



The End of Suffering: Finding Purpose in Pain

Scott Cairns

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“The extreme greatness of Christianity lies in the fact that it does not seek a supernatural remedy for suffering, but a supernatural use for it.” –Simone Weil

“Like most people I, too, have been blindsided by personal grief now and again over the years. And I have an increasingly keen sense that, wherever I am, someone nearby is suffering now.

For that reason, I lately have settled in to mull the matter over, gathering my troubled wits to undertake a difficult essay, more like what we used to call an assay, really—an earnest inquiry. I am thinking of it just now as a study in suffering, by which I hope to find some sense in affliction, hoping—just as I have come to hope about experience in general—to make something of it.”

Is there meaning in our afflictions?

With the thoughtfulness of a pilgrim and the prose of a poet, Scott Cairns takes us on a soul-baring journey through “the puzzlement of our afflictions.” Probing ancient Christian wisdom for revelation in his own pain, Cairns challenges us toward a radical revision of the full meaning and breadth of human suffering.

Clear-eyed and unsparingly honest, this new addition to the literature of suffering is reminiscent of *The Year of Magical Thinking* as well as the works of C. S. Lewis. Cairns points us toward hope in the seasons of our afflictions, because “in those trials in our lives that we do not choose but press through—a stillness, a calm, and a hope become available to us.”

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