

principle in fulfilling all righteousness, or at least love was never wanting. Baptism is enjoined on none but God's own people, and Jesus was baptized in blood for none others, when he went to the end of the law for righteousness. And in the manner of enjoying all righteousness, I may add, there is a further parity between baptism and righteousness. Baptism can only be received, understood, and enjoyed by faith; and the same must be allowed of Christ's righteousness. Now, if we one moment glance at the doctrine of infant sprinkling, we cannot avoid perceiving, that, between such practice and all righteousness, there is no more connexion than appears between will-worship and true obedience. Is infant sprinkling commanded? No. Is there any precedent for it in the holy word of God? None. Does it agree with our text? No. Can it be proved that he who faithfully preaches it, by so doing, evidently preaches Christ? No. What, does it not come forward regularly, as a part of the truth, in the ministry of an Independent? O no: very rarely referred to. Do they believe the infant in its baptism really performs righteousness, or that it truly receives and enjoys Christ's righteousness? No. And do they think, then, that God can approve of such empty ceremony? I fear they do. But it is an irrefutable fact, that if the subject baptized be not therein doing righteousness, his conduct is neither commanded nor approved of God. To deny this, would be to deny the rectitude of God, and oppose a self-evident principle in nature. For if God can command or approve that, wherein is no righteousness, he can deny himself, resign his just right, or even (shocking to suppose) establish iniquity by a law. Thus, my brethren, we plainly see to what lengths of inconsistency a man may be escorted, before he is aware, by indulging in such practice as hath no righteousness in it, and by retaining, after he is even called by grace, a fondness for such innovation and super-

stition; for such I surely may call that which demands my acknowledgment in the church of Christ, as an holy ordinance of his appointing, when such demand has no authority of commandment, nor sanction of precedent.

I cannot conclude this paragraph without remarking, that Jesus must have had reference to a very different signification of the term baptism, from what the pedobaptists are willing to allow it to have, when he likened his work to a baptism. He certainly meant a baptism which should be plainly commanded, and so be an act of righteousness, a doing of the will of God. To have attempted to set forth his important services by any thing less, would have been to preach down his own excellency. But it is said, "That infants have as great a right to baptism as the children had a right to the seal of circumcision under the law." Suppose all this were granted, which yet must be denied; I ask, Why, forsooth, our *girls* must be sprinkled too? The all-supporting argument is this: "God commanded that every *male* child in Abraham's family should be *circumcised* in the flesh of his foreskin; therefore every *female* infant in the professing world (of the Gentiles) at least ought to be *sprinkled* with water in her face!" Now if we Baptists have not a capacity adequate to the difficulty of discerning the force of this argument, are we not to be pitied? It is certainly evident that every man's powers for reasoning will not appear alike commanding. Nor is it to be expected, that when a man reasons well, all who hear him should understand him well. I own myself such a dunce in logic, that I cannot deduce from the above argument a plain command for infant sprinkling. But, thanks be to God, we have a more sure word of prophecy, unto which, my friends, we shall evidently do well to take heed: for in our blessed Saviour's words, now under consideration, we are taught that he, in his awful baptism, was, according to his Father's commandment, fulfilling all

righteousness ; and, also, that his holy ordinance of baptism, now in force, was instituted to remind us of this sweet and saving truth. In baptism we now view this great work of righteousness, and thereon depend ; believing it is accomplished, and that our dear Surety is straitened no more. Here, believing souls, lies all your freedom : righteousness is accomplished *for you*, and revealed *to you*, and *in you*, through the spirit of faith, *as many of you as have been rightly baptized into Christ, have put on Christ* as the Lord your righteousness. Walk therefore in him, and glory in your bright array ; your royal robe shall shine for ever ! Thus saith the Lord : lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath ; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner : but my salvation shall be for ever, and *my righteousness shall not be abolished*, Isaiah, li. 6.

8. In baptism, the Triune God is worshipped and glorified ; and in this it was a suitable emblem for the Son of God to adopt, to show forth his sufferings, obedience, and death, with his burial and resurrection. He, in his baptism, ever sought the glory of God ; in his mediation shines forth the great Trinity in covenant ; and by his obedience and death, are Father, Son, and Spirit, for ever worshipped and glorified. He who is baptized is immersed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ; confessing their nature, power, glory, and authority, to be one, and viewing by faith the name of the eternal Three displayed in the vast plan of redeeming love opened in the face and work of Immanuel. In this sacred ordinance the disciple is required, at the very door of the temple, to acknowledge the God who reigns and is adored within, as on the eternal throne of grace. Here the great Father is confessed and worshipped in his divine supremacy, as opened for acknowledg-

ment and adoration, in the economy of salvation, by mediation. His flaming justice and adopting grace are both believed and both admired. The children freely own his right in them, and his authority to command them; and they are drawn by his love to obey his will, and that in the manner himself hath prescribed. In the faith of his essential perfections, and his sovereign will and favour as a Father, they are taught to be baptized. They view him as a Lawgiver reconciled, and as a loving Father, having bestowed Christ his Son (as a mediator) upon them with all spiritual blessings. For these openings of his name, in the covenant of salvation, he is to be loved and worshipped.

In the sacred ordinance of baptism the incarnate Son is also worshipped and glorified: for one name includes both the Father and the Son. He is viewed as the great reconciler of the people to the mind of God the Father; and his personal and divine perfections are beheld as shining forth in his prevalent mediation; which, without such divine perfections, must have proved unavailing for ever. I believe the divinity of Christ as truly shines forth in his relations and mediatorial works, as does the divinity of the Father in requiring such mediation. To deny the divinity of the Son, and still hold him a meritorious mediator, is to deny the divinity of the Father.

For whosoever thus denieth the all-sufficiency and *true meritorious character* of the Son, the same hath not properly acknowledged the Father. No man can take from the Son but he must take also from the Father by so doing. The dignity of the Mediator cannot but maintain the dignity of the Father; as, on the contrary, the considering of the Mediator to be a mere man cannot but deny the essential dignity of the Father, who is said to be satisfied and honoured by his Son's mediation. Nor, indeed, can we justly suppose that the Son would be so closely joined and equally exalted with the Father

in baptism, were he not one with him in nature, power, and glory. For believers are baptized in the one name of the Father and of the Son: and sure I am that, if the person of the Son were human only, the Father would never have suffered him to demand the hearts of the people equally with himself; nor could any man be said to trust in or love God any the more for his having trusted in or loved Jesus Christ as a man. If the Son were not one in nature with the Father, his commanding angels and men to worship him would be commanding them to break the law of nature, and be guilty of blasphemy. The saints in their baptism are required to ascribe the same perfections to the Son, who hath redeemed them, as they ascribe to the Father who hath adopted and justified them in the Son. Thus, *he who hath rightly seen the Son hath seen the Father also*. But surely no one will say that to see a man is to see God; or that to behold human rectitude is to see divine perfection. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the anointed? He is antichrist that thus denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. In these words Jesus is styled the anointed; or *that* anointed of whom the prophets spake, and the apostles bear witness. Many denied that Jesus was that anointed in the apostolic day; and many continue, to this day, to back their assertions. If they can be said to deny the Christ, who deny his righteousness and atonement, how much more fully do they deny the Christ who labour to deny his personal dignity. The one aims to take away the real virtue of his acts; but the other, by a stroke more conclusive, endeavours to remove *that* from his person which was *the only thing* that could render his acts truly meritorious. Thus, while the haughty Arminian labours, with all his free will, to destroy the streams, the subtle Unitarian levels all his blows at the

fountain, well knowing that, if he can but succeed, the streams will soon be esteemed of little worth.

The character given by the Holy Spirit to the anointed may be seen in the words of David, and which are quoted by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews: "But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands." Now, whosoever denieth this anointed Son of God, is, by the apostle John, called a liar. And surely the anointed One, here spoken of, is plainly denied by all those who declare the Son of God is not of the same nature with the Father. For though they may talk of a Son of God, it is impossible that he, of whom they speak, should be the Son of God spoken of by David and Paul in the above citation. These two holy men were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and both agreed to declare, that the Son of God was both God and man. These words, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, are in perfect concord with Paul's words in the Roman Epistle, where he speaks of *Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.* Observe, he says, *The anointed is God over all*, and blessed for ever. And David says, *He is God*, and that his *throne* is for ever and ever. Now if we may question or reject the authority of this plain testimony, borne in holy writ, to Christ's divinity, what sober reason can be given why we should believe another part of the same paragraph, which, with no greater plainness nor better authority, testifies that *Christ loved righteousness and hated iniquity*? One plain text of Scripture is as real a proof of the position contained as

though five hundred were added, because it is impossible that God should once mistake, in any matter, or announce one falsity as truth. In human evidence a multitude of witnesses may be necessary to confirm any matter in debate, but not so in divine evidence, where truth itself gives affirmation.

When it is said God, *even thy God*, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy *fellows*, we are certainly taught to consider the anointed as being truly man. This, however, can by no means invalidate the evidence already cited for his being truly God. For it is a maxim, ever to be retained, that truth is consistent with itself. And we have no better evidence, from the connexion before us, that he is man, than we have that he is God. Both are affirmed with the greatest plainness, and both ought to be believed with steady mind, and contended for with *godly* zeal. This truth is certainly held forth in baptism, and displayed in the cross. Hence we read that ministers are to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with *his own blood*. And why should this seem so exceptionable? It is certain that the blood which was shed on the tree was the blood of Christ's person; yet, in one sense, it could no more be the blood of his soul than of his divine nature. For a human soul could not bleed, we are confident. But still it was relatively the blood of his whole person; and as he was God in the divine nature, as well as man in the human nature, why should any one object to the Scripture expression above cited: *Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood!* He is also styled *Jehovah our righteousness*. I wish it to be duly considered, whether the preceding exposition of the Psalmist's words concerning the person of Christ, making him to appear both God and man, by personal union of both natures, be not natural and easy, and at the same time irrefutable; and, indeed,

no man ought to worship Christ spiritually that denies his proper divinity. The saints are required to love him with ‘*all their heart.*’ But so to love him would be taking away the glory due unto God, and giving it to the creature, were not the Son one in nature with the Father and Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is also worshipped in the ordinance of baptism, and he is greatly exalted in and through the baptism spoken of in my text. He is included in the one name in which the saints are baptized. The personality and divinity of the Spirit is manifested *in his great relations* in the covenant of redemption, and in his *saving operations*, according to the tenor of that holy covenant. He dwells in the saints as his temple; and they are fitted as a habitation of God through the person of the Spirit. By him they are quickened, converted, sanctified, renewed, strengthened, comforted, sealed, and filled with faith, wisdom, and power; and in these things the saints glorify him in their spiritual worship and baptism. Here I might greatly enlarge, but must pass on to remark,

9. That our dear Saviour might justly compare his humiliation work to a baptism, as to the reproach and shame that has usually attended the ordinance of baptism; for it is certain that this ordinance has been made the derision of the people, and is derided by many (who should know better) to this very day. And how many daring infidels laugh in their licentious robes at the holy mystery of Jesus’s saving Baptism, in the anticipation of which his righteous soul was straitened!

Finally, The work of the cross, which our Lord thought well to call *A Baptism*, also agrees with the figure, in that it is never to be repeated. For as the believer is only *once* baptized, so Christ was *once* offered a sacrifice to justice, and by *one atonement* he removed the iniquity of the land in *one* day. He died unto sin



*once*, but now he liveth for ever unto God. Thus doth the despised ordinance of baptism continue to show forth the great Deliverer of Zion, and bears witness on earth to his completed redemption, until he shall come the second time without sin unto salvation. Having, my brethren, thus far shown you in what respects our Lord's baptism is figured out by immersion in water according to his commandment, I will now proceed to notice,

*Thirdly*—His feelings under the anticipation of it: *How am I straitened till it be accomplished!*

The manner in which our Saviour here expresses himself, fully evinces that his heart was greatly set upon this important baptism. He was straitened till it was accomplished! The word *sunechomai*, which is here translated *straitened*, will admit of the following variations or different readings of our Lord's words:

How am I *pressed together*, as under a ponderous weight of imputed sin, and its dreadful concomitants. The Lord laid on him, as the Head of the church and Surety of the covenant, the iniquities of us all. And he *bore* our sins in *his own* body on the tree. Hereby all his strength was called forth into exercise: at least all his human nature was conscious of possessing. To be thus straitened was no way inconsistent with the final accomplishment of the work in which he stood engaged. For his work of suffering is over, and Jesus our Saviour is *straitened* no more! His being thus straitened in his human views of the work, and in the feelings of human nature, does not suppose him to be merely human, though it certainly proves him to have been really human. "Each nature operates in him according to its essential properties. The divine nature knows all things, upholds all things, rules all things, and acts by its presence everywhere; the human nature was born, yielded obedience, died, and rose again. But it is the

same *person*, the same Christ that acts all these things, the one nature being his, no less than the other.”

How am I *straitened*, may be read thus: How am I *held fast*, in the grasp of Almighty justice, and *bound fast* with cords (Hosea, xi. 4. Psalm cxviii. 27.) of legal authority, and bonds of covenant engagements! Infinite love to his people, and to the honour of Deity, as demanded by the person of the Father, bound him fast in bonds, which secured eternal salvation. Justice held fast the bondsman till all demands were fully paid. But when his Baptism was accomplished, his person was free, and his people redeemed. Immanuel is straitened no more: he is held under judgment no more: for in his humiliation his judgment unto condemnation was taken away. When he became innocent, as the Mediator of his people, or free from all sin, and had wrought all righteousness, justice could demand no more. He was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification. And who then shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, which has not been, by their loving Surety, amply atoned for, and everlastingly removed? That baptism which so straitened our Lord, my brethren, hath made us for ever *free indeed!* O thou immortal Deliverer of sin-bound captives, accept and maintain in thy free people perpetual hallelujahs to thy redeeming name!

Again, How am I *straitened*, may be understood, how am I *afflicted and distressed in mind*. My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, said our agonizing Lord. O, my friends, what love is here! He took our sorrows, he bore our stripes, he endured the curse for us, and thus he made our peace for ever! *Surely our infirmities himself hath borne, and our sorrows he carried them with our sighing; (and) ye accounted him the stricken, smitten, and deeply afflicted Aleim*, Isaiah, liii. 4. In this verse, as thus translated by R. Tomlinson, Esq. we have the divinity

of our sin-bearing Lord clearly attested, while his affliction is also declared with the causes thereof, greatly to our satisfaction.

Once more. How am I *urged* and *constrained*. For this sense of the word, see 2 Cor. v. 14. Jesus was first bound with his people in union indissoluble. He could not but feel the strongest desire for *their* redemption, whose persons and welfare lay so near his heart. He was urged by the desire of having the work accomplished. Justice called upon him for her right, and the joy set before him incited him to his important Baptism; out of which he knew he should surely emerge, and ascend to the enjoyment of the glory which he had with the Father, before the world was. His Baptism is now accomplished, and he is straitened no more! Who shall bind the members, since the Head is free? *I will*, said he, *Father, that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory*. But when he was in expectation of his sufferings, he was straitened; and in what respects, I have aimed in a few words to state to you, by opening the words of my text. I shall now come to the last general head of my discourse, which is,

*Fourthly*—To treat of the accomplishment of this important event. To this our blessed Saviour looked forward with strong desire; and when suspended on the accursed tree he exclaimed, It is finished. As what he did and suffered was not for himself, but for others, for whom he had engaged as a surety, we may inquire, who the people are for whom Jesus was thus baptized? And here I may remark, that, as baptism is made a figure of his sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection, so it leads us, of course, to a view of the people for whom Jesus's baptism is accomplished. For all who are rightly baptized in water, have been baptized into

Christ's death, and are interested in his finished redemption. To them salvation is promised, and a crown of glory is laid up for them in heaven, where Jesus dwells. *And they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.*

The apostle Peter commanded, that certain persons, who had received the Holy Spirit, should be baptized. Acts, x. 47, 48. From this we learn, that having the Spirit is so far from rendering baptism unnecessary, that it is made the very reason of it. And we gather also, that all those, who have received the Holy Spirit, are redeemed with precious blood. For them the Lord of Glory was baptized in death. The Spirit is received under the virtue of his obedience and blood. He enters the heart with a majesty of power, and raises up the soul to a spirituality of life. He vindicates the authority, and maintains the rights of law and justice. He proves the sinner guilty, and destroys his carnal hope. He rebukes iniquity, and fills the soul with godly sorrow under a sight of her omissions and commissions. And he also counteracts the rising propensities of self-love, and opposes the self-justifying pretensions of the imperious mind. So long as the soul is turning to her own free-will, and fancied power to keep the law, to do her duty, to please her Maker, and cause him to be propitious, the Holy Spirit is not manifestly within. Or if he be entered in the formation of a new principle, he will speedily put an end to these proud stirrings of the old man. He will fully demonstrate by his power, and by means of the covenant of works, that no flesh living can be justified by amendment of life, or any thing short of perfect righteousness. As he comes to plead the cause of justice, and an injured law, he will ever oppose all such evasive and ineffectual measures; all of which must be deemed but splendid sins. He

will follow up the work of conviction by the awful tenor of the law of works, till boasting is found in free grace alone. The Spirit will also plead the cause of the great Redeemer, and bring near his mediatorial glories, and fill the eye of the mind with the saving beauties of his face. The people who have received the Spirit have thereby also received spiritual life, light, and enjoyment, from Christ, as their chosen Head, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. He always makes room for Christ, and fills the room he makes within, by introducing the treasures of gospel grace which are hid in Christ. Now, my brethren, thus to have received the Spirit is to have received good evidence, that Jesus the Lord was baptized for you. Had he not died for you, the Spirit would never have taken up his dwelling in you, as in his everlasting temple; for you could only be fitted in point of purity, as an habitation for God, through the cleansing blood of Jesus in the sprinkling hand of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is accomplished for you.

Our blessed Saviour was baptized *praying*; and we are told that many were baptized *confessing their sins*: so that we are taught to believe that those who have received a spirit of grace and supplication, and are led to confess their sin to God with true compunction of heart, are the very people for whom Baptism is accomplished according to my text. Has the Spirit, my brethren, condescended to take the office of Comforter and Advocate? Then he will surely perform all he has undertaken; he will dictate your supplications, warm your affections, help your infirmities, and successfully intercede within you according to the will of God. Thus, while Christ pleads for you in heaven, the Spirit will cry, Abba Father *in* you, and strengthen your hearts with boldness to approach the sacred throne. Thus privileged, you possess the fruits of A Baptism

accomplished. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Here we are told that salvation is the lot of all who confess their sins, and pray in faith for the pardon of them. Why? Not because they so pray, but because, according to my text, Jesus has accomplished his baptism for them, and is now straitened no more.

As all the evidences of interest in the mediatorial work of Christ lie in the work of the Holy Spirit, so faith in Christ, or a believing on him, is one of those characters whereby these people are described for whom baptism is accomplished, and who are (as in Christ) no more straitened. He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life. And it is required that all who come to be baptized should believe. If thou believest, thou mayest. *And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.* Hereby we are led to consider the believer as the character for whom *Baptism is accomplished*. True faith is an eye by which the soul beholds her own defection, and sees the danger to which she is exposed by sin against God. By faith the soul puts off the old man, and puts on the new man. It is in believing we enjoy the truth, establish the law, and rejoice in the gospel. Hereby the saint is enabled to see, to hear, to taste, to eat, to live, to walk, to run, to stand, to fight, to flee, to conquer, and to die. The new-born soul by faith *receives* all favours, but *merits* none. Faith credits many facts, but makes none: forms no relations, but receives and enjoys many. God adopts, and faith is witness of that adoption. Jesus atoned for the sins of his people, and faith receives the atonement. He wrought a perfect righteousness, and by faith it is put on. The Spirit shows the things

of Christ, and faith is the eye that beholds them. He brings them near, and faith takes hold of them. The gospel is the voice of Jesus, and faith prepares the soul to distinguish it from that of a stranger. Faith is quick to hear the still small voice of the Holy Spirit in the heart, and is much animated, and gladly attends the dictate of the sacred teacher; while, of Jesus's things, he powerfully speaks to the heart, and fills all the mind with Immanuel's glory. By faith we *taste*, and eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God. To the believing soul he is most precious: he is highly esteemed, and, therefore, duly exalted as the Lord our righteousness. Nothing so invigorates the act of faith as a plentiful feast on the ante-typical passover. Cleansing blood is a darling theme, while the purifying fountain overflows all the soul through the sanctifying influence of the Holy Comforter. A believing soul lives by faith, through Christ living in it, as the quickening and fructiferous root of all righteousness and joy. Thus the saint is made active and fruitful to the glory of God, by his union to Christ, through the Spirit. Having received Christ Jesus the Lord as his life, he walks in him. We walk by faith, said the great apostle. He also speaks of running a race; but then he ran by faith, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. And it is by faith we stand in the worship of God, and in the field of conflict with our enemies. By faith we fight and finally prevail. For as we live by faith, so we die in faith, and obtain the kingdom without either might or merit of our own. Faith prays for *all things*, and has the evidence of all things about her. To faith in Christ all things are promised; and he who by faith overcometh the world, sin, and death, *shall inherit all things*. For you, my brethren, who are thus favoured with precious faith, Jesus lived, and died, and rose again: for you his baptism was accom-

plished: for you his heaven is made sure: for you he ever lives. Baptism is likened to a burial: *we are buried with Christ in baptism*. Now, as we do not, in the natural sense of language, bury the living, but the dead; so in baptism we always wish to have good evidence, that the persons we baptize be truly dead to the law of justification by works. And when they give evidence that they are dead, we think it right that they should be baptized or *buried* with Christ in baptism. And we know that the brethren at Rome, who were baptized into Christ's death, were *dead to the law by the body of Christ*; Rom. vii. 4. For such, I believe, baptism was accomplished, and Jesus, *as their Surety*, is straitened no more! Every natural man is wedded to the law of works; and the first ideas that arise in the mind, when convinced of sin in a general way, are all according to the nature of a law state. What must I *do*? becomes the inquiry. But when once the commandment is seen in its extent, vigour, perpetuity, and immutability, the man becomes sensible of his insufficiency; and fully persuaded that he cannot be justified by the deeds of the law, he falls into the arms of death, and all his flattering fleshly hopes expire. I, *through the law*, he cries, *am become dead to the law, that I may live unto God* by faith. Thus is he prepared to receive the fulfilling end of the law. To him the doctrine of the cross is salvation. The spirit of Christ vivifies all his soul afresh, raises him up to look at the cross, and gives immortal hope. Jesus he now admires; his heart is not his own; he now enjoys in rays of holy light, and operations most effectual, the pleasing fact which I will again repeat, *That Baptism is accomplished, and Jesus is straitened no more!* And in such a soul we see for whom it is completed.

When the saint is baptized he doeth righteousness.



He obeys his Lord ; and *If we know that he is righteous, we know that every one who doeth righteousness is born of him*, and redeemed by him. He who worketh righteousness is accepted in Christ ; against such there is no law. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, we may safely conclude that for such he shed his blood and died. For them he was straitened in Gethsemane, and slain on the tree ; all to bring them to God, and to purify them to himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works of righteousness. He calls them the righteous, and contrasts them with the wicked and disobedient. Righteousness is a course of internal and external action, agreeable to the pattern Christ himself hath laid down, and to the spiritual commands himself hath given. It springs from faith and love, and is wrought in the spirit of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God. This righteousness is not designed to justify before God, but to witness that the subjects of it are freely justified from all things by faith in Jesus, who is the end of the law for justifying righteousness to all spiritual believers. For such righteous souls, therefore, we are to understand atonement is accomplished, and endless joys secure.

And who is he, my friends, that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good ? For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears open to their prayers ! but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. Consider, my brethren, Christ suffered for us from the hands of sinners, and has left us an example that we should follow his steps. He, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness. As by his stripes we are healed, let us aim to fellow his steps. Seeing he has bought us with a great price, we are greatly induced to glorify him with our bodies, and our spirits, which

are his. We cannot be excessive in exalting him; we cannot err in following him, as we are not our own, but his. O that the Holy Spirit may increasingly empower us to render our dear Lord his due! He has given himself to us without reserve, and shall we object to giving ourselves to him in all obedience and worship? O Holy Spirit forbid it effectually for Immanuel's sake! Teach us to follow his righteous steps, and learn his holy ways, till we behold his lovely form in glory. There we shall not only see him as he is, but (O pleasing truth!) we shall be like him, and remain for ever with him.

As to every work there is a time, I may just remark, as to the time of Jesus's Baptism, that it was accomplished when it pleased the great God of heaven to have it done. We learn from the Scriptures that it was according to the counsel and foreknowledge of God. As there was a time set for Jesus's Baptism by John, in Jordan, so also we may be sure the time was fixed for his being baptized in blood by the eternal Father. As we cannot tell why he was not baptized in water till he was thirty years old, so neither do we know why he did not die before the time in which he did. Why it was not appointed to be sooner, or why not later, I believe no man can give any reason. But this we know, he died in *due time* for the ungodly; and when the payment became due, justice presented the hand-writing or bond, and Jesus paid the whole sum, and cancelled the bond for ever. Joyful news to us!

We are told, that in the *fulness of time* God sent forth his Son: when all the time was fulfilled, which was allotted to the Jewish rites, which were imposed till the time of reformation, and were then to cease.

It is said he appeared once, *in the end of the world*, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and John assures us this is the *last time*. This is the last measurement of it in which we now live. I expect the present

date will run on till the second coming of the Lord; when he will again appear *without* sin unto salvation. This intimates that he did not appear without sin when he first came into the world. He came before to act as a priest: the next time he will appear as a king, crowned with glory and honour. He came the first time as a feeble infant; but when he comes the second time he will prove himself the mighty God!

Relative to the manner in which the baptism of our Lord is accomplished, I shall only remark a few things. It is done to the full satisfaction of all parties immediately concerned. The Father is well pleased; the Son is satisfied, Isaiah, liii. 11. The Holy Spirit is thereby worshipped and glorified. He reveals the mystery of the cross, and sweetly applies the blood of the Lamb; he fills the souls of the saints with all joy and peace in believing, so that *they* also are greatly delighted. *We joy in God*, said Paul, *by whom we have now received the atonement*. Christ is acknowledged all in all: in him we are justified, and glory. Him being exalted in his manhood, we humbly adore, as being, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the one eternal God. Though there be many who artfully and obstinately deny the divinity and vicarious work of the Lord Christ, there are others who wisely and obediently embrace and rejoice in them both. The enemies of Christ's personal dignity, and meritorious mediation, are a very different sort of people from the real Christians in their ideas of almost every point of gospel doctrine. No one would think they had more than a hearsay acquaintance with the writings of the prophets and apostles, did they not assure us that they have both read them, and acknowledged some select parts of them to be infallible truth.

That, in which the righteous rejoice, the wicked will despise: nor is this surprising. The doctrine of Christ is not congenial with the feelings of contaminated nature;

and although many call themselves Christians, without either believing the doctrine of Christ, or enjoying salvation as a free gift through his blood, this cannot alter Christianity; it remains the same in itself. In this, through grace, my brethren, we can rejoice: truth is immutable. Every effort made to impose a false gospel on the real saints must prove unavailing; while the Holy Spirit will continue to take of the things of Christ, and show them unto his people. He will guide into all truth as it is in Jesus; he will bear witness in your hearts, by saving, sanctifying influence, that on your behalf Jesus's saving *Baptism is accomplished*, and that your sin-bearing Saviour is *straitened no more!* He is now ascended to the kingdom of glory; but, according to his promise when on earth, he hath sent the Comforter from the Father, who will abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom *the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* To him, with the Father, and his Equal Son, be ascribed all glory, majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever. Amen.

F I N I S.