

The Unlawful Abuse of the Gospel

1) The Abuse of 'forgiveness'

At the age of six I became aware of the fact of my own existence, of the fact of the death of my grandfather, of the fact of the unsatisfactory nature of human relationships and of the fact of obligation to the Creator. All of these facts deeply impressed themselves on my consciousness and are deeply embedded in my memories. What I have no recollection of whatsoever, is that I 'went forward' at a Seaside Mission and was, supposedly, 'converted' - or so I have been told. Whether this was spontaneous, whether it was prompted by adults or whether prompted by musical enhancement, I cannot say. For I have no memory of it at all.

At the age of eleven, away from school at the seaside and having little to do, I remember beginning to read the Authorised Version of the bible and I recall the sensation as I discovered, I think for the first time, that this book was a superlative book. For the words I read produced within me something which no other words - spoken or written - could do.

At the age of fourteen, I made up my mind that I would no longer use divine names lightly in conversation or as oaths. Nor have I done so since that day which I can distinctly remember. Though I have, I confess, prayed in front of others and addressed divinity, as a matter of obligation, when I felt that my heart was not right; which I count to be taking his name in vain. At fourteen, also, I thought upon the future death of my parents, sadly realising that my only friends, as they appeared to me to be at that time, would, some day, depart and I might be left alone in an adverse world.

At fifteen, I heard words on my radio, at night, which convicted me of my sins. Then I read words. Then I read more words. Then I became convinced that, although brought up as a 'son of the

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manse' in a Presbyterian denomination, I was not a real christian. Some words that convicted me were those of the apostle John, 'He that is born of God doth not practice sin'.

Although I had, by then, stopped shoplifting - I later worked in the school holidays and paid it all back - and stopped misusing divine names and stopped telling lies as a habit, yet I felt deeply troubled by those words of John and by other words of Jesus and the apostles. Ignorant as I was at the time, I did not differentiate between outward action and inward desire.

To me, sin was sin. I could not live with it. My conscience was deeply troubled, my mind disturbed, my past and my present a burden, the future a fear. In this state, I saw an older boy carrying a bible, evidently on his way to seek seclusion that he might read and pray. Such was the momentary glimpse of this sight that it changed my life.

I wrote, we met, he took me to an 'evangelical' gathering and I stopped going to the modernistic and liberal gathering in which I had been brought up. Without a thought, without a backward glance, I forsook the denomination in which my great grandfather, my grandfather and my natural father - and, later, my natural brother - had been, were or would be clergymen.

And yet I have to say that, even as a fifteen year old boy, I was shocked at what I saw among the young people of the 'evangelical' gathering. The modernistic and liberal presbyterian company were, outwardly and apparently, more sober, more sensible, more staid, more respectable and more decent than the 'evangelicals' who, because of a profession of that which was more biblical - supposedly, considered themselves vastly superior to the less 'evangelical' and more modernistic society in which I had been brought up.

After a time it became necessary to leave that place for their behaviour was such that I was made the worse, both outwardly and inwardly. Drawn into behaviour that would not have been

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tolerated in the more staid environment of the presbyterian group, my own behaviour deteriorated and I became hardened. Yet, thank God, my convictions remained, my burdens were unrelieved and my disturbances grew worse.

Many attempted to persuade me that these convictions were not necessary. They seemed to think that a profession of Christ, an acquaintance with their 'gospel' and the company of religious people should alleviate my symptoms. I was actually treated as an offender for having such convictions. This was 'unbelief'. Such doubts and fears should all be swept away, it seemed, immediately, easily, effortlessly, by just 'standing on the promises' ; 'accepting Jesus' ; 'trusting the Saviour' ; 'being assured'.

What they could not see - and what I did not quite understand, though I felt it - was that I was under the law. Despite an ignorance so profound that I could not express what was happening, I was keenly aware that, within, there was that which was contrary to all that was good and adverse to all that was godly. And I had no answer to it. So deeply within was the sensation that nothing outward could ever distract me, comfort me, support me or give me any confidence.

The commandment had come. Sin had revived. And I was as a dead man.

In this state, it became clear to me that others were quite content to use the gospel as a means of quenching all proper convictions. They appeared to be able to stifle any fear of death, any concern about past conduct or present behaviour, any genuine anxiety about future living with trite expressions regarding 'jesus' and 'blood' and 'forgiveness'. It became rapidly apparent to me, by then sixteen, that the majority around me treated their version of the 'gospel' as *carte blanche* to behave however they liked with the assumption that all would be fine for them in future life and beyond the grave if they just 'believed' in 'jesus'.

Personally, I discovered no such luxury.

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Thanks be to God, that he gave me not up to such a fate. I thank God for every piercing conviction; for every crushing unhappiness; for every weighty burden bearing down on me; for every black cloud of misery. I am utterly grateful.

In maturity, I have discovered a far more sophisticated abuse of the gospel being perpretated.

2) The Abuse of 'righteousness'

The former group assume that the one they call 'jesus' is so 'loving, merciful and forgiving' - in their meaning of these quoted words - that one should have no troubles whatsoever. Life is pleasant, henceforth, for all will be 'forgiven'. These people hire others to stand in front of them on sundays and comfort them with many words extracted, carefully and cleverly, from scripture, avoiding the real meanings, assiduously taking them out of context, subtly misinterpreting the very words and slyly stitching them together to make what is actually a substitute gospel.

I can hardly use Paul's expression of 'another' gospel of this ignorant, blatant and very obvious abuse of the bible. Even at sixteen, I could see right through the pretence and the complete lack of logic. It takes a truly unintelligent mind - a deluded mind, one has to say - to accept this thinly disguised pack of lies as a means of protecting oneself from all proper obligation and responsibility.

The result of assimilating this revolting philosophy speaks for itself.

But there is a more crafted version that does deserve the term 'another' gospel. This constitutes an abuse of 'righteousness' rather than the more obvious abuse of 'forgiveness'. In this scheme of things, adopted by those who favour descriptions such as 'puritan' and 'reformed' and 'protestant' - though they deserve none of them, it is 'righteousness' that is misrepresented

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and used as a cloak to cover up sin.

Concocting the theory that Jesus Christ 'kept the law' they then appropriate that 'lawkeeping' to themselves. Describing this as the 'righteousness' of Christ or of Jesus, they then subtly alter their terminology and begin referring to the 'righteousness of God' abusing the matter of the Person of Christ, and the union of Divine and human nature, uniquely, in his One Person.

Hey Presto ! having conjured a human righteousness out of no texts at all and no substance at all, they niftily tap a wand on it and Shazam ! it turns into something else which they claim is no longer human but divine and Bingo ! they now claim that someone has 'imputed' this thing to them.

Only one who willingly wished to be deceived by this subterfuge would be so deceived. The question is, why would one want to be ?

Why would a man who, being ungodly, had believed on him who justifieth the ungodly, and had, thus received, as a gift, the righteousness of God, through the faith of Christ and by the faith of Christ, solely because of the faith of Christ, which righteousness is not only, firstly, unto the one who believes but is also, then, upon the one who believes, the receiving of which righteousness is a matter of God almighty himself logically seeing the one who believes as righteous in his Divine sight to the extent that he sees him righteous, counts him righteous and accepts him as righteous and then, justifiably and righteously, God almighty himself freely pours upon the believer, without measure, the Holy Spirit such that the believer is then full of the Holy Spirit, who is a blessed Divine Person and who, thereafter, guides him and teaches him and freely expresses wondrous gifts to the believer, such as the redemption of the body, and whose very Presence within is a pledge of an inheritance in the world that is yet to come, and whose very Presence is described as the Spirit of Sonship, who assists the believer in all his prayers - I ask, why would such a man even bother to look at the

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aforementioned conjurer and his trickery ?

Well, he wouldn't, would he ?

Because he already has all he requires, from God almighty himself. As a gift.

Therefore, *ipso facto* - and in the absence of any further Hey Presto, Bingo - this man does *not require* what the conjurer is cooking up.

Ergo, it is *other people* who need the conjurer to do something for them.

Because they lack what the believer has.

The reason they lack what the believer has is because they have not learned the lesson that Saul of Tarsus learned which turned him into Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ. They have shunned the law in its interior, deeply inward workings. For had they so submitted to the lawful and proper use and experience of what the law truly is they would have ceased from their works and they would believed.

But they have not. And they prove they have not.

For they profess a righteousness - never described in scripture - that consists of human lawkeeping in flagrant contradiction of the words of God to humanity - Thou dost not eat of that - and they then appropriate this 'righteousness', which, along with all such human righteousness of human works is described by holy scripture as 'filthy rags' - they unlawfully appropriate this thing to themselves, claiming God 'imputed' it to them, which he did not - they grabbed it themselves - and they then use it to

cover up their own sin.

Listen to their prayers. Hear their own professions. Harken to their constant expressions that 'this relationship is not expected to be a perfect one' and 'none can ever attain perfection in this

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life'. These people quite clearly need this so-called human righteousness to cover up the fact that *they have not received one from God as a free gift !*

Of such sons of God as have received the gift of righteousness says Jesus, Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Then hearken again to these who conjure up a human righteousness out of nothing at all as they then demand that what they call 'believers' - by which they mean people who watch their conjuring trick - must now yes, keep the law.

Except not as a covenant of works, apparently.
But definitely under 'threat', it would seem.
And absolutely being 'bound', it is said.

Moreover these people claim that Adam, as created, was righteous.

So they think that a created man is righteous, by creation.

One can only stop typing at this point and slowly shake one's head

They claim that a thing called 'righteousness' can be conjured up on earth by doing the very thing that God almighty, the only righteous, told mankind was impossible and would result in death.

They snatch this non-existent thing and claim it was 'imputed' to them.

And then they claim to be keeping the law.
Except not perfectly, they say.

And at times of non-perfect lawkeeping, apparently, the aforementioned thing comes into play.
Or so it would seem.

Exactly.

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A cover up for sin.

This convoluted concoction of filthy rags which exposes themselves disgustingly, which shamefully is neither a proper expression of the law which is holy, just and good nor is a proper expression of that gospel which is the glorious gospel of the blessed God, they then entitle, 'justification', deliberately confusing it in the minds of their hearers with that which Paul teaches in Romans and Galatians, which if a man but read the books himself, minus conjuring tricks, he shall see for himself is *nowhere near* what these people attempt to convey.

As I wrote before, only someone who wants to be taken in with this, will be.

It is a question of needing to be.

Better to hearken to Paul, I would say. Better to go back to the beginning and start again.

Better to find a sure foundation. Better to cease from all works of the flesh.

Of course, it is the case that many good men in the past have held to something like this doctrine. It is true that, coming out of many centuries of Roman darkness, men like Luther and Calvin were unclear of some matters and had to find the way for themselves whilst encumbered with much of their previous backgrounds of spurious learning and unhelpful philosophy.

It is also evident that William Huntington held on to something of this theory, though I do notice that he, unusually, refers to other men when he speaks of certain matters relating to righteousness. Mr Huntington confined himself only to the English translation of the scripture and, thereby, was affected by those places where the translators, who held to the error, interpreted rather than were faithful to the original.

But I see a difference thereafter. J N Darby and William Kelly

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both rejected the theory but were not clear, themselves, on demonstrated righteousness. They, too, suffered from a background of human learning. Presently, of course, John Metcalfe has been very clear indeed and his book, 'Justification by Faith', deserves full attention. But I am constrained to add my own book, *Righteousness*, to his and, in particular, to note my stress on 'demonstrated righteousness'.

However those who presently continue deliberately, in the face of present enlightenment and instruction, to hold to a theory that has been, utterly, exposed for its falsity, its detriment to the genuine expression of justification, and its subtle misuse in the hands of deliberately insincere men, these should receive no quarter and deserve to be fully exposed for what they do.

[Pre-publication extract from the book
'Crucified']

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Worcestershire, january 2014.