moral ideas and principles cannot have credibility and, in most cases, they meet wondering hearts and broken will. “*God’s man preaches, evangelizes, shepherds and announces the ones to come to his people and creates, through his personality, job and preaching, an atmosphere in which the soul breaths easily like in God’s world.*” (Cristescu 1928, 34). According to Saint Gregory of Nyssa, man “*was endowed with life, with reason, with wisdom and with all the good things that only the godly nature has, for each of these to awake in him the longing for God, with Whom he knows he is related*” (Bodogae 1998a, 294). He is the crown and the jewel of the creation, being made from material body and rational and immortal soul. Man has in himself all the beings ever created, which have preceded him in existence, like the superior involves what is inferior and the general involves the particular. Man’s greatness does not consist in the fact that he resumes in himself the macro cosmos, but in the fact that he is face of The One Who made him. “*The Creator gave special worthiness to our being just by making it after His face, giving him, thus, the possibility of making himself like Him*” (Bodogae 1998b, 30).

In order to defeat the obsessions and aberrations become pathological today, to be able to convert the energies in the values creating powers, to save the man from degradation and to rebuild him, the human being created after the resemblance of God (Making 1:27), we must be aware that the spirit leads us and not the body, a biological complex, which is weak and perverted. “*If we live with the Spirit, then in Spirit we should walk*” (Galatians 5:25), cause, if we live by the body, we shall die, but if we kill, with the Spirit, the deeds

of the body, we shall live (Romans 8:13)". *The body sees through eyes; and the soul through mind. And just like the body without eyes is blind and does not see the sun, that lights the entire earth and sea, nor can enjoy light, so does the soul if it does not have good mind and pious living, it is blind and does not understand God, Maker and Benefactor of all, and does not worship Him, nor will it be able to enjoy His purity and the eternal goods*" (Stăniloae 1927, 25).

The goal of spiritual education through religion is eternal, pursuing salvation. It is not mistaken with some other ways through which man's molding is attempted, but, at the same time, it also minds them, saluting the ones that do not exclude God's presence and work in their *programme*. Church, while fulfilling Its formative ideal, needs instruction. But the religious education is nor limited only to informing about the Christian moral principles, but it also involves the private experiences of each person in the secret conversations with God. *"Thus, we need divine grace, sober mind and watching eyes in order not to eat the cockle like wheat and hurt ourselves unknowingly, nor to be torn by mistaking the wolf as sheep, nor believe a benefactor angel the loser devil and be swollen by it"* (Fecioru 2003b, 49).

Christian religion is not a philosophy of the words, but of facts; it is not a study object, but a way of life. World will truly change when its inhabitants will seek, before everything, the holiness of their lives and they will endeavor *"to search, first of all, God's Kingdom and His justice"* (Mathew 6:33), because *"we are His being, built within Jesus Christ to make good deeds, which God prepared beforehand so we can walk among them"* (Efeseni 2:10).

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