

WHAT CHRIST MEANS TO ME

"For me to live is Christ." Philippians 1:21.

It is a privilege to speak to friends in the name of Him who has called us His friends if we do the things which He commands us. Someone asked Charles Kingsley, "What is the secret of your beautiful life?" He answered, "I had a friend." And I have often thought that if this life of mine ever approaches the beautiful and true it will be because,

"I've found a Friend, O such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him."

There are many things about which I am too ignorant to speak wisely, but I can speak of Christ with freedom, for then I am boasting of Another and not of myself. In a day when men are chasing a thousand and one things that are not so I rejoice in Jesus Christ who is ever the same. I have found in Christ a life that is beautifully simple and simply beautiful. In Him I find:

1. Pardon.

"God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Years ago a Russian soldier sat in his tent one night before a list of debts he could not pay. He had written at the bottom of the list, "Who is to pay for all this?" As the hours went by, he finally fell asleep. The Emperor came by, looked in the tent, saw the soldier, came up closer, saw the list of debts and the pitiful question. He affixed his signature to the bottom of the list, so that when the soldier awoke, he found his debts paid. I know that once I faced moral and spiritual debts which I could not pay. But Jesus, with the blood of Calvary, wrote, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Is it any wonder that rainy days become radiant days when the heart can sing?

"Jesus paid it all;
All to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow."

2. Peace.

Through Him I have peace with God, and as I make my requests known to God with thanksgiving, the peace of God which passes all understanding garrisons my heart and mind through Christ Jesus. This world does not have any peace. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." Someone has spelled modern life in three words, "Hurry, worry, bury." The world has insomnia of the soul. It has tried all the opiates and sedatives, but there is only one prophylactic against fear and worry. You don't keep it, it keeps you: "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth."

3. Purpose.

"To live is Christ." A negro philosopher once said, "One reason why some folks never git nowhar is, they wasn't gwine nowhar when they started." But Christ gives us a purpose, and that purpose is just Himself. As the Mississippi River flows through the middle of America and the tributaries feed into it on both sides, so when one seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all else flows into that central purpose, to know Christ and to make Him known.

4. Power.

Christ also means power, the power to see the purpose through. "All power is given unto Me," He said. And Paul declares, "I can do all things through Christ." Jesus is not only our Saviour, He is our sustenance, He is "the power of God." His power is made real to us by the Holy Spirit, not that we may brag about it, but that we may be His witnesses.

5. Plenty.

Spiritual abundance is ours. "All things are yours," says Paul to the Christian. Again he speaks of "having nothing, yet possessing all things." It is the Christian's paradox. He doesn't have to get rich, he is rich, for "the Lord is rich unto all that call upon Him." Most of us appreciate but do not appropriate what we have in Christ. We carry checks on the bank of heaven and never cash them at the window of prayer. We are Bible window-shoppers; we stroll up and down through the show-windows of God's Word and never possess what we perceive. God, Who spared not His Son, shall with Him also freely give us all things.

6. Prospect.

"Where I am, there ye may be also." Someone has said, with reference to the life to come, that in the Old Testament they were willing to go but wanting to stay, while in the New Testament they were wanting to go but willing to stay. Jesus had made the difference. And what a difference it makes to be with Christ! A mother whose little son had died, told her little daughter, "Your brother has gone to be with Jesus." Later, in conversation with a friend, she spoke of having lost her little boy. The daughter spoke up and said, "But, mother, you said he was with Jesus. How can he be lost if you know where he is?" Truly, the Christian can say with His departed loved ones in Christ:

"Death can hide but not divide;
Thou art but on Christ's other side.
Thou art with Christ and Christ with me;
In Christ united still are we."

These are some things Christ means to me. All I need is found in Him. He is Alpha and Omega and all the letters between. He is the same yesterday, the historic Christ; the same today, the indwelling Christ; the same tomorrow, the coming Christ.

Christ is my message. Some years ago, two boats were passing each other on the Mississippi, when an old Negro said to a white passenger as he pointed to the other boat, "Look, yonder's the captain!" When asked for an explanation, he said, "Years ago, we were goin' along like this and I fell overboard and the captain rescued me. And since then, I just loves to point him out!" Some years ago, I was overboard but the Captain of our salvation leaped overboard from glory to rescue me. And I just love to point Him out.