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DARBYISM :

ITS FRUITS AND DOCTRINES.

BEING A REVIEW OF A TRACT ENTITLED "THE BRETHREN
AND THEIR REVIEWERS," PARTICULARLY IN RELATION
TO THE DOCTRINE OF

Imputed Righteousness.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "OUR OLD PRAYER MEETING."

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PREFACE.

THERE are times in the history of the Church, when the great and paramount aim of every Christian should be to stir it up and awaken it to life and activity—times when one is almost tempted to cry out for “life at any price,” be it the wild ravings of fanaticism, the perverted zeal of heresy, or the violent convulsions of schism, anything rather than the cold, repulsive stillness of indifference. There are other seasons, however, when the Church having partially awakened from the sleep of death, to a state of religious excitement and activity, duties, different, although of no less importance, devolve upon those interested in the progress and establishment of the Gospel—seasons when prudence should accompany zeal, and caution should be the companion of piety. I believe the present to be such a season, and that we have especial need now to remember the words of the Apostle Peter—“**BE SOBER; be VIGILANT.**” Novelty and excitement, alas! too often seem to have supplanted piety and devotion in the religious world. The “old paths” are neglected, partly because they are old, and therefore considered behind the age we live in; and, perhaps, still more, because they are retired and peaceful, and afford neither opportunity for display, nor pretext for abnormal excitement. New ones are, therefore, sought for, more suitable to the prevalent temper of the public mind, and into

which novelty of doctrine, and novelty of practice, invite the restless and unwary.

If every one remembered the injunction of the Apostle Paul—"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21), these strange views, which so easily find adherents, would make but little way. Unfortunately, however, but few are to be found in the present day who are disposed to follow the Berean example, and to "search the Scriptures" whether such things are true. Many are ready to quote favourite passages, and to skip those not to their liking; but the patient and impartial scrutiny of God's Word is a task not very popular in the nineteenth century.

It has been my purpose, in the following paper, not only to meet doctrines and opinions which I believe to be opposed to the truth of God, and calculated to injure the cause of true religion, but also to defend what I as strongly believe to be a vitally important article of faith—namely, belief in the imputed righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Trusting that, in the performance of this duty, I have not been "as one who beateth the air," I commit the following pages to the reader's consideration, with the earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit may guide him and the writer into all truth, and give us both "a right judgment in all things," through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour.

H. T. D.

DARBYISM :

ITS FRUITS AND DOCTRINES.*

It is now more than thirty years ago since orthodox Christianity was disturbed by the strange doctrines of Edward Irving. If eloquence and genius could have transmuted doctrinal truth into the wildest heterodoxy, he was the man to have done it. While his glowing rhetoric fascinated the poetic and refined, his pointed and often argumentative addresses shook the faith of many. He was not one of those who "creep unawares" into the Church to sow heresy. He had not an insincere thought. Himself the victim of his own delusion, he enforced it upon others with an earnestness that could not fail to command admiration, if it did not carry conviction. It was very hard to resist the power with which he spoke, supported as it was by his noble and spotless character. Was he not a servant of the Lord? Did he not seek to save perishing souls? We should not be so critical about the soundness of his views when his heart was so true. Such were some of the motives urged by his admirers, and with which the sober enquiries of many thinking Christians were sought to be overborne.

About the same period, orthodoxy was threatened in another direction. No glowing eloquence was enlisted on the side of this new schism; the excitement of spiritual manifestations and unknown tongues was not brought to bear on excitable temperaments in this as in the other system. No; a quiet and noiseless mission among the most earnest and godly people of the Church of England, a professed exaltation of Scripture, and a contempt of

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creeds and ordinances, but especially for the office of the ministry, characterised the movements of Mr. Darby.

Sapping and mining, rather than assault, characterized his tactics. Well received by the unsuspecting of the Evangelical clergy, from his apparent soundness on the most vital points of Christian doctrine, and admitted freely among their flocks, he soon picked up disciples who, albeit they were none of the wisest, were often truly godly people. There was a considerable charm in the assumed primitive simplicity of the Darby views—"Away with orders and ministry; away with ordinances and forms of worship; away with every approach to ecclesiasticism—these are all human inventions. Let us return to the primitive simplicity of the apostolic age; let us have no more churches, but meet in an upper room furnished to break bread together, and then we shall be like the primitive Christians." Some people were caught with this sort of decoy, as others were caught by the alleged miraculous gifts of Irvingism, and deluded themselves into the notion, that by reducing worship to what was bald and indefinite, and doctrine to what was vague and mysterious, they became thoroughly apostolic.

As a necessary result of such movements, the followers of Irving and Darby were soon distinguished by the names of their respective leaders, and indeed, partly for lack of any other better designation, were known in the world as "Irvingites" and "Darbyites." Although in some respects at right-angles with one another, the founders of these two sects had one point of communion—they were equally hostile to the Church of England. "Come out of her," said Edward Irving, "lest ye be partakers of her plagues." If Mr. Darby did not use precisely such language, there can be little doubt that his opinion of the National Church was no better than that of his eloquent cotemporary.

To both, her sober piety, her calm but zealous energy, were intolerable. She was cold, dead, corrupt, and abominable in their eyes, and their glowing imaginations pictured her speedy downfall, to be supplanted by Utopian systems after their own hearts. But here the divergence began. Irving would have the highest Apostolic authority, accompanied by all the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. The other would have a universal Christian brotherhood, but without any ordinances or ecclesiasticism. Both experiments have been tried, and after thirty years' experience, what do we find to be the result? Irvingism, under the magnificent title of "The Catholic and Apostolic Church," has been developed "Romewards." An imposing ceremonial, gorgeous vestments, perfumed incense, and Popish doctrines about the priesthood and ordinances, now distinguish the followers of Edward Irving. Unity was their aim, and private judgment and liberty of opinion are gladly surrendered for that "desideratum." And where are the followers of Mr. Darby? Broken up into sub-schisms almost as hostile to each other as they are to the Church of England. Liberty was the great "desideratum" with them, and they have got it to their hearts' content—perfect liberty, that owns no law, no order, no ministry, and no Church. But although so much at variance with each other as to refuse to "break bread" together, each sub-section of Darbyism claims, as distinct from all the rest of the world, the primitive title of "The Brethren."

In the English census return for 1851, we find that both sects equally repudiate the charge of being sectarian—and with equal reason, we have no doubt. "The Catholic and Apostolic Church" says, "The body to which this name is applied make no exclusive claim to it; they simply object to be called by any other." "The Brethren" say, "Those to whom this appellation is applied receive it only

as descriptive of their individual state as Christians, not as a name by which they might be known collectively as a distinct religious *sect*." It seems as though both were uneasy in their consciences about the sin of schism, and were, therefore, trying to cheat themselves into the belief that they had not committed it.

And what, we ask, have either of these bodies who refuse to be called sects done for the cause of religion in their thirty years' existence? What has the world been bettered by them? Where are their fruits? Opposite as they are in doctrines and systems, they yet resemble each other in having made no impression upon the world without; and beyond the little "coteries" of their own communion, they are almost unknown. In these little corners, no doubt they edify one another with mysterious, and, therefore, supposed to be deeply spiritual teaching; but the true and healthful spiritual vigour which accompanies a sound judgment in eternal things is absent, and so there is no progress made. Indeed, it would be unreasonable to expect anything effectual from "Darbyism," which has no cohesive principle. A Church without a ministry, or any kind of order, is such a non-descriptive sort of institution, that it would be sheer madness to look for fruit on such a tree. Individually, they may all be very excellent people; but collectively, they are nothing—absolutely nothing. If Irvingism were not so much taken up with forms and ceremonies, and could descend from her pedestal of apostolic inspiration, and renounce Romish doctrines, something might be expected from her organisation; but as for Darbyism, it is literally unworthy of the name of a sect, not to say, a Church.

There is, however, one position in which this nomad existence of "Darbyism" has a great advantage over organised Churches—such as the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland—and that is, in controversy. Here a single Darbyite can make

raids upon creeds and formularies of regular Churches with the impunity derivable from the consciousness that there can be no retort of a similar kind made upon him. What is it to him that "J. N. D." writes so and so, or "C. H. M." something else? He is not either of those individuals, and he is not bound by their opinions, and thus he slips through the fingers of the controversialist. If he is asked what he believes, he says, with wonderful candour, that he believes the Word of God, as if every Christian did not do that; but he absolutely refuses any more definite statement of his opinions or doctrines.

For a long time we heard very little of Darbyism—so much so, that some people believed it might be put in the category of the extinct heresies. But this appears to have been a mistake, as we find Darbyites busy at work again, doing their little mission-work among the pious members of other Churches, and picking up the weak ones, as they stray out of the fold. If they would only direct their operations towards the careless and ungodly, we should not complain; but they have no taste for such unsavoury labour, and leave such fields for that *bête noir*—"The Establishment"—to deal with. If you are induced to say a word against the prudence of yielding unqualified admiration to these self-ordained missionaries among the godly, a number of *very* charitable people in our own Church look upon you with horror, and stigmatize you as sectarian, bigotted, and jealous-minded. "Are they not devoted men? Are they not earnest workers in the Lord's vineyard? *Do they not hold the truth?*"

It is in relation to the last of these inquiries that we desire to say something to our readers. What we have to say is suggested by a pamphlet from the pen of Mr. Darby himself, under the modest but (to some minds) magic initials of "J. N. D.," and entitled "Brethren and their Reviewers." In this

pamphlet Mr. Darby criticises and reviews those who have dared to impugn the soundness of the doctrine put forward by him and his disciples. Among those who come under the lash of his "gentle" pen, are Dr. Carson, Mr. Cox, *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, *The Record*, and **THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER**, which he is pleased to designate the representative of "the waning evangelicalism of the Establishment" in Ireland. One might have expected no very gentle treatment for his "Reviewers" from the opening sentence of the pamphlet:—

"The Christian has to watch, and closely watch himself in controversy, particularly if he has any keen sense of the ridiculous, lest, when his adversaries expose themselves to being confounded, by the manner of their attacks, he would seek victory, and not the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ—lest he should seek to expose them instead of patiently insisting on the truth. My desire is to do this last, because I feel that important truth is in question."—p. 1.

Anyone of experience in controversy knows that such very lofty profession of Christian feeling is the sure introduction to strong language and bitter invective. The work in question forms no exception to such a rule. The observations of one of the Reviewers makes "J. N. D." "doubt if he is a Christian at all;" and "his statements are a denial of the whole Gospel, and nonsense, to boot." Another he charges "with the horrible denial of the whole meaning of Christ's death"—a charge which he admits himself "is not a light one." Of another, he says, "It is difficult to understand how the writer of this article is a Christian." Again, he says, "I do not believe that anyone who is not *horrified* at the language of *The Record* and **CHRISTIAN EXAMINER** has ever felt in his own soul, nor indeed, can fathom what the dying sufferings and sin-bearing of the Blessed One were."

Our reader may be curious to know what doctrine has elicited language so strong as that which we have quoted, and may, probably, be surprised to hear that it is one which has ever been dear to the hearts of most Christians—the imputed obedience and righteousness of Christ. That Christ fulfilled the law *for us*, and that his obedience and righteousness is imputed to his people, is, we are told by the exponent of this new theology, “a subversion and denial of Christianity as St. Paul taught it.” It may be asked, how this startling assertion is *proved*, and we confess ourselves totally unequal to satisfy our readers on this point. We have conscientiously waded through the whole sixty close pages of letterpress in the pamphlet (a task for which we take no small credit, and could hardly be tempted to repeat); and while we found an abundance of strong dogmatic assertion, are bound to say that we were unable to meet anything like true argument, such as would in our mind form just grounds for the novel doctrine stated. One passage, however, in which Mr. Darby states this doctrine, we must admit to be very clear and intelligible; and, as it raises the issue in question, we shall, therefore, quote it at length:—

“I affirm that Scripture never speaks of imputed righteousness as of a sum of righteousness first existing in itself, and then imputed. The truth is, it never speaks of imputed righteousness at all, but of imputing righteousness, and the difference is very great, indeed. Imputed righteousness may carry with it in the mind the sense of a substantive quantity of righteousness first existing, and then imputed; imputing righteousness cannot. It is an act of the mind accounting the person something at the moment the act of the mind takes place. If it is God's mind, it is perfect, and does not change, no doubt; but when I say God imputed his faith to Abraham for righteousness, it is plain that He held Abraham to be righteous in His sight on account of faith; that is, imputing righteousness means in Scripture to hold a person to be a

righteous man, to reckon or account him such. Theologians may torture themselves, and abuse those who state it, and quote clouds of doctors like themselves. They advance nothing. When Scripture says Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, it means Abraham was accounted righteous on account of his faith. Hence, imputing God's righteousness could not be employed or thought of by me, because I deny all such previous sum of righteousness made out, and then imputed, to be the meaning of righteousness being imputed. Imputing righteousness (for, I repeat, imputed righteousness, as a compound term, is unscriptural) is the estimate of the man's relative state to God. The man is righteous in the sight of Him who judges."

The above is a very fair specimen of Darbyite theology. We say a very fair specimen — indeed, we may say a very favourable specimen — as it is capable of being understood, which is more than we can say of most other statements we have seen from the same source. No doubt the author thinks it a triumph of argument, and his admirers, something little short of inspiration. As we, however, are not imbued with so much veneration for Mr. Darby's opinions, he must forgive us if, instead of setting it up to worship and adore, we take it down to look at and examine.

In the first place, we would examine this distinction without a difference—"imputed righteousness" and "imputing righteousness." It would appear to our ignorant minds that if God *imputes* righteousness, it immediately follows that righteousness is *imputed*; and we care very little whether it is put in the present tense or the past participle, provided the *imputation* is admitted. What possible effect can it have on the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ whether Scripture speaks of it as God's *imputing* it, or its being *imputed* by God? The question is, *What does God impute?* Here lies the gist of the question. Mr. Darby says, "*Imputed* righteousness may carry with it in the mind the

sense of a substantive quantity of righteousness first existing, and then imputed; *imputing* righteousness cannot." We are quite at a loss to see the force of this dogmatic assertion. It would be just as forcible if you reversed the terms and stated, that imputing righteousness may carry with it, &c., but imputed righteousness cannot. "Imputing righteousness," says Mr. D., "is an act of the mind, accounting the person *something* at the moment the act of the mind takes place." Truly it is; and the question is, What is that "*something*"? If it is "something," it must be some definite thing, and not a vague quality, that may mean anything. What is being "righteous"—the something that God imputes (but we are not to say it is *imputed*) to us? We have little doubt that it is the specific righteousness of Christ; and we deny that it is an undefined obedience never rendered, a standard never reached, a vague and suppositious quality, such as Mr. Darby would make it. He will admit, no doubt, that *on the tree*, at least, our sins were imputed to Christ. Was it sin generally, in a vague undefined way, that was so imputed? or was it not rather actual sin—the "sum" of our transgression, to use Mr. Darby's own expression. Is not such definiteness necessarily implied in the very idea of imputation? "Faith was *accounted* unto Abraham for righteousness;" that is, a certain specific sum was put to his account—he was credited with a specific righteousness which belonged not to him, nor to any other human being, and had only existence in the life of Jesus Christ. That righteousness was Christ's righteousness; and thus the patriarch was saved by Christ, and, like the remnant of Israel, drank of the spiritual rock that followed him, and that rock was Christ.

The opponents of the doctrine of Christ's righteousness being imputed to us seem to consider a great point gained when they assert, truly, that there is no such expression in Scripture as "the

imputed righteousness of Christ." If this were an argument against it, of course the same rule would apply to the doctrines of the Trinity, the divinity of our Lord, and the personality of the Holy Ghost, as none of these expressions occur in Scripture either ; but we should be sorry to say that, therefore, the truths they express had no existence. Solitary and unconnected texts, even if they have a *verbal* reference to the subject under discussion, are the most unsatisfactory kind of evidence of Scriptural truth, and are often used to prove untruths. Rather let us take the whole tone of the Divine Word—its natural sense and general teaching. In that way let us first look at the important subject now under discussion.

What was the whole scheme of man's salvation? Was it that the Son of God should suddenly descend from heaven to die upon the cross, as an atonement for man's sin? Such would have been quite sufficient according to the Darbyite view, which in effect cuts us off from all connexion with the Saviour, until He came under the shadow of the cross. But was it God's plan? No ; the Son of God took upon Him our flesh, was born of a woman, submitted Himself to the ordinances made *for man*, which had no obligation upon him *as* "the Lord from heaven," was circumcised the eighth day, was obedient to His reputed parents, went to John, who was "preaching the baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins*," and was baptized by him ; and when the Baptist remonstrated with the Saviour, "who knew no sin," for asking baptism of him who should rather have been the recipient of that blessed ordinance from the hand of Christ, what was the Lord's reply? "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh *us* (that is Christ, as the substitute and representative of His people) *to fulfil all righteousness*." Now, unless vicariously, it would *not* have become Him to offer Himself for baptism, as he had no sins of His own to be remitted. There

is, therefore, no meaning in the act but that which the Christian Church has long put upon it, namely—that in this, as in every act of His whole life, He was fulfilling the law for us. It may be said that baptism was no part of the law. It was, however, part of the will of God; and the obedience of Christ was not restricted to the law only, but extended to the perfect fulfilment of the Father's will. Mr. Darby does not, of course, deny that Christ kept the law; but he seems merely to admit that He did so because it was impossible that He, being perfect, as the Lord from heaven, could do anything else.* But he appears to consider that *we* have nothing to do with that fulfilment—that it was rather an incident to His sacrifice, than a part of the work which He came to do. What does the Lord himself say? "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to *fulfil*; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from *the law* till all be *fulfilled*."—Matt. v. 17, 18. Observe here that it is the fulfilment of the *law*, and not the prophets, which he speaks of in the 18th verse; and that he is not speaking merely of the fulfilment of the *types* of the law, as is evident from the following verse (19), which has reference only to the *obedience* to the law ("whosoever shall *break* the least of these Commandments," &c.).

But in the types of the law is not the righteousness of Christ brought out plainly, not as an *incident*, but a *requisite* of His atonement? Is it not plainly signified in "the Lamb without blemish" (Ex. xii. 5; Lev. ix. 3, &c.), which was to be offered as an atonement for the sins of the people?—a figure which is preserved through the Gospels (John, i. 29), Epistles (1 Peter, i. 19), and up to the Apocalypse (Revelation, vii. 17, &c.) In fact, it is the

* In speaking of our Lord's obedience Mr. Darby calls it "the *infinite obedience* of love," a curiously incongruous expression, exhibiting a great want of clearness of thought in him who coined it.

perfection of obedience to God's will by Christ that makes Him "*the Lamb of God*"—the perfectly Holy One. It is not sufficient answer to say, He was essentially holy in His nature. Holiness, such as was a necessary requirement in the sacrifice to be offered for *man's sin and transgression of God's law*, was not essential, abstract holiness, but holiness exhibited in the specific obedience and fulfilment of God's law and will, not the attribute of Deity, but the obedience and righteousness of humanity. Hence it was that the Son of God "did not take upon Him the nature of angels, but "the seed of Abraham," the nature of man. "Being *made perfect*, He became the author of salvation unto all them that obey Him." (Heb. v. 9.) He was the Lamb without blemish and without spot ; and *as man* yielded obedience to the law given for man ; and having perfectly fulfilled His Father's will *as a man*, and for man, He offered Himself upon the cross, as a "full, *perfect*, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." Faith, therefore, in the atonement, comprehends faith in our Lord's obedience and fulfilment of the law—His perfect righteousness. In fact, it is impossible to separate His righteousness from His sacrifice, without mutilating the precious truth contained in the Baptist's declaration—"Behold *the Lamb of God* that taketh away the sins of the world."

Why the long series of trials and temptations of our Lord by the Evil One, but that He came to fulfil the law for us, and to triumph where the first Adam was conquered? Satan would not have essayed to tempt Him, if He had not been *very man* as well as *very God*. And are we to have no benefit from this conquest, beyond an example which we may follow, but can never reach? No ; this was part of the great work of our salvation—the battle fought for us, of which we are enjoying the fruit.

It is really dreadful to think of the consequences

which the denial of the vicariousness of Christ's life involves us in, and how completely it shuts off the most precious and comforting considerations of religion, and makes the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, save the few last chapters, a cold historical narrative, in which we have no part, beyond the evidences it contains of His divinity. In this "new light" all the perfections of the human character of Jesus Christ, which we have been accustomed to look upon as ours by the imputation of faith, are but attributes of God, and have no connexion or reference whatever to the law which we supposed they fulfilled for us; and numerous passages of Scripture are thus stripped of a deeper meaning than Mr. Darby's theology can give them. For example, the "obedience unto death" spoken of in the Epistle to Philippians (ii. 8), which, according to our reading, expresses a life-long submission and patient endurance, culminating in an ignominious death (Hebrews, xii. 2-4), means, according to Mr. Darby, simply that Christ died. Again, such expressions as "the Holy One and the Just" used by the Apostle Peter (Acts, iii. 14), which imply to us the perfectly holy and righteous *manhood* of our Lord, contrasted as it is by the Apostle with the crime of the murderer whom the Jews preferred, can only mean, in Mr. Darby's reading, the infinite attributes of Christ *as God*.

But there is another passage (Heb. x. 6-9), the meaning of which must be contracted by this new theology, so as to lose its true effect. In that passage the Apostle is referring to a prophecy of our Lord's coming and mission, contained in the 40th Psalm (verses 7 and 8), where Christ says, speaking of the failure of man's efforts for his salvation by the works of the law, "In burnt offering and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to *do thy will*, O God." Now, we suppose the Darbyites will say, that this had

simply and only reference to the great sacrifice for sin, in contrast to the sacrifices of the law, which could not take away sin. There is no doubt that it had such reference; but if we consult the passage quoted in Psalms, we will see that it had a further meaning—namely, the fulfilment of God's law for us; for after the words "I come to do thy will, O God," is added, "Yea, thy *law* is within my *heart*." This clearly shows that the fulfilment of God's will, which the Son came to perform, included obedience to the law of God, as well as the payment of the penalty for its transgression. Thus is our salvation abundantly wrought out for us, both by a vicarious righteousness and a vicarious sacrifice—one interwoven with the other—the righteousness perfected in the sacrifice, the sacrifice perfect, because of the righteousness. How much is God's gift of His dearly-beloved Son enhanced by this consideration! He gave Him up, not only to die for our sins, but also to supply the deficiency in our obedience—to do what we were unable to do, and give us a perfect righteousness.

Here, and here only, we firmly believe is the key to the right and profitable comprehension of the parable of the wedding feast. What is the "wedding garment," without which we shall be excluded from the supper of the Lamb? It is the spotless righteousness of Christ. The idea of a general vague imputation of a quality, falls very far short of the specific *robe* put on us, and clothed in which we are viewed *as righteous* by God the Father, and fit to enter His presence. Yes, it is because we are *in Christ*; clothed in His righteousness, with whom the Father expressed Himself "well pleased," that we stand righteous before Him. He is unto us wisdom, sanctification, *righteousness*, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). Such is the truth again expressed by the Apostle in the first chapter of Colossians, 28th verse, when speaking of *Christ* in the believer the hope

of glory—"Whom," he says, "we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man *perfect in Christ Jesus.*" Now we are pardoned by the blood of Christ, it is the price paid for our sin; but this does not meet the idea of being "*perfect in Christ Jesus,*" an expression which it seems to us is met by nothing short of His perfect righteousness being imputed to his people.

Having thus briefly considered the nature of our Lord's work, and the scheme by which God, while *just* and exacting perfect obedience to His law, became the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, let us now refer to some texts which plainly and directly bear out the view we have put forward, and which lose half their significance, by Mr. Darby's interpretation of Scripture. "I have glorified thee on the earth," says our blessed Lord, on the eve of His sacrifice (John, xvii. 4), "I have *finished the work* which thou gavest me to do." Here, at the end of His life, He speaks of His "*work*" (even the salvation of man) being "*finished,*" when, according to the Darbyite theory, it was only just begun, as He was only entering under the shadow of the cross, to accomplish the only *work*, according to Mr. Darby's view, He performed for man. In the strength of the above words of our blessed Lord, and notwithstanding that for doing so we are charged by Mr. Darby "with the horrible denial of the whole meaning and value of Christ's death" (alas! that one professing the Gospel should adopt such language), we affirm our belief that our Lord's life and righteousness are as essential a part of the *work* of our redemption as His death, and that God having joined them together, they *cannot be put asunder.*

Let us now hear St. Paul in another epistle:—
"Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the *righteousness of one* the free gift came upon all men unto

justification of life. For as by one man's *disobedience* many were made sinners, so by the *obedience* of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign *through righteousness* unto eternal life, *by Jesus Christ our Lord.*" — Rom. v. 18-21. We have no idea of what may be Mr. Darby's interpretation of the above passage. But, we suppose, he has some way of bringing it under his peculiar mode of exigesis, which seems to consist generally in creating such a cloud of dust and smoke about a subject, that the wearied critic can discover neither truth nor falsehood in the interpretation with any sort of distinctness.

Again:—"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."—Gal. iv. 4, 5. If there was nothing beside the atonement in our redemption—and it could have been as effectually carried out had our Lord been crucified the day He was born, or fallen a victim to the sword of Herod, when he massacred the infants at Bethlehem—why was our Lord "made under the law?" And if, as Mr. Darby contends, we have nothing to do with law, why are we here stated to have been "under the law?"

Now, hear the Apostle John:—"If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ *the righteous*, and He is the propitiation for our sins."—1 John, ii. 2. What is it here which gives value to the propitiation, and power to the advocacy? That Jesus Christ is "*the righteous*" one.

We see this put forward again most clearly in the seventh of Hebrews, where the Apostle is speaking of the priesthood of our blessed Lord, and says, "For such an High Priest became us, who is *holy*,

harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Now it is impossible to apply such expressions as those we have italicized to God, or the Godhead of Christ. They obviously apply to our Lord's humanity, and harmonize with 1st Timothy, ii. 5—"There is but one mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus." It is in His manhood that He becomes our High Priest and mediator, and therefore the necessity for its perfection, and that He should, *as man*, be "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

The Apostle Peter also puts forward the same truth in his 1st Epistle (chap. iii. 18), when he says, "Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the *JUST* for the unjust." Here the contrast is plain between the fulfiller and transgressor of God's law.

The same Apostle also writes—"To them who have obtained like precious faith with us, through the *righteousness* of God, and *our Saviour Jesus Christ*"—[Margin, "Our God and Saviour."]—2 Peter, i. 1.

We admit that from the various places, particularly in the Epistle to the Romans, where "the righteousness of God" is spoken of, the imputed righteousness of our Lord cannot be *proved*, but to us, and those who hold that doctrine, these and other passages have a far deeper, and much more connected meaning, than they can possibly have to Mr. Darby. To us they speak of a given "sum" of righteousness, the personified perfection of our substitute, which, with His atonement, we have laid hold on by faith. This is God's scheme for our salvation, and by faith in Him the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, as is the blood paid for our redemption. The whole plan of salvation is a vicarious one; the law is fulfilled *for us* by our substitute—by Him who is called "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."—Jer. xxiii. 6. The penalty is paid *for us* by our substitute, "who was wounded for *our* transgression, who was

bruised for *our* iniquities, and by whose stripes we are healed."—Isaiah, liii. 5.

We cannot conceive anything more monstrously unreasonable, quite apart from the uncharitable way in which Mr. Darby puts it, than his assertion that the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ makes light of, or causes us to undervalue the atonement, and brings us back "under the law." On the contrary, it vastly increases the value of the atonement, which has thus the weight of the sacrifice of "the Lamb without blemish and without spot." Is it because we desire the benefit of Christ's obedience and righteousness, that there is less value in the atonement of His precious blood? Is it because in all points it was beyond the requirements of our salvation, by reason of the infinite perfection of the victim, not only in His Deity but in *His humanity*, that the offering loses its value? Mr. Darby has made a serious charge against us, and those who believe with us in this imputed righteousness of Christ, in saying that we depreciate the value of His atonement. We greatly dislike recrimination, particularly on so solemn a subject; but we must tell him that he himself is depreciating it by the denial of that doctrine, and by an obvious disbelief in the *thorough humanity of our Lord*, a firm and clear apprehension of which, is an essential antecedent to the entertainment of the doctrine in its fulness. To those who, like Mr. Darby, and his disciple Mr. Mackintosh, hold the doctrine of a "heavenly humanity," the obedience of our Lord, and His fulfilment of the law, is utterly immaterial. To them He came down from heaven to die, and no more; and it would quite as well have accorded with their ideas about redemption, if He had descended from heaven one day in the human form, been sacrificed at once, and returned to heaven again the following day.

Truly, "Great is the *mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh.*" It is this mystery that, when

it has not been received in simple faith, has given rise to strange heresies and extreme views, those on one side contending for the peccability of our Lord; and those on the other, for His heavenly humanity. When we look at the various heresies that have sprung up in the Christian Church upon this subject, from the earliest period of the Christian era, when the Apostle John did battle with the Docetæ, to the present time, we feel the deep truth and wisdom of the words of the Athanasian Creed—"Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he [who will be saved] also *believe rightly* the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ." In fact, unless we do believe it "rightly," we do not understand the plan of redemption, and cannot believe to the saving of the soul.

As to the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ bringing us under the law, as alleged by Mr. Darby, it is really too unreasonable almost to admit of discussion. If the fulfilment of the law by Christ for us brings us under the law, then may not the same be said of the *atonement*? Was not the atonement for sin by sacrifice, a *legal* requirement also? The principle that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," was surely essentially a principle of the Divine law, in compliance with which our Lord offered Himself on the accursed tree. Of course, the Almighty might, if it pleased His sovereign will, have offered salvation to all mankind without any sacrifice. He might have also dispensed with the fulfilment of the law by Christ, and sent Him merely to die, but then His law would not have been fully honoured; but in the fulfilment of the law, both as to obedience and penalty by Christ, God the Father has shown Himself "just," and yet the justifier of those that believe in Christ. It is idle to quote the passages referred to by Mr. Darby, in support of his assertion, that the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ brings us back under the

law. The Apostle, as any one can see, on consulting the passages in question, is speaking of being "under the law" in the sense of seeking salvation by our *own* fulfilment of it, in contrast to the righteousness of God. Can Mr. Darby gravely assert that, by looking to the vicarious fulfilment of the law by Christ, imputed to us by faith, we are "going about to establish our *own* righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God? It is not *the law of God* that the Apostle would depreciate, but the attempt to justify ourselves before God by our *own* fulfilment of it. We regret to say the Apostle's argument is very much mistaken by persons holding Mr. Darby's views; so much so, that one would really suppose, to hear them speak of God's law, that it was deserving rather of contempt than honour; whereas the Apostle tells us, on the contrary, that "the law is holy, just, and good;" but it is the boasted fulfilment of it by man that is worthless. The law is perfect, for it is God's law; the obedience to it is imperfect, because it is man's obedience. But the Apostle speaks so plainly in the last verse of the third chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, as to leave no doubt on the subject. Having stated the doctrine of justification by faith clearly and emphatically, he says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? *God forbid; yea, we establish the law.*" How? Not by ignoring it, as Mr. Darby would do, but in its complete fulfilment by Christ our substitute, and the payment of its greatest and last penalty on the cross.

What a change this Darbyite view makes in the whole Gospel of our Lord and Saviour. How it cuts off at one blow the interest and connexion with which the Christian studies the history of his Master. According to this new theology, he was not *his* Saviour till He had shed His blood on the tree, or rather till He had risen from the dead; then, for the first time, He became one with His

people. To use Mr. Darby's own language in another tract, "As a living man, sinners had no part in or with him. He abode alone." We are no longer to look at Christ fulfilling the law for us on earth, or to seek "to follow in His most holy footsteps." No. Mr. Darby tells us (p. 41) that the Christian's "place is not under the law, but in Christ, *glorified* in the presence of God." "As He *is*, so are we in this world." "Christ is the rule of walk, and what He *is*—the measure of attainment." "What answers to this glory of Christ is, the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, and sealing us for the day of redemption, when we shall be like Him, and bear His image: grieving the Spirit, thus becomes the other *measure of right and wrong* for us, not breaking the law."

This is the kind of practical teaching that is offered us in lieu of the plain and simple doctrines of our Church, as epitomised from Scripture, in her Articles and formularies. Does the Apostle tell us that "grieving the Spirit" is to be our "measure of right and wrong"? Let anyone refer to the passage where he uses that expression (Eph. iv. 30), and they will see that the Apostle does not say even that we shall be aware when we have grieved the Holy Spirit, but is merely warning us, in the most practical way, against the commission of certain sins, and urging as a motive or reason against such transgressions, the fact that the Holy Spirit dwelling within us will be grieved by our commission of them. But here we find the expression wrenched out of its connection by Mr. Darby, and misapplied, to give colour to a wild transcendental theory of morals, without a standard or a principle capable of application. How are we to know what grieves the Spirit, but by the Word of God? But Mr. Darby means to set up the doctrine of an inward monitor within our own breasts, "a perfect conscience," whose dictates are absolute—a kind of touchstone, which detects right

and wrong intuitively, as the "verifying faculty" of the Essayists and Reviewers detects truth or error in revelation? We admit, as of course every Christian must, the fact of the Spirit of God speaking in our consciences—but how? By the means of the Word of Life—the Scriptures of truth—which alone are the Christian's "measure of right and wrong." It has been well and beautifully said by the Archbishop of Dublin, that the conscience is like a clock, and the Word of God as the sun-dial by which the clock must be set, if it is to be reliable. The clock may go out of order, it may go too fast or too slow, or cease working altogether, but the sun-dial is infallible.

It has been asserted, we believe, by Mr. Darby, that the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of our Lord, is not the doctrine of the Church of England, although we have no doubt it is to him utterly immaterial whether it is or not. It is not so immaterial to us, however, and we therefore deem it necessary, in a few words, to vindicate our Church from this charge.

The 11th Article of the Church of England, "Of the Justification of Man," is as follows:—

"We are *accounted righteous* before God only for the *merit* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification."

Although, to our mind, the expression "*accounted righteous* before God for the *merit* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith," speaks plainly enough the doctrine for which we have been contending, we shall give some extracts from the Homily referred to (called "Of the Salvation of Mankind"), which put the matter quite beyond controversy. We wish we could afford space to print it

in extenso it is such a noble exposition of Gospel truth, albeit dressed in the quaint language of three hundred years ago :—

“ For the more full understanding hereof, it is our parts and duties ever to remember the great mercy of God, how that (all the world being wrapped in sin by breaking of the law) God sent his only Son our Saviour Christ into this world, *to fulfil the law for us*, and by shedding of His most precious blood, to make a sacrifice and satisfaction, or (as it may be called) amends to His Father for our sins, to assuage His wrath and indignation conceived against us for the same.”

“ His great mercy He showed unto us in delivering us from our former captivity, without requiring of any ransom to be paid, or amends to be made upon our parts, which thing by us had been impossible to be done. And whereas it lay not in us that to do, He provided a ransom for us—that was, the most precious body and blood of His own most dear and best beloved Son Jesus Christ, who, besides this ransom, *fulfilled the law for us perfectly.*”

“ In these foresaid places, the Apostle toucheth specially three things, which must go together in our justification. Upon God's part, His great mercy and grace: upon Christ's part, justice—that is, the satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our redemption, by the offering of His body, and shedding of His blood, *with fulfilling of the law perfectly and thoroughly*; and upon our part, true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, which yet is not ours, but by God's working in us; so that in our justification, is not only God's mercy and grace, but also His justice, which the Apostle calleth the justice of God, and it consisteth in paying our ransom and *fulfilling of the law*; and so the grace of God doth not shut out the justice of God in our justification, but only shutteth out the justice of man—that is to say, the justice of our works, as to be merits of deserving our justification.”

“ For all the good works that we can do be imperfect, and therefore not able to deserve our justification; but our justification doth come freely by the

mere mercy of God, and of so great and free mercy, that, whereas all the world was not able of themselves to pay any part towards their ransom, it pleased our Heavenly Father, of His infinite mercy, without any our desert or deserving, to prepare for us the most precious jewels of Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be fully paid, the *law fulfilled*, and His justice fully satisfied. So that Christ is now the *righteousness* of all them that truly do believe in Him. He for them paid their ransom by His death. *He for them fulfilled the law in His life. So that now in Him, and by Him, every true Christian man may be called a fulfiller of the law, forasmuch as that which their infirmity lacked, Christ's justice hath supplied.*"

In addition to the homily which we have quoted, and which speaks as plainly as words can speak the doctrine we have been contending for, we have the doctrine clearly set forth in the Litany, where we pray to be delivered by the obedience and righteousness of Christ, as well as by His sacrifice, thus— "By the mystery of thy holy incarnation; by thy holy nativity and *circumcision*; by thy *baptism*, *fasting*, and *temptation*, good Lord deliver us. By thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy precious death and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, good Lord deliver us." Thus we have Christ's *whole* work pleaded before the throne of the Father.

Again, the expression, "Through the *merits* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," taken in connection with the 11th Article, obviously refers to His righteousness, as such a term would be totally inconsistent with the divine part of our Lord's nature, and has plainly reference to his manhood.

But we have the doctrine again still plainer in the Collects for the Circumcision and first Sunday in Lent, the former of which begins, "Almighty God, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and *obedient unto the law for man*;" and the latter, "O Lord, who *for our sake didst fast forty days and forty*

nights." On this doctrine the trumpet of the Church of England gives no uncertain sound, and we are quite at a loss to understand, with such plain and pointed language in her formularies, how Mr. Darby or any one else can allege that she does not teach our Lord's life, as well as his death, to be vicarious.

We hope that, in presence of such explicit declarations of the doctrine of the Church of England on this subject as we have quoted, no one will again assert that she does not teach the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ.

In the foregoing argument we have endeavoured to meet the challenge so vaingloriously thrown down by Mr. Darby (p. 24), "to meet this question fairly." Although we might have done so, we have not, to use his own choice and refined language, quoted "evangelicals and modern theologians by sacksfull," but have confined ourselves (save in defending the formularies and teaching of our Church) to the authority of the Word of God alone, with what success the reader must judge for himself. At the same time, although "J. N. D." may view "Evangelicals" and "Theologians," whether ancient or modern, with that contempt, which is never so *profound* as when the despiser is too *shallow* to comprehend the opinions which he despises, it is to us a strong confirmation of the interpretation of Scripture which we have been endeavouring to vindicate, that it has been the view accepted by the great and good in all Evangelical Churches of Christendom, not as a theory for the discussion of "schoolmen," but as a precious and practical truth for the support and nourishment of Christian life.

The passage that we have quoted from Mr. Darby's pamphlet about the "measure of right and wrong," will give our readers a very good idea of the character of his teaching. It is easy to imagine the application of such a theory as he seeks to establish, to such subjects as the Christian Church, the Christian ministry, and the Christian Sabbath.

We say it with all solemnity and earnestness, we thank God that the doctors of such a theology have made little way in the Christian Church, and that the theory (we cannot call it system) which they propound is so incohesive in its inherent nature as to break up and crumble of itself. While however powerless for good, we regret to say it is not so for evil. Although feeble and emasculate, as a Church, to do any service to the cause of the Gospel, Darbyism can, in a certain degree, damage and hinder the Churches that do. It can creep into the houses of weak but pious women, who are, by the perversion and misquotation of Scripture, led to dissatisfaction with everything they used to look upon with veneration and love. The ministry is priestcraft, the ordinances are beggarly elements, the Sabbath is no longer a delight, but a chain upon Christian liberty. A new light dawns upon these neophytes. All their pious brethren with whom, before their conversion to Darbyism, they used to hold sweet communion, are now mourned over as misguided, dark, and ignorant of "the truth," and a sharp controversy, of course, inevitably follows. Thus is the brand of dissension thrown not only among Christian friends, but often among the closest relations of the domestic circle.

It is to Darbyism we may trace that painful anomaly we so often meet with now—an isolated Christian, who, when asked to what communion he belongs, boastfully replies that he is a Christian, and belongs to no Church on earth—who, having been made dissatisfied with his own Church, by some self-ordained Darbyite missionary, has left it, and never been able to settle his mind since. He has tried various Churches, but none of them were perfection; and, *therefore*, he has come to the conclusion that the Independent is the only true system of Church government; but he acts out the principle to its conclusion, and applies it not to congregations but individuals.

Of one or two Reviewers of "The Brethren" to whom the pamphlet before us purports to be a *reply*, Mr. Darby admits, with great candour, that he has hardly read their pamphlets, although he undertakes the duty of replying to them. This admission is of the same character as the rest of Mr. Darby's pamphlet, all through which he treats those who dare to disagree with him with the most profound contempt, sometimes expressed in language nothing short of insult. It is impossible not to see that he has been accustomed to have his opinion listened to with the greatest reverence, and is impatient of the least contradiction. However, he ought to remember when he comes before the public in print, that he is not lecturing a select circle of his disciples, who receive all he says with rapt admiration, and look upon every word that falls from his lips as oracular. This imperiousness of tone and impatience of contradiction is not likely to prepossess his readers in favour of his novel and dangerous doctrines, and if he wishes to recommend them he had better, at least, moderate these peculiarities when next he comes before the public.

Unlike Mr. D., we have conscientiously waded through his whole pamphlet — afterthoughts, postscripts, and all—a task which we candidly admit was performed with no small amount of fatigue, and which we should be very sorry to undertake to perform a second time. From the glimpses we have afforded our readers of its contents, we think they will forgive us for not quoting from it at any greater length than we have done, or going into greater detail or argument on the other points upon which Mr. Darby holds such peculiar opinions. We have chiefly addressed ourselves to what seems to us the most important one, namely—the denial of our Lord's righteousness being imputed to His people, in the consideration of which subject we have been betrayed into a much longer notice than is merited by "The Brethren and their Reviewers."

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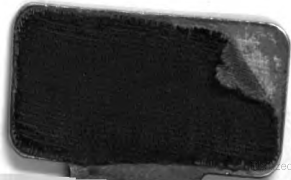
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