

## Knowledge Through Suffering

George E. Failing

Knowledge gained without suffering is only superficial.

He who has not suffered as a man does not know men. He who has not suffered for God does not know God.

There is a knowledge of God and man that may be obtained without suffering. It is a knowledge of facts and not of processes.

The matter can be viewed three ways: God knowing man, man knowing man, and man knowing God.

Because God created man in His own image, God knew man apart from the incarnation. Jesus exercised what might be called a divinely intuitive insight into man: "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:24, 25). But there were some things—we say it most reverently—that Jesus "learned . . . by the things that he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). In fact, He was made perfect in sufferings.

Specifically, we know that Jesus suffered chiefly because of contact with sin. While it is not possible for God to be tempted with evil, Jesus did actually suffer being tempted (Heb. 2:18). Not only so, God made "him to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21). Following His resurrection, Christ took with Him into the Trinity the ability to be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15). It is not profane to say that God knows us, both because He made us and because He became one of us—in suffering.

Suffering also establishes a bond of knowledge between a man and his fellows. Until a man suffers he does not know at all the plight of millions of his fellows. He knows that there are hospitals, physicians and medicines, but he does not know the sick. He knows that there are cemeteries and morticians, but he does not know the bereaved. He knows that many are famine-stricken, but he does not know the pangs of hunger.

Compassion literally means to suffer with another. No one can truly have compassion on another unless he has suffered himself. So sufferings have a real value: they knit us one to another. When a man suffers, he enters into a new experience for himself. When he suffers with, and on behalf of, others, he enters a whole new world of human brotherhood.

Then by suffering men also come to know God. There are some who preach a religion without tears, penitence or restitution. To them the phrase "only believe" encompasses the whole truth about salvation.

We agree that unbelief is the last barrier that must be cleared before a man receives Christ. But we cannot believe that believing is an easy, cheap thing. Just as salvation cost God His utmost—His son, so salvation costs us our utmost—ourselves! That surrender of self is impossible without godly sorrow, without renunciation of sin, without cutting off all the shore lines of human help and self-pride. We suffer to enter the kingdom of heaven.

There is also a deeper suffering involved in knowing God better. Job knew God before He entered into his fiery trial. But as he came to the end of that trial, he admitted: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Whereof I abhor myself, and repent in dust and in ashes" (Job 42:5, 6). Through that suffering Job came to exclaim, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25).

He who purposes to gain a fuller knowledge of men or of God must take post-graduate courses in the school of suffering.

—The Wesleyan Methodist

The King's Highway

## THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer

Thought it scarcely worth his while

To waste much time on the old violin,

But he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bidden, good folk?" he cried,

"Who'll start the bidding for me?"

A dollar—a dollar—then two, only two—

Two dollars, and who'll make it three?

Going for three"—but no—

From the room far back, a gray-haired man

Came forward and picked up the bow,

Then, wiping the dust from the old violin,

And tightening the loosened strings,

He played a melody pure and sweet

As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,

With a voice that was quiet and low.

Said, "NOW what am I bid for the old violin?"

"A thousand dollars — and who'll make it two?"

Two thousand—and who'll make it three?

Three thousand once—three thousand twice—

And going—and gone," cried he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,

"We do not understand.

What changed its worth?" Quick came the reply.

"The touch of the Master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,

And battered and scarred with sin,

Is auctioned cheap, to a thoughtless crowd,

Much like the old violin.

A "mess of pottage"—a glass of wine,

A game—and he travels on:

He is going once—and going twice—

He's going—and almost gone!

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd

Never can quite understand

The worth of a soul, and the change that's wrought

BY THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND.

## ONLY EIGHT PERCENT

Dr. Walter Cavert tells of a physician of wide experience who analyzed the "worriers" who at one time or another had been his patients. Forty percent of them, he found, worried over things that never happened. Thirty percent of the worries analyzed were related to past matters which were now beyond the patients' control. Twelve percent were anxious about their health, although their only illness was in their imagination. Ten percent worried over their families, their friends, or the neighbors, although in most cases there was no substantial basis for the fears that were causing trouble. Just eight percent of the worries seemed to have some basis in conditions that needed to be remedied.—Paul S. Rees

## PLAIN GOODNESS

Christianity is not a voice in the wilderness, but a life in the world. It is not an idea in the air, but feet on the ground, going God's way. It is not an exotic flower to be kept under glass, but a hardy plant to bear all kinds of fruit in all kinds of weather. Fidelity to duty is its root. Nothing we can say to the Lord—no calling Him by great or dear names—can take the place of doing His will. We may cry out about the beauty of eating bread with Him in His kingdom, but it is wasted breath and a rootless hope unless we plow and plant in His kingdom here and now. There is no substitute for plain, everyday goodness.

—The War Cry