

Are You a Christian?

Are we in Christ? Do we walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh? Are we spiritually minded? Is Christ in us? for "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Are we led by the spirit? Do we say, "Abba, Father?" Do we suffer with Christ? for then only shall we reign with Christ. Are we, in one word, Christians?

To be a Christian is not to subscribe a creed, or to chant a prayer, or to sing a hymn, or to come to the Lord's table: it is to be changed in heart and nature; so that in all places, in all companies, in all employments, in all disputes, in all debates, in all undertakings, the glory of Christ,—the safety of souls,—the high present and eternal happiness of man, shall be your chief aim, and God's word shall be your conclusive directory. Hearing a sermon is of no more merit than kissing a cross, or kneeling at an altar, or sharing in a splendid ceremony. Our work begins when the address of the preacher closes. It is meant that what we hear in the sanctuary, we should take home to our hearts and consciences and either reject or accept it. It is the bitterest mockery to come constantly to the house of God, to hear faithful sermons, join in evangelical prayers, and afterwards go home with no real or permanent influence on the heart, no change of course, of character, of conduct, of views, of thoughts, of affection, of love. To come to the house of God is not so much duty as precious privilege. To hear the sermon is not the end of our coming to the house of God: it is to receive instruction, impulse, motive, hope, so real, that all will help to make the week-day toils more holy and the week-day heart more happy.

Let no one say, "We are so busy in the world that we cannot take up seriously the affairs of our soul." Want of time, in this matter, never can be an excuse. God has placed us

here for one grand purpose, to ripen for eternity. If in travelling to a distant spot we spend the whole day in gathering flowers, till night come upon us when we can no longer travel, the guilt is entirely our own. To be rich is not necessary, to be great is not necessary, to be celebrated is not necessary, but to be a Christian is necessary. All else can be dispensed with, except in answer to the question: "What must I do to be saved?" And until that question is settled, and settled in the very depths of our hearts, and in the light of God's countenance, all our religion is but a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.

I asked you, reader, Are you a Christian? Are you, in heart and conscience, a child of God? Are you living as such, counting your present sufferings, if you suffer, not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed? If you are resting on the crucified for acceptance, looking to the glorified for happiness, then the eyes that now see through a glass dimly, shall soon see face to face; those hands that hold trembling the cup of sorrow, will soon wave the palm; those heads that are bowed down beneath a burden of care shall be encircled with everlasting garlands; and those sad voices that have often been heard in the night in agony, "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" will yet be heard again saying: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever."

"Art is long and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.
Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,—
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."

—*Voices of the Night.*