

The Christian.

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EDITORIAL.

THE BLESSING OF A CLEAR TITLE

We often sing that beautiful hymn—

When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies, etc.

Having no continuing city here, and knowing not how soon we will be called to cross the river which divides time from eternity, it is most important to have a clear title to a mansion in the skies.

Sin has separated us from God and heaven, and we can be prepared for and gain that blest abode—only by Christ. He suffered for us the just for the unjust to bring us to God. He saves us by His blood. His obedience unto the death of the cross is the cause of our salvation, and that salvation is not of ourselves but it is the gift of God. (Eph. ii. 8). To read of our salvation arising from any other cause than the grace of God in Christ is not clear reading but confused and delusive. How are we to read of our acceptance of God or that we are saved through Christ? Some one will say that I feel that I am saved—accepted of God—when I am so happy thinking of Christ and of His love to men. Sometimes I am so happy that the birds and trees and all nature seem to be vocal in their praises to God and to the Lamb. It is then I feel that I am saved. Again, I have not these happy feelings and can't read my title so clearly. And still I feel more cast down than ever, and I am afraid I never was saved at all. Oh, that I had the joyful feelings that seem forever fled, etc., etc.

Now, the question is not about *feeling* our title clear but about reading it. Good people have not the same feelings at all times. Even Jesus, the Son of God, at one time rejoiced in spirit and thanked God for revealing these things to babes, etc. At other times He was troubled in spirit—groaned and wept. But He was the beloved Son of God as much when He wept as when He rejoiced, and so it is with His people. It is not in our emotions our frame of mind we read our title clear to an acceptance with God. We read the promises of Jesus, and when the word of promise applies to us we read a clear title. Jesus has positively promised to save men on clear terms. When we know that we comply with these terms we read our salvation clearly from the very lips of the Son of God. He saves His people from their sins. He saves no one in his sins. If we love our sins and are satisfied to live in sins it is vain to talk of being saved from them. But if we believe that Jesus is the Son of the living God and that He in infinite love died for our sins and rose again for our justification, and that belief leads us to hate our sins and determine with all our hearts to forsake them by the help of God and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, we have a clear testimony from Jesus and from the Holy Spirit that we are saved. When Jesus sent the Gospel to us and to all mankind He declared, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. (Mark xvi. 16). This testimony of Jesus is clear. There is no uncertainty in it. It holds good both when we are happy and when we are depressed in spirit. "He is 'the same' (in His promise and in His love) 'yesterday, to-day and forever.'" What clearer title could anyone have or desire than the last promise of the ascending Saviour of the world. It is clear in life and in death and will lose none of its brightness in the day of judgment.

The child of God begins his course by faith and follows that faith course till death. Good feelings follow faith in Jesus and do not go before faith and are the fruits of a clear title and not that title itself.

We will not be judged so much by our feelings as by our faith and actions. *Doing* the sayings of Jesus and *doing them not* will come up in our final destiny.

The man who has fled to Jesus for refuge has great consolation, and when just to his Saviour will constantly enquire, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do, in order that he may obey the Master in everything. He finds the Lord's will and commandments in His word. He therefore studies the scriptures so as to understand and do His commandments. These he finds delightful and safe. In the keeping of them is great reward, and his path is as the shining light which shineth more and more until the perfect day.

The devices of Satan to deceive and discourage young Christians are many and artful. One of these is to persuade him to look to his own feelings and not to the unchangeable word of Jesus as a test of his acceptance with God. Another device is to persuade him to indulge in his old sins, and if by inadvertance he does wrong, to persuade him that it is all over with him and his condemnation is sealed. Thus, the man who was addicted to strong drink before his conversion will be continuously tempted by Satan's agents to take even a little. If he is overcome by them they are the first to report his fall and the readiest to persuade him that he is lost. But when he looks to Jesus and His word he is encouraged to seek divine mercy and to renew the struggle against sin. In so doing he has a clear title of forgiveness. The same is true with others who may be suddenly overcome with the evils which once had the mastery. Satan's policy is to lead astray and then make the impression that the erring are irreparably lost.

John was the youngest of the twelve disciples and his zeal and rashness led him into many mistakes, but his love to Jesus was none the less for kind rebukes and forgiving smiles. When very old and the only surviving apostle he tells the children of God what he and the other apostles had seen and heard and handled of the word of life. He bore this witness that they whom he addressed might have fellowship with the apostles who had true and direct fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. He wrote for a double purpose; first, to keep them from falling into sin; second, to encourage those that may fall to turn and find pardon. His words are these: My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world; and hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. (I. John ii. 1, 2, 3).

To receive the apostles testimony of Christ and keep the commandments of Jesus will banish every fear and lead us into a fellowship with the Father and the Son through His apostles—a fellowship which will endure forever.

Original Contributions.

CHRIST FULFILLING THE LAW
AND THE PROPHETS.

BY M. B. RYAN.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Matt. v. 17.

The mission of Christ to earth is, perhaps, nowhere more concisely and completely stated than in I. Tim. i. 15. " * * Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, etc." The salvation of sinners was the object of Christ's mission. Yet the accomplishment of that object involved vast and important undertakings along different lines. It is well for us to look at the mission of Christ in

its many sidedness; and we can have no safer guide to such a study of it than the statements of Christ and His inspired apostles, in which the various purposes of His mission are set forth. Such a statement we have in the scripture at the head of this paper. And our present investigation will be limited to that phase of Christ's earthly work indicated in this statement.

Christ lived in the end of an age. The beginning of it was fifteen centuries in the distance. Its opening years had been characterized by the giving of a law by the God of heaven to a people which He had espoused as His own. Its progress had been marked by the rise of men called prophets, who, during successive generations, acted as the divinely authorized and inspired teachers of the nation. The law, given at Sinai, and the "prophets," given, line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, had come down to the days of Christ, the priceless legacy of the nation of which He formed a part. Both the law and the prophets had a specific purpose. Both were given for a specific time. Each was complete for the accomplishment of its purpose. Neither was perfect as a provision for man's wants. Both together fell short of what man needed for his complete redemption. Hence, both looked to the future and contemplated a better provision for man's needs. The law predicted the "good things to come" in type and shadow; the prophets, by vision and message. Both law and prophets must have a fulfilment. And this they must have, not only with reference to what they predicted for the future, but as well with reference to what they demanded in the present. Christ came to perform this task. Let us reverently behold Him in the accomplishment of His work.

I. CHRIST FULFILLED THE DEMANDS OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS OF LIFE.

The law demanded righteousness on man's part. Purity toward God and justice toward his fellow were the things the law asked for. And the prophets repeated that demand. But the demand never met a perfect response in all the history of the nation. With their highest achievements in this direction before them, the people were compelled to take up the humiliating cry, "There is none righteous, no, not one. * * * They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one," etc. But Christ fulfilled this demand. He gave it its *first* and *only* fulfillment. He was tempted in all points, like as other men, yet He was without sin. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." He could challenge His enemies to point out any evil He had ever done. He never offered a sacrifice for Himself, because He never sinned. The law was satisfied in Him and the prophets could demand nothing more. How sublime is this! For fifteen centuries the law had stood as an exponent of righteousness; and for a thousand years or more the prophets had called, with trumpet tongues, upon men to climb to that standard and be right. But in vain had the law presented righteousness and the prophets urged it. For, although many notable worthies had lived in the fear of God and died in the hope of glory, no life had appeared that had not been marred by sin; none which had not violated the law; no man who was wholly righteous. But here, in the end of the age, Jesus advances and says: "I came to fulfill." And in His spotless life the demands of the law and the prophets are met.

II. CHRIST FULFILLED THE DEMANDS OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS FOR A PERFECT REDEMPTION.

The law had "a shadow of good things to come." But the *shadow* was very significant and impressive. Streams of sacrificial blood ran from Jewish altars without cessation. Behind this blood the Jewish sinner-sought shelter. This *shadow* demanded the appearance of the *substance*, the *reality*. *the blood*