The Incomplete Gospel and the Deception in Which Many Who Call Themselves Christians Live

Today we can see multitudes of people who say they were "born again" decades ago, and it never even crosses their minds that they must come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

This grave deception, which will cost them their life, happens because God's plan of salvation for them has been reduced to a mere form of godliness and the forgiveness of sins.

They have let Satan deceive them into believing that the life of a "born again" Christian is marked by falling, repenting, confessing, and falling again into the same sin or sins, and that it will go on like this until the moment of death. And this happens because we are taught that sin cannot be overcome, and that in the end the righteousness of the Lord Jesus will be credited to us. Many pray to God to overcome a particular sin or several sins (slander, anger, idle talk…), and on the second or third day they find they have been overcome by them once again. Because in their Christian life they have no victory over sin (anger, greed…), they cannot believe it is possible to live a life like that of the Lord Jesus, one that would lead them to the perfecting of their character.

The Condition of the Religious Person

So they have concluded that this is the true life of the "born again" Christian, who will in the end reach heaven, not on the basis of what he lived on earth, but on the basis of the Saviour's perfect life credited to his account.

This is **the condition of the religious person,** who has preached, taught, spoken in tongues, prophesied, worked miracles and kept a day, but did not believe that God requires him to live **a life of complete obedience** and of transformation into the image of the Lord. Yet at the end of his life he will have a terrible surprise. (**Many** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I **never** knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Matthew 7:22-23)

We see the great failure of multitudes of Christians who believe they are "born again", yet when they lie on their deathbed, on the final stretch, they run to the only option Satan offers: the Lord's mercy for "the forgiveness of sins". We see many tormented by the thought that they have not lived at peace with their neighbours and with their brothers and sisters in the faith, and they seek them out to ask their forgiveness.

The failure of this incomplete Gospel, which stops at the forgiveness of sins, forces them to rake through their minds in search of sins still left in their lives, so they can ask the Lord's forgiveness for them, hoping in His grace and mercy. This happens because they neither believed in, nor worked toward, coming to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

But we must remind them that the **"doctrine of atonement"** offered by Satan, "a salvation that consists only of the forgiveness of sins", brings with it the fear of punishment, because the Scriptures require us to overcome sin. (Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. Revelation 3:2, 5)

Whoever has not worked to come to the stature of Christ will carry this fear until he closes his eyes for the last time. Whoever accepts this lying offer cannot have full confidence in the day of judgment.

The Necessity of Perfection

Only when we come to the stature of Christ will we have His love, which is perfect, and only this love casts out fear and will give us full boldness in that day. (Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment… There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:17-18)

If the religious organisation or congregation (group) we belong to does not put God's plan into practice, if it does not make disciples and place them in the school of Christ in order to grow them until they come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Lord Jesus, but confines itself to obtaining salvation through faith in the sacrifice on the cross, then that organisation **is not of God;** it is not the Body of Christ.

We must flee from such an organisation, which promotes the scheme by which Satan has deceived the world.

The Church is the Body of Christ, and God designed it not to call people to religious programmes, but for the growth and perfecting of the saints; that is its purpose. (And he gave… some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints… till we all come… unto **the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.** Ephesians 4:11-13)

The Lord Jesus warns us to search the Holy Scriptures so that we do not stray from God's truth concerning His plan, a plan that provides for the perfecting of our character. (**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.** Matthew 5:48)

So that we are not deceived by Satan, we must understand that we are called not only to have our sins forgiven, but also to grow as disciples until we reach the perfection required of those who are brothers of the Lord Jesus.

This article is taken from the booklet Transformed into the Image of Christ, available free online in .pdf format.

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Source: *The Incomplete Gospel and the Deception in Which Many Who Call Themselves Christians Live* — Unmodified Word
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