The Incomplete Gospel – A Work of Deception

Following the thread of history, we see that with the invention 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 as to keep handing out cheap tickets to heaven. He brought people an incomplete gospel, and with it he managed to deceive, besides the Orthodox and the Catholics, other multitudes as well. This is how new teachings arose, all of them built on the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins.

We must note that Satan's main aim was to found as many religious movements as possible, with teachings as varied as possible, so as to offer the cheapest possible tickets to heaven and so catch as many people as possible in his net.

The Foundation of the Sixteenth-Century Reformation

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

This "so-called reformation" was the foundation on which the Lutheran movement was formed, 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, and that this is obtained freely, by faith in the sacrifice on the cross alone, 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 of 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 that they might become like Christ, but they paid for this conviction with their lives. Satan roared like a

lion against them and used the people under his sway to exterminate them.

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

The Neo-Protestant Movements

Then, as time went by, 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 diverse biblical teachings," on the foundation of which other religious organizations were formed.

All these organizations, each with its own "distinctive teachings," have not altered Satan's original design, with which he has deceived the world. We can easily see this if we read their confessions of faith. They have all stopped at the "doctrine of the forgiveness of sins." Not one of them contains God's plan, which provides that we all come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The Baptist Movement So, in 1609, a teaching appeared that was closer to the truth of Scripture, and we find it in a new religious organization (the Baptists), also of worldwide size (there are about 100 million of them in the world).

Besides faith, this teaching brings in a new element, namely a person's repentance. But faith is still reduced to accepting the sacrifice on the cross, or receiving God's grace (grace alone...). Through this teaching Satan assures people that if they acknowledge that 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 is **the sinner's receiving of the divine grace** that God offers in Christ, unto salvation and eternal life."

The plan of perfection, which provides for discipleship so that a person may come unto the measure of 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 confession of faith of the Baptist movement stops at a partial sanctification, at a form of godliness that does not call a person into a covenant of discipleship leading to the perfecting of character.

Looking further along 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 texts from Holy Scripture.

The Adventist Movement

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

So in 1863 a new teaching appeared, which became the foundation of the Adventist movement, and it too 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 keeping a day… and of studying the fulfilment of prophecies.

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 of faith.

Jehovah's Witnesses Another work of deception that offers you a cheap salvation and lets you go on living in the flesh is found in the organization "Jehovah's Witnesses," a religious movement that does not have the perfecting of character anywhere in view.

Obtaining salvation comes down to upholding the teaching about the importance of pronouncing the name "Jehovah" and of studying the prophecies about the last days. As for God's plan to bring us unto 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 goal of their searching, with a much improved offer to assure people that their salvation is guaranteed.

Satan's aim was the same as in 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 that we all come unto the measure of 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 was secure.

He used a few verses of Scripture to convince us that the Holy Spirit dwells in a person even if that person does not live a life of righteousness, 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 about 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 emphasized the truth in Luke 11:13, which says that God gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, deceiving many into thinking that the baptism with 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 was altered in such a way as to convince us that the only condition God requires for a person to be baptized with the Holy Spirit is persistence in prayer, with no need for a heart that obeys and fears God.

On the other hand, he 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 14:15-17)

To give us the assurance that once the Holy Spirit is obtained He will dwell in us for the rest of our lives, Satan arranged the verses so that the evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was tied to a gift of the Spirit, namely speaking in tongues.

This teaching holds that if, through persistence, a person obtains speaking in tongues (which he will then have for the rest of his life), he has been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Then, as long as he has this gift (that is, all his life), it guarantees him that the Holy Spirit dwells in him, and so his ticket to heaven is secure.

According to this interpretation, the only evidence of having received the baptism with 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 will 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 notice that this method of persevering in prayer for the baptism with the Holy Spirit is really persevering in prayer simply to receive "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, will then stay with the deceived person for the rest of his life. So that people could obtain speaking in tongues, Satan met 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 heathen 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)

Against a background of ignorance of Scripture, Satan has deceived many into believing that if they keep on seeking speaking in tongues, it will eventually be given to them, without God asking them to give up sin. This is why some have ended up seeking for months or even years to obtain speaking in tongues.

With this teaching Satan contradicts the Word of Scripture, which shows plainly that there were people such as Cornelius the centurion, or the disciples of John, 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 Him and obey Him, but only to those who compel Him by their persistence.

Scripture shows clearly that God shows no partiality; He is righteous in all that He does. ("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; "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 15:8-9)

The Purpose of the Holy Spirit

Through this interpretation Satan ignores another truth of Scripture, which says that **"all"** of us are baptized with 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 unto 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 was the foundation on which a new religious movement was built, which grew enormously in a short time and is now the largest worldwide organization after the Catholics.

Since its founding (in 1906), it has grown at a rate unprecedented in the history of Christianity. Under the umbrella of this new offer, a "supermarket" of worldwide proportions has been formed. According to statistics, there are an estimated 650 million Pentecostals in the world, of whom about 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 those 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 its foundation is still the doctrine of a salvation that consists in the forgiveness of sins.

The plan of perfection, which provides for discipleship to Christ so that a person may come unto 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 that they no longer need to live a life of discipleship, nor to live as their Master 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 who, because they have accepted and practise this altered teaching, are convinced that they are baptized with 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 goal to come unto 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 self-denial? Was a real covenant of discipleship made, of complete 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 elders of the church, as Timothy, Titus or Philemon were to Paul? Or are we in an institutionalized congregation that has only religious programmes, where everyone does as he pleases?

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 someone lives in the sin of anger, if he does not live in righteousness, if he works off the books and does not pay his taxes, if he pays bribes (at the hospital or elsewhere) or drives over the speed limit, if he speaks evil (of those close to him, of the authorities…), if he is in 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 he speaks in tongues, he has not been baptized with the Holy Spirit but has 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 2:4)

In conclusion, we can see how Satan has made use of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which he counterfeited and then offered 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, but not from the Holy Spirit; it comes 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)

Anyone who looks carefully will be able to see that none of the groups we have mentioned, nor indeed the other large religious movements spread all over the world, aims at the perfecting of a person's character.

The "more distinctive" teachings peculiar to each organization have nothing whatsoever to do with God's plan, whose purpose is that we come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

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

In this way he has achieved his great aim, 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 ask ourselves honestly: Can this be God's plan? To pay for indulgences, or give alms for the dead, 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 really meant to keep us far from our true calling: to live a life of discipleship so as to come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

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