Christian Movements Today – The Fruit of an Incomplete Gospel

Following the thread of history, we see that with the arrival of the printing press, Holy Scripture became available in the languages of many nations. As people searched it, their eyes began to open, forcing Satan to find other ways to deceive mankind.

So he was forced to make use of the word of Scripture itself, arranging it in such a way that he could go on handing out cheap tickets to heaven. He brought people an incomplete Gospel, through which he managed to deceive further multitudes besides the Orthodox and the Catholics. That is how new teachings arose, all of them built on the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins.

We should note that Satan's chief aim was to found as many religious movements as possible, with as wide a variety of teachings as possible, so as to offer the cheapest possible tickets to heaven and so catch as many people as possible in his net.

How Sound Was the Sixteenth-Century Reformation?

Luther's so-called Reformation in the sixteenth century was the first great offer, by which Satan assured the ignorant that they could obtain salvation "by faith alone." So people no longer needed to pay for indulgences or give alms, because someone else had paid for them, namely the Lord Jesus.

This "so-called Reformation" was the foundation of the Lutheran movement, which indoctrinated further multitudes with the teaching of sovereign grace, telling them that God's purpose is to give salvation (a free ticket to heaven) by faith alone.

People were deceived into believing that salvation consists only in the forgiveness of sins, which is obtained freely by faith alone in the sacrifice of the cross, without paying for indulgences and without any need for the works of faith.

As for God's plan to bring us to the stature of the fulness of Christ, to perfection, we find not a single word about it in their confession of faith…

The same was true of the Reformed, Calvinist movement, which likewise preached the teaching of sovereign grace and predestination…

The Radical Reformation – the Anabaptist Movement

If we study history more closely, we can see that in that period there were also people who searched the Scriptures carefully and experienced true revival.

They understood God's plan, which called them to self-denial and to discipleship so as to become like Christ, but they paid with their lives for that conviction. Satan roared like a lion against them and used the people who were subject to him to wipe them out.

Sources from the time show that tens of thousands of martyrs were cruelly put to death in that period, by the Catholic Church as well as by the newly formed Protestant churches. Because they practised believers' baptism, their enemies at the time gave them the name Anabaptists.

The Neo-Protestant Movements

Then, as time went on, people came to know Holy Scripture more and more and could no longer be deceived so easily, so Satan added further offers with "ever more varied biblical teachings," on the foundation of which other religious organisations were formed.

All these organisations, though their "distinctive teachings" differ from one another, have not changed Satan's original scheme, with which he deceived the world. We can easily see this if we read their confessions of faith. They have all stayed with "the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins." Not one of them contains God's plan, which provides for all of us to come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The Baptist Movement

So, in 1609, a teaching closer to the truth of Scripture appeared, which we find in a new religious organisation (the Baptists), also worldwide in scale (there are around 100 million of them in the world).

Besides faith, this teaching brings in a new element, namely repentance. Yet faith is still reduced to accepting the sacrifice of the cross or receiving God's grace (grace alone…). Through this teaching Satan assures people that if they admit they are sinners and receive God's grace, salvation is given to them as a gift (once again a free ticket to heaven).

We will quote a passage from the confession of faith of this religious movement in our country, Romania. It is found in the chapter "On Salvation," which explains how salvation can be obtained. This is how faith is defined in their confession: "Faith means **the sinner's receiving of the divine grace** that God offers in Christ, unto salvation and eternal life."

The plan of perfection, which includes discipleship so that a person may come to the stature of Christ, is not mentioned in their confession of faith. In this way people remain with the offer of cheap grace, of the forgiveness of sins.

It is easy to see that the Baptist confession of faith stops at a partial sanctification, at a form of godliness that does not call a person to a covenant of discipleship leading to the perfecting of character.

Looking further on in time, we can see that where Satan could not deceive with alms, with prayers for the dead or with cheap grace, he made use of other passages of Holy Scripture.

The Adventist Movement

To take in as many religious leanings as possible with his offer, he also made use of the law of Moses, especially the keeping of the Sabbath day. He emphasised certain passages of Scripture as being required for salvation, though they do not aim at reaching the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and so a new religious movement was created whose chief aim is keeping the Law of Moses.

That is how, in 1863, a new teaching arose that became the foundation of the Adventist movement, which also rests on the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins.

If we look more closely, we can see the doctrine on which it was founded: the importance of keeping the Law of Moses, of a day… and of studying the fulfilment of prophecy.

If we take as our reference the confession of faith of the Adventist movement in our country, it is easy to see that God's plan of perfection is not mentioned in any chapter of their confession.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Another work of error that offers you a cheap salvation and lets you live according to the flesh is found in the organisation "Jehovah's Witnesses," a religious movement that does not even remotely have the perfecting of character in view.

Obtaining salvation comes down to upholding the teaching on the importance of pronouncing the name "Jehovah" and studying the prophecies about the last days. As for God's plan to bring us to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, we find not a single word about it in their doctrine.

Tireless and always at work, at the beginning of the last century Satan came to meet those who do not make salvation the aim of their searching, with a much improved offer to assure people that their salvation is guaranteed.

Satan's purpose was the same as at the beginning: to keep people in the doctrine of cheap salvation, which consists in the forgiveness of sins, far from God's plan, which provides for all of us to come to the stature of Christ.

The Pentecostal Movement – a New Teaching

This time he took as his basis the word of Scripture that guarantees us eternal life if the Holy Spirit dwells in us. ("He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Romans 8:11)

Taking advantage of this truth, Satan came up with a teaching that would give people a shortcut by which to obtain the Holy Spirit, and then the certainty that the Spirit would dwell in them for the rest of their lives, so that their ticket to heaven would be secured.

He used a few verses of Scripture to assure us that the Holy Spirit dwells in a person even if that person does not live a righteous life, that is, in the fear of God and in obedience to Him as the Word requires.

This teaching, which has caught on with multitudes, is a truncated interpretation of Scripture concerning how you can obtain both the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit, namely speaking in tongues, prophecy and miracles.

To sow confusion, Satan emphasised the truth in Luke 11:13, which says that God gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, deceiving many into thinking that baptism in the Holy Spirit is obtained **only by persistent asking,** without God requiring obedience and the keeping of Christ's Word. **Obedience and the fear of God – up to a point**

The teaching of Scripture has been altered in such a way as to assure us that the only condition God requires for a person to be baptised in the Holy Spirit is persistence in prayer, with no need for a heart that obeys and fears God.

On the other hand, he has kept silent about the teaching of Scripture that says we will receive the Holy Spirit only if we obey Him and keep His Word. ("The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Acts 5:32; "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth." John 14:15)

To assure us that once the Holy Spirit is obtained He will dwell in us for the rest of our lives, Satan arranged the verses in such a way as to tie the evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit to a gift of the Spirit, namely speaking in tongues.

This teaching holds that if, through persistence, a person obtains speaking in tongues (which they will then have for the rest of their life), they have been baptised in the Holy Spirit. Then, as long as they have this gift (that is, all their life), it guarantees them that the Holy Spirit dwells in them, and so their ticket to heaven is secured.

According to this interpretation, the only evidence of having received baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues, while the fruit of the Spirit is ignored. This interpretation ignores the teaching of Scripture that tells us we shall know them by their fruits. ("Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:20)

Anyone who looks more closely at what actually happens will easily see that this method of tarrying in prayer for baptism in the Holy Spirit is in fact tarrying in prayer to receive only "speaking in tongues," that is, the ticket to heaven.

The counterfeiting of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Satan has counterfeited "this gift," which, once obtained, then stays with the deceived person for the rest of their life. So that people could obtain speaking in tongues, Satan came to meet them with a pattern of prayer that Holy Scripture condemns, but which, if used, leads to obtaining "this counterfeit gift."

If we look more closely, we can see that the method most people use to receive speaking in tongues is persistent prayer made up of **repetitive words** (the most common being "glory" and "blood"), and these are in fact pagan practices forbidden by the Lord Jesus. ("But when ye pray, **use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do:** for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Matthew 6:7-8)

Taking advantage of people's ignorance of Scripture, Satan has deceived many into believing that if they keep pressing for speaking in tongues, it will finally be given to them, without God asking them to give up sin. This is why some have ended up pressing for months or even years to obtain speaking in tongues.

Through this teaching Satan contradicts the word of Scripture, which shows plainly that there were people such as Cornelius the centurion or John's disciples, as well as many others, who received the gift of the Holy Spirit without any such persistence.

We can easily see that this interpretation would make God partial, since He would not give the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who fear and obey Him, but only to those who compel Him by their persistence.

Scripture shows clearly that God is no respecter of persons, being righteous in everything He does. ("Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts 10:34; "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them." Acts 15:8)

The Purpose of the Holy Spirit

Through this interpretation Satan ignores another truth of Scripture, which says that **"all"** of us are baptised in the Holy Spirit, from babes in the faith to spiritual fathers, so as to form one body for the growth and perfecting of the saints, so that we may grow as disciples in the Body of Christ and come to the measure of the stature of His fulness. ("For by one Spirit are **we all** baptized into **one body.**" 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:11-13) **The Pentecostal movement today**

This new teaching, which does not aim at the perfecting of character, has had astonishing success. It became the foundation of a new religious movement that grew enormously in a short time and is today the largest worldwide body after the Catholics.

From the time it was founded (in 1906), it has grown at a rate unprecedented in the history of Christianity. Under the umbrella of this new offer a worldwide "supermarket" has been formed. According to statistics, there are an estimated 650 million Pentecostals in the world, of whom around 350 million are charismatics.

This impressive number of people who have joined this religious movement **stands in obvious and stark contrast** to the word of the Lord Jesus, who says that few are on the narrow way and

that **His flock is little.** ("Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:14; "Fear not, little flock…" Luke 12:32)

If we examine the confession of faith of the Pentecostal movement, we will easily see that it too rests on the doctrine of a salvation that consists in the forgiveness of sins.

The plan of perfection, which includes discipleship to Christ so that a person may come to the measure of the stature of His fulness, is not mentioned in their confession of faith.

By altering this biblical teaching, Satan has deceived hundreds of millions of people, assuring them that if they speak in tongues, the Holy Spirit dwells in them and so they have their ticket to heaven in their pocket.

In this way people are deceived into thinking they no longer need to live a life of discipleship, nor to live as their Teacher lived, as God's plan requires. ("He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John 2:6)

Even though the word of Scripture warns us that whoever lives in sin is not born of God, today we see so many deceived people living in gross sin, yet because they have accepted and practise this altered teaching, they are convinced that they are baptised in the Holy Spirit and therefore saved.

We warn those who find themselves in this situation that they have received a deceptive offer. ("Little children, let no man deceive you… He that committeth sin is of the devil… Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin… In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." 1 John 3:7-10)

The Holy Spirit is given to us first of all to convict us of sin and to perfect our character. If He has not yet convicted us of sin, the Holy Spirit is not present in our lives. ("And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin." John 16:8)

There are a few simple things by which each of us can test whether we received speaking in tongues from the Holy Spirit or from another spirit.

Self-Examination

Let each of us examine ourselves honestly: When we came to God, did we fall in love with the character of Christ, and was our aim to come to the measure of the stature of His fulness? Or did we come out of fear of hell? When our life with Christ began, was it a life of self-denial? Did we make a real covenant of discipleship, of full obedience to Christ? Do we hunger and thirst after His righteousness?

Has God truly placed us in the Body of Christ? Is this body fitly joined together and compacted, where the word of Scripture has authority and every member contributes its part to the growth of the others? ("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)

Are we submitted to our spiritual fathers and to the leaders of the church, as Timothy, Titus or Philemon were to Paul? Or are we in an institutionalised congregation that merely runs religious programmes, where everyone does as they please?

Let us ask ourselves: If we speak in tongues, is it used by the Holy Spirit in good order, as Scripture lays down? Is this speaking in tongues also interpreted for the growth and perfecting of others (for the edifying of others)?

Or is it used in disorder, so that the unlearned or unbelievers say we are mad? Surely this cannot be from the Holy Spirit, for He does everything in order! ("For God is not the author of confusion." 1 Corinthians 14:33)

We must understand that speaking in tongues used in disorder brings condemnation! ("Whosoever therefore resisteth… resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Romans 13:2)

Let each of us examine ourselves carefully in the light of Scripture, so that we are not deceived! If anyone lives in the sin of anger, if they do not live righteously, if they work cash-in-hand and do not pay their taxes, if they pay bribes (at the hospital or elsewhere) or drive over the speed limit, if they speak evil (of those close to them, of the authorities…), if they belong to a congregation where sin is tolerated, where speaking in tongues is not used in good order, where women do not keep silence in the church, then even if they speak in tongues, they have not been baptised in the Holy Spirit but have received a deceiving spirit.

The word of Scripture shows us clearly that where there is no obedience to the Word, God does not give the Holy Spirit. ("The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Acts 5:32; "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:3-4)

In conclusion, we can see how Satan has made use of the gift of the Holy Spirit, counterfeiting it and then offering it as genuine to those who want a cheap ticket to heaven. Whoever asks with prayers like those of the heathen will easily obtain this counterfeit gift, not from the Holy Spirit but from another spirit. ("For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus… or **if ye receive another spirit…** or another gospel… ye might well bear with him." 2 Corinthians 11:4) **Whoever looks carefully** will see that none of the groups we have mentioned, nor indeed the other large religious movements spread throughout the world, aim at the perfecting of human character.

The "special" teachings peculiar to each organisation have nothing whatever to do with God's plan, whose purpose is that we come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Satan has done everything in his power, and has succeeded, in hiding well God's true plan, whose aim is the perfecting of man. Because of the "so very many denominational teachings" put before us, most of us remain in great confusion about salvation.

So he has achieved his great goal, keeping people in **"the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins"** through the multitude of "religious supermarkets" spread all over the world, which have **"on special offer"** a salvation that does not cost too much.

Let us honestly ask ourselves: Can this be God's plan? To pay for indulgences, or give alms, or keep a day? Is this God's purpose? To speak in tongues, to chase after prophecies or miracles, or to pronounce the name Jehovah and talk about the last days?

Whoever has eyes will see that these teachings are in fact meant to keep us away from the true calling, which is to live a life of discipleship so as to come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

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