

The Baptism of Christ is where all righteousness is fulfilled

This Sunday we celebrated the baptism of Christ. "Let it be", He said, "for it is fitting that we fulfil all righteousness in this way." - meaning that this was how God had ordained and arranged for things to be.

Later, our Lord Jesus would speak of His death as the completion of His baptism. For being baptised with the baptism of sinners He had Himself made one with us sinners, and with our sin, He of whom the Father said that "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased." And in His death the righteousness of God was fulfilled. All sin of sinners was judged and damned and destroyed, as the righteousness of God demands it, and all righteousness and right, that evil is not allowed to prevail, and no sin goes unpunished.

Having been baptised into us, the Son of God has fulfilled the righteousness of God, not for our destruction, but for our salvation. For so good is God that He who is Himself God would take the judgement of His righteousness against all sin upon Himself and bear it for us sinners, and take it away from us.

With His Baptism, all righteousness is fulfilled. Having Himself baptised with us He has us made one with Himself, who are baptised into Him. And in His life He has Himself fulfilled all righteousness, in that He lived the life we owe to God, in full and complete love and trust and obedience. And the life He has lived He has lived for us, and it counts as ours before the judgement of God - because He had Himself made one with us.

Now He has sinners baptised into Himself and made one with Him in all that is His. His righteousness is ours, that is: His goodness and innocence before God. We are right with God, and righteous before His judgement. All righteousness is fulfilled. The righteousness He promises in the Gospel, and gives to us with His promise, is full and complete, and there is nothing lacking. It is given to us full and complete, fully and for real, with His promise. And it is all His own doing - as it has to be, since nothing we sinners would do could ever be full and complete.

This is the reality of His Baptism. He has been baptised into us, and we are baptised into Him. In this way all righteousness is fulfilled for our salvation. As He would later have His Apostle Paul write it: "He who knew of no sin God made to be sin for us in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

God is that good. In His Baptism His righteousness is fulfilled. And in His Baptism He gives His righteousness to us sinners.