

## THE MESSENGER AND HIS MESSAGE

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**R**EPEATEDLY we hear the statement, "The Church has never had a greater opportunity that it has today." This statement is always re-iterated in time of crisis, whether that crisis be economic, social, political, or moral. The implied assertion is that the Church is capable of ministering to men, no matter how dire their need; that the Church has a message of salvation for all men, everywhere, and under all circumstances. That is a great testimonial to the power that religion may have in the lives of men.

It is my firm conviction that the Church is meeting the challenge of today. The Church is more vitally aware of the needs of men, of their problems, of the problems that face us now, of the problems that will face us in the post-war world, than any other agency, anywhere. The great limitation that the Church now faces is that which comes from lack of man-power. She knows the tasks which must be done, and with superhuman strength she is accomplishing great things, but like her Lord she cries, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."

Any consideration of the problem and scope of evangelism must of necessity begin with a consideration of the evangelist. At the outset it is necessary to clarify terms. Perhaps because so many of the words associated with the process of evangelism have been perverted to specialized meanings or have become associated with very definite techniques it may be necessary for us to create a new terminology. Yet the fact is that we are called upon to consider the new responsibilities of the church in terms of an old vocabulary.

In this paper we shall assume the task of evangelism to be the total pro-

cess of relating men to God and to their fellow men, and of so nurturing them that they will continue to grow spiritually. The evangelist is any servant of the church who is engaged in any part of these processes. Primarily we shall be concerned with the ordained minister of the church, who in evangelical protestantism is given the prime responsibility of being a messenger of God. Who is this messenger and who commissioned him?

Every Methodist preacher enters the ministry of the church by the recommendation of a local congregation. His fellow Christians say of him, "Here is a man in whom are the marks of a Christian." The first test of the man who becomes a Methodist preacher is the testimony of his own life. The assumption is that his life is an example of what man can become when he becomes a Christian. Further, he has found such satisfaction in the Christ way of life that he is dedicating himself to persuade others to become Christ's followers. After he has been admitted to the ministry of the church his character is examined in open Conference session every year of his life. It has been said that the Christian minister is a salesman of Christianity. If it be true that he is a salesman, then it must also be said that he himself is a sample of what he is seeking to sell. Is this pious theory, or is it fact? Is it true that we place only the finest Christian characters in the ministry? How carefully does the local church face its responsibility of recommending only the best for the Church? Is a young man chosen because of his sterling character or because he is a good organizer? The program of evangelism is more in need of outstanding lives than it is of clever organizers. It may be objected by some that we are overlooking the fact that

laymen as well as ministers must have an evangelistic zeal. A man must be a consecrated layman before he can become a consecrated minister, but it is also true than any effective program of lay evangelism must revolve in part around the minister. It must be remembered too that while defection may be tolerated in a layman, ministers are expected to be above suspicion. Yet our practice in Annual Conference has not been without censure. Problem cases have frequently been solved by transfer instead of stern disciplinary measures. Annual examination of character must remain an opportunity for the Church to examine its servants, otherwise the procedure becomes perfunctory and hypocritical. We need to remember that immoral conditions obtained in the ministry of John Wesley's church. That is what led to the spiritual decline in England and of the Established Church. And it wasn't the clergy of that day that saved England from moral chaos, but an enlightened lay leadership in class meetings and societies, men who were spiritually alive, thoroughly devoted to the cause of Christ and His church. I am not pleading for sanctimony, that is more dangerous than irreligion, but "God send us men" who know the power of salvation, who have found the strength of God in their lives, and who will dedicate themselves to be co-workers with Christ in His Church. Perhaps the program of evangelism needs to begin with the prayer "Revive us, O Lord, beginning with me."

Our first plea, then, is that local churches will guard carefully the character of its ministry by recommending only those in whose lives are evidences of Christian salvation. One of the difficult tasks of our theological schools is to have to inform some man that while he may be able to qualify academically for grades or graduation, he cannot be continued much less be graduated be-

cause he is unfit to be a spiritual leader of men. Yet our schools would be derelict in their moral obligation if they evaded this responsibility. Everything must be done so that the Methodist Church can face the world unafraid and say through the lives of its ministers, "This is what a man may be when his life is completely possessed of the spirit of Christ." This John Wesley had in mind when he formulated the questions, "Are you going on to perfection?" and "Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?" Our answers must be in the affirmative if we believe that the teachings of Jesus will save men..

In a recent Annual Conference a speaker presented the claims of the Christian ministry. Afterwards a layman approached the speaker, and said, "I am a salesman. The job of the minister is to sell Christianity and the minister has the greatest thing in all the world to sell." Let us continue that salesman's analogy. How efficient is a sales organization that has a good board of directors, excellent literature, well equipped buildings, sufficient capital, a splendid stock in trade, but an undermanned sales-force? Yet that is precisely the position in which the Church finds herself today. The General Conference of 1944 was startled when Dr. Murray H. Leiffer stated that "one out of every three men now in effective service in the Methodist Church will be either dead or retired in the next ten years." Yet the fact is that on the basis of the life expectancy of our ministers that statement was not only true in 1944, but it is always true. It means that for every three men in any Annual Conference, that Conference must find one recruit every ten years.

That makes no allowance for growth, for opening new churches, for enlarging responsibilities of the church. The Church is undermanned. We have a greater job to do than can be done with

our present trained leadership. We have failed to challenge men to the point where they desired to become ministers of Jesus Christ. How often a delegation arrives at the Annual Conference with the demand that the Bishop and Cabinet will send them a new minister, "a young man, well trained, with a passion for souls." Yet if that delegation investigated it would find that the church it represents has never in its history produced such a man. How many problems of our Annual Conference cabinets would be solved if each church that had never produced a minister would resolve to be content with whoever the Bishop would assign to them. I recognize that there must be developed in our Church an intelligent recruiting program for the ministry, but I am firmly convinced that men of evangelistic zeal are grown in homes and in congregations that have the warmth of Christianity in them.

There are many qualities that the minister and evangelist should have and many techniques that he should develop. To look at the total task of evangelism in the church will help us to understand something of the many qualifications that the modern church leader must have. We say that the major task of the church is still the salvation of mankind. But our work has become infinitely more complicated than one individual confronting another individual with a challenge to righteous living. Our supreme goal is still that of bringing Christ's love into men's lives so that they may respond to that love, but in a world shot through with hatred that is a difficult task. Specifically "salvation" means giving men a reason for living when all hope is gone; it means bringing words of comfort to hearts that are broken through bereavement; it means binding up the wounds of bodies torn by war or by industry; it means giving education that is Christ-centered to youth who otherwise must

study in institutions that have no concern for the spiritual well-being of its students; it means being father and mother to children who because of the ravages of war, or broken homes, are left without benefit of loving parents; it means providing havens of rest for aged folk who have grown weary; it means the printing of Bibles, devotional literature, and good books; it means preaching the word of hope and challenge, giving men something to live by day after day; it means above all planting the principles of Christ deep in the hearts of men and nations so that upon the common acceptance of the principles of Christ the nations may be bound together in brotherhood and peace. For these things the Church is necessary, and through her manifold organizations the Church is addressing herself to the challenge of today.

To serve in such a church program a leader must have many gifts and excellent preparation. He needs faith and hope, perhaps charity, but most certainly love. How can a man win others without love? A genuine love for folks must be the major possession of any man who would be an evangelist. Organization, building campaigns, financial canvasses, religious education techniques, or any other part of the church structure, is meaningless apart from a love and concern for people. Examine the lives of the great heroes of our faith, from the time of the great prophets, down through the apostles, the early church fathers, the saints of later years, the leaders of Protestantism, the founders of our own church body, and above all, the life of our Lord. Their love and loyalty to God and their concern for his children drove them through fire and flood, enabled them to surmount defeats and discouragements, gave power to their messages, and compassion in their ministries. If you would discover the dynamic of the evangelist, look not to his techniques, but to the

impelling power of his love. See John Knox on his knees, wrestling through the night "for the other half of Scotland." These men had discovered the power of divine love, and it became the main purpose of their lives to bring something of that love into the lives of their fellows. The evangelist looks at Edwin Markham's "Man with the Hoe." He may not agree with Markham's theology, but he is stirred with pity for this servant of the soil. This stolid creature is far from being the dream of the great Creator. He needs to have the divine spark re-kindled.

But it is not this simple peasant alone that stirs our messenger, he is concerned about the man with stocks and bonds. He seeks to challenge the man to loftier goals and more challenging horizons. It is not enough to convert his resources, desirable as it may be to have him undergird a program of education or to transform an Akron atrocity to the aesthetic Gothic. It is the man himself that our messenger seeks to save. He sees also the man with the micrometer painstakingly measuring parts for machines that will be instruments of death. He comes to understand something of the tension that arises in men's minds as they seek to construct, when they know that their work will lead to destruction. In country, small town, and in city (that is the usual sequence of promotion in the Methodist Church), wherever he may be, he sees men in varied tasks, some whose lives are benedictions to their families and their communities, but all too many others who are not even blind leaders of the blind. They sense no destiny. And as our messenger sees these men and their needs, he becomes aware of three important considerations. First, he recognizes that all men cannot be approached in the same manner; second, that he himself must know the rich resources of Christian living but in addition he must know how to present

intelligently and winsomely a plea for the man's commitment to God; and third, that salvation is a continuous process daily lived and that men must not only avow their purpose but must be taught the Christ way of life. Let us consider the last first, and then return to the other consideration.

The trousers of the Christian were reputedly vulnerable at two places, the seat and the knees. An examination of this article of clothing presumably indicated whether a man was a sinner or a saint. In other words we recognized that salvation was an ongoing process and did not terminate with any one particular act or moment of time. Yet despite the fact that each year or season we had "revival meetings" when the backsliders could find their way back home, much of our programming and theology revolved around the idea that once a man was saved, he was always saved. We proceeded on the assumption that the prime responsibility of the church was to get a man's name down on the record as a member. There are still many Protestants who believe that if their names are still recorded in the church membership list they have made a reservation with Saint Peter for a reserved seat in heaven, no matter how neglectful they may have been of their church vows. Our failure to teach men to walk the Christian way of life after they had avowed their purpose to do so is a major reason for our large inactive membership rolls. Religious educators have shown us how unintelligent it is to teach children in our homes and churches to live the Christ way of life and then after a number of years of such instruction seek to "convert" them. We now recognize that such children must avow their purpose of allegiance to Christ and to His church, but they need to be confirmed rather than converted into the faith and fellowship of the church. Conversely it is similarly unwise to expect

new born Christians to be full grown in their application of the Christian principles. Industrialists have discovered how difficult is the transition from paternalism to co-operative endeavor, that application is far more difficult than intention. Just so, in all the varied phases of men's lives they must be taught the implications of Christian principles. We still proceed however in Christian education on the assumption that people may be divided into classes on the basis of physical age rather than mental and spiritual development, but our messenger knows that he must make some special provision for those who are full grown physically, but are children in spiritual understanding.

He realizes, as he works with men, that there are two distinct stages in the religious development of men. First, there must be a decision or commitment, that moment when men avow their purpose to become followers of the Christ. That decision must be made on the basis of intellectual content, but the decision is essentially emotional. It is putting will to motivate intellectual persuasion. How many men have been lost to Christianity who have been intellectually persuaded that Christianity was the greatest challenge to man, but who did not have the emotional courage to follow the dictates of their own conscience. We have been afraid of emotion in the church in recent years. We certainly needed a wholesome reaction against the emotionalism of other years, but we have sometimes failed to see that it is an essential part of our work to channel the emotions of men in the right direction. We shall recognize also that since men differ greatly in emotional tolerance we shall need to have a great variety of approaches. We shall need to guard also against superficial emotional outbursts that contribute little or nothing to undergirding the daily lives of men. It has sometimes been charged that religion is an

escape mechanism. That charge arose because some religious groups provided the means for emotional outbursts, but all too often these outbursts did not result in changed lives. It is just as dangerous for the church to make it possible for some men to go on "emotional jags" as it is for the state to enable other men to get drunk on liquor. Our job is to harness the emotions of men for worthwhile tasks, not to provide spiritual safety valves, and certainly not to build up artificial pressures in the belief that sudden explosions are evidence of great power. The channelling of the emotions into worthwhile Christian living is the second phase of religious development and experience. We have set as one goal of the year of evangelism the accession of one million new members, half by confession of faith and one half from revived Methodists. The fact that we are seeking to revive as many Methodists (not now on our rolls) as we are seeking new converts indicates that we have not done an effective job of keeping converts spiritually alive. There is danger that we shall seek to enlist men more rapidly than we can assimilate them. That is why it is so vital to put the first objective of a spiritual rebirth within the church itself, and spiritual rebirth must begin with the ministers and key laymen.

We have already suggested that salvation is an ongoing process with which our messenger must be constantly concerned unless he is to add further to the already overcrowded inactive lists. The messenger, throughout his ministry, will constantly find himself in a quandary as to the proper balance of his time and energy between the first and second of these phases. Both must be done. The messenger who has led men to follow Christ has undertaken the spiritual responsibility of being the new convert's religious guide. On the other hand he is everlastingly aware of

the great command, "Go ye into all the world." It is then that he realizes that he cannot work alone. In addition to drawing upon the great spiritual resources, he must build around himself a great corps of workers. The two phases of evangelism must become the task not only of the minister but of his entire church. It takes skill to promote such an organization as that. Let us look, now, then at the other two considerations, the approach to men, and the message and its presentation.

A glance through recent publications will indicate the multivariied groups of men with which the modern church must be concerned. Each group has its own frame of reference and presents its own peculiar problems. It becomes increasingly necessary that men who serve the church shall have adequate preparation for their mission. It is not our purpose here to justify theological education. We simply recognize its need. (It might be stated parenthetically that those who charge that increased educational standards for our ministry has resulted in our present shortage of men, have overlooked the fact that during the time we have increased the standards of our ministry we have also decreased our program of enlistment.) Nor is it our purpose to evaluate the curriculum of our theological schools, except to ask whether or not our schools increase the evangelistic zeal of our ministers. It is one thing to offer courses in the content and methods of evangelism, it is quite another matter to match results with theory. Theological school education must be a combination of theory and practice. But it has frequently been charged that men "lose their religion" in the theological schools, that they have less of evangelistic purpose and dynamic. It would be a laborious task to examine the records of all annual conferences with regard to the performance of student ministers but perhaps it would be worth-

while. I can speak only with regard to our own immediate situation, but an examination of the year-book of the Colorado Conference indicates that the average number of accessions made on those charges served by students was well above the average of the Conference, and the church at large. That is because our schools **are** stressing the need for evangelism, and **are** guiding men in its purpose and practice.

Our candidate for the ministry will early discover that there are four phases of his training in the theological school. He will learn the structure, law, and practices of the church he is seeking to serve. He will learn a variety of techniques that will enable him to serve more or less efficiently, and to approach men in all walks of life and under many circumstances. As a matter of fact he will probably be more interested in such courses for they will enable him to be an efficient workman. Fortunately there is an increasing recognition that courses in procedure and practice are as important as anything else that we teach. Third, he will become acquainted with the great teachings and traditions of the church through courses in Bible, church history, systematic theology, etc. Finally, he must be taught to think clearly. Courses in theology and philosophy will help him to systematize his thought, and courses in sermon construction and preaching will teach him to present effectively the ideas that he would impart to his congregations. He will discover that his training as a minister does not cease as he leaves the campus, but that training is a constant process as he meets and solves new problems. He will discover also that his own religious life must be the main-spring of his work, and that his own religious experience must be the center around which is built his theology and philosophy of life. There is danger here, but if a man is intellectually honest he cannot subscribe to a theology

that contradicts his own experience. No system of theology is big enough if it does not account for one's valid religious experiences. It likewise remains sterile academic theory until it has been validated by personal experience. Methodism has always had her strength in the testimony of personal experience, not in her systems of thought, which necessarily changed through the years.

Our messenger will express himself in various ways as the years roll by, but his message, of evangelism will necessarily revolve around five points:

1. Men need to give allegiance to something bigger than themselves.
2. The moral law of the universe cannot be broken with impunity.
3. God is not an innocent bystander, or an unthinking force, but has a love and a concern for His created, a love expressed supremely through Jesus.
4. There is forgiveness with God, but it is obtained through penitence and restitution, not subscription to creeds.
5. The way of suffering is the way of salvation, and God Himself shares in that suffering.

Let us glance at each of these briefly.

1. Men need to give allegiance to something bigger than themselves. There is a constant cry from men, "What shall I do to be saved?" It may not be stated in those words, but that is their implication. The tragedies of war and the frightful experiences in combat have wrung this cry from many lips. But it is not simply the fears of death and suffering that prompt this cry. Man seeks significance for himself, and for life, and he is conscious that unless he be related in some way to the Creator of all life, then man is simply the blind sport of circumstance, an accident that flashes up momentarily, only to disappear as if he had not been. Now it is false procedure to assume that because man desires a certain type of God, or relationship to the cosmos, that necessarily that God or that

relationship is there. But the evidences from the sciences indicate that man is the highest result of creation, and we have further evidence that the best is conserved, not wasted or destroyed. There is the further testimony, evidenced in so many startlingly different ways that man may be conscious of companionship with the Creator. From a pragmatic point of view, those lives have had greatest meaning which have given themselves with utter devotion to something that is greater than themselves, be it a humanitarian cause, patriotism, benevolence, or religion. It has been demonstrated repeatedly in the lives of men that when man becomes selfish and self-centered, his life is dwarfed, dissatisfied, and frustrated by boundless fears. Horrible as modern warfare is, it has not been without its great deeds of heroism; deeds that were accomplished on behalf of comrades, or the great ideals for which men struggle. The democracies have discovered that men can be challenged more readily in terms of great ideals, and slogans expressing great ideals have oftentimes been thin veneers for less worthy objectives. But the fact remains that there is something in the very nature of man that challenges him to give himself unstintingly on behalf of others. His "strength is as the strength of ten" not because his heart is pure, but because he is unselfishly seeking benefits for others. John Wesley's discovery that "the world was his parish" undoubtedly had much to do with the new found energy and health that came to him. It has been literally true that "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." (Luke 17: 33 A. V.)

2. The moral law of the universe cannot be broken with impunity. One of the greatest discoveries of modern science is that this is a world of law and order, and we are but a part of a crea-

tion that is characterized by law and order. Law is to be discovered not only in the field of the natural sciences, but there is a moral law in the universe. Man is discovering that he must live in harmony with the moral law of the universe or die. We now know that while man may discover moral law in contact with his fellows, man does not invent that law. Fortunately we have progressed beyond the stage where we believed that moral law was simply the accepted standards of a community for the convenience of man's society. Wherever men have banded together the community has eventually "discovered" the same basic moral laws: Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not bear false witness, etc. We are now in the process of discovering that nations as well as individuals must be governed by these same laws, and the nations that dare to break them will themselves be broken. The thundering message of the 8th century prophets was that Israel could not break the law of God and live. Then, through the messages of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, men learned that each individual was responsible before God for his own conduct, and the conviction was borne in upon them "that everyone shall die for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge." (Jer. 31:30)

Another fallacy from which the world is yet to recover is that good intention is the way of salvation. We have misrepresented the message of Jesus that said a bad intention is as evil as a bad act, and we have made it say that a good intention is as praiseworthy as a good act. Indeed we have gone so far as to say that a good intention cancels a bad act. The phrase "well, he meant alright" has obscured a multitude of sins. The old standard that "a man must be under conviction" is profoundly true. It is part of our responsibility to teach

men to admit fault, regardless of the intent of the act. Whenever there is hurt to others we must discover the source of the hurt, and persuade men so to correct their conduct that this same hurt shall not be repeated.

We have the further responsibility of teaching men that a violation of the law of God will bring inevitable punishment, not because God is a vengeful God, but because the good of all mankind demands it. Much of the older theology portrayed God as a vindictive monarch, far more concerned about His own reputation than the moral growth of men. He demanded the last pound of flesh in recompense for offended majesty. We misunderstood the messages of the prophets and of Jesus. They taught that man's sin hindered God's purpose, and alienated man from God. They taught that man must turn from sin and seek good so that he can work with the Creator to reach the great goal set for man.

We must also show men that companionship with God is impossible so long as sin remains unforgiven. This again is due to the very nature of man. So long as there is a sense of guilt, companionship or allegiance are impossible. The man who has betrayed a friend feels uncomfortable in his presence. The lover who has compromised the high standards expected of him uneasily faces the scrutiny of his beloved. The story of Adam hiding himself in the garden from the gaze of Jehovah is profoundly true in its insight concerning the nature of man.

We must stress the love of God, but there has been grave danger that in emphasizing the love we have forgotten that sin cannot be tolerated by a wise Creator. It would be difficult to discover two lives in which the love of their fellows is greater than in the lives of Jeremiah and Jesus. Yet each of them stressed the awfulness of sin, and each of them taught that the mes-



sage of God is and must be, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The love of God for man makes sin intolerable.

3. God is not an innocent bystander, or an unthinking force, but has a love and concern for his created, a love expressed supremely through Jesus. There has been a tendency in recent years to turn from anthropomorphic concepts of deity and the transcendentalism of older writings. Reaction has sometimes led us however to a mechanistic naturalism that is powerless to save men. We dare not find refuge in the defeatism of the transcendentalism of Karl Barth, and unless we have something more to offer men than the upward surge of creation or the unfolding tendencies of a patternful universe we have no religious message. At least we have no message that is comparable to the message of Jesus. The testimony of great religious men through the centuries has been that when they have accepted the teachings of Jesus that God is love and that **He** is concerned that men shall love **Him** in return, they have found new life. They have found release from the burden of sin; they have found new meanings for life; and they have found new strength to live as God's children as they have let the spirit of Christ and the power of God enter into their lives.

That God can understand and may respond to the petitions of men is the basis of all prayer and communion. The spirit of prayer is the great cry of Jesus "not my will, but Thine be done." Prayer is not a magical force that we may use to force the Deity to do man's bidding. But unless there be the possibility of communion between the divine mind and man's mind, then prayer becomes meaningless, and man must look elsewhere for the strength of his religious life.

Similarly communion through worship becomes but a pious exercise that has no other significance except concentration upon great and noble goals

conceived by man. Hymns of praise are but psychological devices to create the right mood for the reception of the masterful address which follows. If this be true the church may well abdicate in favor of other organizations whose rituals are often more skillfully and colorfully done. But any man who has led a congregation in meaningful worship will recognize something more than the skill of his leadership is necessary to account for the benefits they derive from the service.

Thus in private and corporate worship man has learned to know God who spoke through the prophets of old and who has been portrayed supremely in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Their messages become ghastly tragedies of self-delusion unless the power of creation be in very fact the God and Father of mankind. But we must not make the mistake either of continuing to portray God as a benevolent old grandfather who is seated far off somewhere on a golden throne; who has set the world in motion and is concerned with it only as some importunate prayer ascends to the throne and persuades Him to adjust the world's machinery. Men have long since seen that such a picture is not a true portrait of the power that they have come to know through science or through personal religious experience. Creation cannot be apart from the Creator; He is the very life-blood of all creation. We shall not use the terms immanence or transcendence with our congregations, but they can understand that God can be very close. "Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands or feet." He is as close as the smile on a little child's face, the beauty of a sunset and a good man's life. Our message must be that God is available to men, aiding them and sustaining them, nurturing their lives in each moment of their need.

4. There is forgiveness with God, but it is obtained through penitence and restitution, not subscription to creeds. The soft sentimentalism of an earlier day failed to strengthen the moral fibre of men. Salvation became all too often a bargain counter transaction that left God short-changed. Simply saying that Jesus is the Christ will not heal the hurts of men. Men need the discipline of a sterner faith. In fact we shall fail to understand the mind of Christ unless we see that there is no true salvation or forgiveness except as His standards become our standards. Too many men have sought peace with God apart from peace with their fellow men. That cannot be. Remember that Jesus insisted "first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." True penitence consists in recognizing one's fault, seeking to make restitution where that is possible, and, finally, seeking to so re-orient our lives that we shall not again fall into the same bad conduct. We shall fail to be true interpreters of the nature of God's creation if we tell men just to forget their acts of immorality. How can a man be a follower of Christ if he prays the prayer "Give us this day our daily bread" and then is not concerned to see that bread is made available to others, or what is worse, that he will conduct his own business so as to feed his own family in luxury but his employees live at starvation level. We shall not understand the mind of Christ or the God that He reveals unless we come to know that so many of the hurts of the world are the results of man's conduct and that those hurts must be healed before there can be peace between man and man or between man and God. We have tried for so long to be the beneficiaries of salvation without assuming the obligation of its terms. Too many have tried to enter the kingdom by the broad way of standing before a congregation and giving assent to certain formal statements

of belief, but the way of salvation is through the narrow gate of new life lived according to the principles of Christ, and few there be that find it.

This leads us to the last and certainly the most difficult aspect of salvation.

5. The way of suffering is the way of salvation, and God Himself shares in that suffering. It is not too difficult to appeal to a man's sense of fair play and to persuade him that when he has been responsible for the hurt of another he should be responsible for bringing healing to that hurt. But when we seek to go further and to teach that it is part of our privilege to suffer on behalf of others, and that they may benefit from our suffering, then our task is difficult indeed. The disposition of the modern world has been to seek the most comfortable life possible. The very test of success has been how completely we have been able to surround ourselves with ease and labor-saving devices. Man has long struggled with the problem of suffering and many answers have been proposed. One of the answers discovered by the great prophet of the exile is that nations and men may suffer on behalf of others. We have dignified the teaching by calling it "the principle of vicarious suffering" but we have many everyday experiences that indicate that out of suffering may come benefit for others. To be sure, much suffering is needless and we shall lend every effort to see that useless suffering is banished from the earth. The physician who makes his body a host to malignant germs so that he may develop vaccines or medicines that can cure others knows this principle and is seeking to banish some pain from the earth.

False interpretations of this principle have sometimes led the Christian world astray. Simon Stylites suffered, but it is doubtful if the suffering of others

was alleviated by his suffering. Martyrdom for its own sake, for the benefit of the martyr, will defeat itself. But an attempt to serve others, to ease their suffering even though it may mean suffering ourselves will carry us to new heights of Christian living. We dare to believe that the devotion of Jesus to His principles that led Him to the cross is the kind of suffering into which God Himself enters and through which God can lead men to the great goals He has envisioned for them. We dare to believe also that any time that righteousness is impaled upon a cross, the God of righteousness is with the crucified, and that through the travail of suffering there is being brought to birth the Kingdom

of God so long promised, but for which men have so often failed to comprehend the price. Men must know that if they would be "joint heirs with Christ" they must also enter into the "fellowship of His sufferings."

The messenger who dares to witness in his life that these are the principles through which men may know the power of salvation will learn that many will say that the way of Christ is too difficult, but he may understand, too, why "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." For of such is the Kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The preceding is a message delivered at the E. V. Moorman Clinic on Evangelism, held at Albion, Michigan, July 31-Aug. 9, 1945.