

**ON THE SUFFERINGS
OF CHRIST FOR OUR
SAKE**

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On the Sufferings of Christ for Our Sake by Esther Seebohm

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**CONSISTING CHIEFLY OF SELECTIONS FROM THE
WRITINGS OF ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.**

BY

ESTHER SEEBOHM.

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"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."—1 PETER III, 18.

At the first, *Sin*, as the breach of God's command, separated man from God, and ever since the soul remains naturally remote from Him. It is under a sense of exile, pronounced by the justice of God—banishment from Him who is the light and the life of the soul, as the soul itself is of the body.

But Mercy's voice is heard—"Return, repent, and live." The Apostle says, "Ye who were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." But it is impossible for the soul, led captive by sin, to break its chains, and return by itself. Nothing

but the power of Christ can effect this— can bring home a heart to God. Common mercies are little thought of—the judgments of God without the power of Christ, spoken of, will not do it. Neither the works, nor the word sounding daily in his ear, Return, return! cause the soul to see the hand of God lifted up, Isa. xxvi. 11.

How many are there who, in their own particular, or in their families, have been sharply lashed by divers scourges, and yet are never a whit the nearer God for it all—their hearts have proved as earthly and vain as ever. Only a divine virtue going forth from Christ, “lifted up, draws men” unto him—and being come unto him, He brings them unto the Father.

Before He ascended up on high, He promised to send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to convince of sin, and guide into all truth. It is His blessed work to humble and contrite the soul before the Lord, in a deep feeling of its sinful and alienated condition; and in proportion to the depth of this conviction, will be its estimate of the value of that redemption which Christ has purchased for us, and the gratitude with which, in faith, it will accept the offers of His love and mercy. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” But this message of pardoning love, entirely free and unmerited as it is, and so pre-

cious to the broken-hearted believer, who feels he has no other refuge, is not calculated to quiet the sinner in his sins. The Spirit that quickens in the beginning, is the same that carries on the heart-cleansing work. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things have become new." You who declare yourselves to be strangers to God, by living far off from him, do not continue to abuse yourselves so grossly. Can you think any consolation yours that arises from the sufferings of Christ, while it is evident their end is not accomplished, they have not brought you to God? Hath He purchased you a liberty to sin? or is it not deliverance *from sin*, which alone is *true liberty*? the thing He aimed at, and agreed for, and laid down His life for.

Shall any man offer to bear the name of Christian, who places himself in the way of sin, and can delight and sport himself in it, when he considers this, that "Christ suffered for sin!" You who still account *that* sweet which he found so bitter, and account *that* light which was heavy to Him, and made His soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, you are yet far from Him. If you were *in* Him, and one with Him, there would be some harmony of your hearts with His, and some sympathy with those sufferings endured by your Lord for you. This makes the real Chris-

tian an avowed enemy to sin. He may be surprised by it, but there is no possibility of reconciliation between them.

Christ hath, by His blood, opened up our way to God, and yet we refuse to make use of it. Oh, how few come in! Those who are brought unto God, and received into friendship with Him, entertain that friendship—delight to draw near to Him—love to be much with Him. Is it so with us? By being so near, they become more like unto Him, know His will better every day, and grow more conformable to it.

Some of those who have felt the drawing influence of His Spirit, who was lifted up for their sakes, and been brought nigh unto God, may be neglecting so sweet a privilege. They can comply and be too friendly with a vain world—can pass many days without a lively communion with God, not aspiring to an increase of that as the thing our Lord hath purchased for us, and that wherein all our happiness and welfare lie, here and hereafter. Your hearts are cleaving to folly—you are not delighting yourselves in the Lord, not refreshed with this nearness to Him; your thoughts are not often on it, nor is it your study to walk conformably to it. Oh, endeavour that it may be thus with you! The true life of a Christian is to eye Christ in every step of his life, both as his rule and as his strength; looking

to Him as his pattern, both in doing and suffering, and drawing power from Him for going through both.

His whole life is a steady aiming at conformity with Christ ; so that there can be no argument so apposite and persuasive as this example, and no exercise of obedience, either active or passive, so difficult, but the view and contemplation of that example will powerfully sweeten it, for "Christ also suffered."

"No temptation has befallen you, but what is common to men." If we trace the lives of the most eminent saints, shall we not find every notable step that is recorded marked with a new cross, one trouble following on another, as the waves of the sea do ? Is not this manifest in the life of Abraham, and Jacob, and others ? Why, then, dream of exemption ? Would any one have a new untrodden way cut for him, free of thorns, and strewed with flowers all along ? Does he expect to meet with no contradictions, nor hard measure from the world, or imagine that there may be such a dexterity necessary as to keep its good will, and the friendship of God too ? This will not be ; all that will "live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," 2 Tim. iii. 12. This is the path to the kingdom, that which all the sons of God, the heirs of it, have gone in, even Christ ; according to that well-known word,