

for us if we use it aright. When we are *chastened*, we are to take it as the chastening of our Father. When we tread on any *thorn or thistle* in this world, while natural feelings may prompt a cry of pain, and cause some warm pure tears to flow, Christian principle must dry those tears, and forget to murmur.

Or to return to the figure in the text, *The Cross of Christ*, the wooden one that stood on Calvary was carried by two different men, in two different spirits. The one was *Simon the Cyrenian*, the other was *Jesus Christ*. The one bore it as a mere slave. He happened to be in the crowd, when he was singled out and compelled to bear it after Jesus had sunk under the weight. There was no dignity, no self-sacrifice, no victory in the work. As far as appears he was the reluctant, stolid instrument of an arbitrary command, compelled to a menial service by an insolent and overbearing police. The other bore it, so long as his strength allowed, with the firmness, the nobility, the heroism of a great soul. He conquered even when he was crushed. He bore it with the meek resignation that came from knowing it was laid on him by his Father.

In the spirits of these two, we have the types of the different spirits in which the common crosses of life are borne. Some there are who meet their trials like the Cyrenian, if not with open murmuring, with a concealed discontent. They submit, because they *must*. They feel that the cross is laid on them, that they can't throw it off, and therefore sullenly they bear it, a heavy load on an impatient spirit.

But there are *others*, who can glory even in tribulation, who can take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, who can be happy even while they weep, who can be meek and patient and hopeful even in their afflictions, knowing them to be the correctings of Divine love, and that the pain which is but for a moment, may work for them a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory.

Oh, that ye could gather the lessons of such lives, for I have learnt from them, in the homes of poverty, of disease, of death, and of living sorrows, worse than death, as I could not have learned from the wisest expositor, how amid the trials of common life, 'tis possible to obey this precept. I have learned, how ennobling it is for a man in however lowly station, how strengthening under whatever burden of sorrow, to take up his cross in the spirit of Christ, and follow him.

Finally, there is a cross *peculiar to the Christian*. "All they who live godly in Christ must suffer persecution."

The self-denial of which I spoke is in itself a cross. Every time when a man subordinates his will to God's will, he is taking up his cross, and that too one peculiar to the Christian. But that of which I speak now, is the one laid on Christians by an unchristian world. It's the trials he has to bear at the

hands of others, because of his Christian profession. It is the one Paul had to bear, and of which he says he was not ashamed. He had been imprisoned, scourged, stoned, shipwrecked. He had suffered the loss of all things, because of his faith and zeal, and yet he says "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ." It's the cross that has been borne by the noble army of the martyrs, the cross once carried by every saint in Heaven. The cross, the same in kind, *you* must carry when you are out in the world. Not the cross of Paul, or Stephen, or John. Not the cross perhaps of the worthies of our own land, whose worth came out in troublous times. Not perhaps resisting unto blood, but *your own cross*—the one made for you, and laid on you, by the men of your own time and your own sphere. The cross made up of the infidel sneerings, the sceptical questionings of the enemies of religion, and the cold indifference of those who from their profession ought to be your friends.

Every man knows his own difficulties of this kind best, but there are few spheres in which there are not some who make light of the Bible, of Churches, of religious work. Who delight in nothing more than the ribald jest that provokes a laugh at the expense of a religious companion, who, if they have not driven the nails into the Saviour's hands and feet, nor pierced him with the spear nor crowned him with thorns, have joined with the crew who shouted, away with him, crucify him.

These are the men you have to face, my Christian brother, men you can surely afford to despise. I know well how hard 'tis, for a young man especially to bear such attacks. I know how the young spirit that loves to be praised and encouraged and needs help, shrinks under the withering influence of sneering and opposition. Still, why should you fear the laugh of a profane coward, when the Lord is on your side. "Who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?"

And if ye wish an example, look to Christ. He was mocked, buffeted, spit upon, but through it all he went with a calm dignity. "As a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." "When he was reviled, he reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to Him who judgeth righteously." From him, you may learn how "when ye do well and suffer for it, you may take it patiently."

Take up your cross and follow him, for as he was perfected through his sufferings, so in that same school may ye too be matured. For as the storms rock the tree, and cause it to strike its roots deeper so do persecutions give depth and strength to Christian faith.

And oh, what is it, that ye gain an infidel's smile, if thereby you have alienated God. And what is it on the other hand, that ye have