

Disappointment

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God keeps a school for His children here on earth; and one of His best teachers is Disappointment. This is a rough teacher, severe in tone and harsh in his handling, sometimes, but his tuition is worth all it costs us. Many of our best lessons through life have been taught us by that same stern old schoolmaster, Disappointment.

One lesson we learned was not to be selfish, or imagine that this world was all made for us. If it had been, the sun would have shone just when our hay needed curing, and the rains would have fallen only when our garden thirsted for water. But we found that God ordered things to please Himself, and not us. And when our schemes were broken up and our journey spoiled by the storm, the stern schoolmaster said: "The world was not made for your alone. Do not be selfish. Your loss is another's gain. The rain that spoils your hay makes your neighbor's corn grow the faster. The fall in wheat that cuts down your profits will help the poor widow in yonder cottage to buy bread for her hungry little mouths next winter."

A second lesson which Disappointment has taught us is that our losses are not only gains, sometimes, to others, but are very often the richest gains to ourselves. In our shortsighted ignorance, we had "devised a way," and set our hearts upon it. Had we been allowed to pursue it, we must have been led by it to ruin. The railway train we were disappointed in not reaching was dashed into fragments down an embankment; the steamer that we were too late for was burned to a wreck. At the moment, we scolded bitterly; but, by-and-by, we found out that God could not have sent a more fatal judgment upon us than simply to have let us have our own way. That seemed right unto us, but the end thereof was death.

A hundred illustrations of this truth occur to us. A "first honor" in college has turned more than one young man's head; the disappointment of losing it has goaded on another to higher distinctions than he had lost. More than one covetous merchant has been so thwarted in his enterprises for money-making that he has been enraged with mortification. But his Heavenly Father knew the dangers of success to him, and saved him from sorer sorrows. A young lawyer, heart-broken by the early death of the sweet girl he loved, turned away for solace to sacred studies and doing good. He became a successful winner of souls in Christ's ministry. During twenty-five years' ministry we have known more souls converted or especially sanctified through the loss of little children than from any other providential discipline.

The record book of every Christian's life has some pages in it which were written at the bidding of that severe teacher, Disappointment. Tears may have blotted and blurred the page at the time, but as we turn over to that page now, and read it in the light of experience, we can write beneath it: "Thank God for those losses! They were my everlasting gain. Thank God for those bereavements! They have saved my soul from being bereaved of heaven. All things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose."

THE DEATH OF JESUS

By Dr. Peter Wiseman

There never has been a death in human history like the death of Jesus Christ, noble as many have been; for Jesus died, not as a martyr, but as the Redeemer, the only One in all history qualified so to die.

The death of Jesus was for the world; "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Also, it was for His Church: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25); "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

The death of Jesus is a revelation of divine love, both in the Father and in the Son, "God so loved . . . he gave." Jesus so loved that He gave himself. Love brought Him down; love led Him to Calvary; love caused Him to die in our stead and for us, that we might go free.

The death of Jesus was of infinite merit, the dynamic of efficacy. There were many crosses, and many crucifixions. At the time of Christ's death, and at the same place, there were two other crosses; but the center cross is different. It is "the cross"; the Person on it is a unique Person; "the death of the cross" is outstanding. Upon crosses have hung criminals, the worst that sin could produce; upon "the cross" came Christ, the best that Heaven could produce; and the whole significance of the cross was changed, from an instrument of death, Rome's substitute for the Jewish method of stoning, to an instrument of redemption—the redemption of the whole human race.

The death of Jesus, then, was not a mere accident but, rather, an accomplishment; "It is finished"! The death of Jesus was the death of the God-man; on the cross He accomplished perfect redemption for all, and from the cross uttermost salvation is offered to all.

Yes, they killed Him! The hands that were often lifted up to heal and bless the needy were stretched upon a cross and nailed there. The feet that took Him over the dusty roads of Galilee, always on missions of mercy, were placed one upon another on a footrest on the cross and nailed to it. The voice that was often heard in accents kind, saying, "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest," was hushed in death. The eyes that looked so tenderly and compassionately upon poor, needy humanity were closed in death. The greatest Person who ever lived on this earth, the greatest Character in human history, was crucified on a cross. He died for us; but, thank God, He rose again and lives today! Hallelujah!

When you and I reach our Father's house, we shall look back and see that the sharp-voiced, rough-visaged teacher, Disappointment, was one of the best guides to train us for it. He gave us hard lessons. He often used the rod. He often led us into thorny paths. He sometimes stripped off a load of luxuries; but that only made us travel the freer and the faster on our heavenward way. He sometimes led us down into the valley of the death-shadow; but never did the promises read so sweetly as when spelled out by the eye of faith in that very valley. Nowhere did he lead us so often, or teach us such sacred lessons, as at the cross of Christ. "Disappointment—His appointment!"—Heart-Life.

God In The Commonplace

In this day of big things and big movements one is apt to get a distorted view of life, and of what constitutes success. Life as a whole is not made up of big things but of little ones. So true success lies not in trying to do something great or big but in doing little things in a great way, and that means doing the thing with God. "Little is much if God is in it."

For—
No service in itself is small,
None great though earth it fill
But that is small which seeks its own
That great which seeks God's will.

Said Faber, "Love's secret is to be always doing little things for God and not to mind because they are so little." "Do with thy might what thy hands find to do," is the Scriptural injunction.

There was Dorcas. All she had was a needle, but she used it to God's glory and homes were gladdened and heaven rejoiced in her good work. Have you ever thought how happy that man must have been who owned the colt upon which Jesus rode into Jerusalem? Possibly all he had was a colt but his was the honor of lending to God the only animal upon which God Himself ever rode. You recall the occasion of the last Passover with Jesus and the disciples. And the good man of the house said, "You can have my spare room, Lord, an upper room. I have so little to give." The Master accepted the offer and that room was graced by the presence of the Lord on one of the greatest occasions of our Lord's earthly ministry—the Last Supper.

A lady was filling a box for Burma. A child brought her a penny. With the penny she bought a tract and put it in the box. The tract was given to a Burmese chief. Through its instrumentality the chief was saved. He told his fellowmen the story and it is reported that in time 1500 were converted. Just a little thing, only a penny, but given to God it meant everything to hundreds of people! "Little is much if God is in it."

Our sphere may be limited, our endowments small, but God gives to everyone, a large amount of small and of often insignificant opportunities to honor Him by bringing God into the ordinary commonplaces of life.

"We turn our sad, reluctant gaze
Upon the path of duty;
Its barren, uninviting ways
Are void of bloom and beauty,
Yet in that road, though dark and cold
It seems as we begin it,
As we press on—lo! we behold
There's heaven in it."

—Claude A. Ries

Let us see—and with the conviction that we cannot do without it—that all selfishness be extirpated, pride banished, unbelief driven from the mind, every idol dethroned, and everything hostile to holiness and opposed to the Divine will crucified; that "holiness to the Lord" may be **engraven on the heart**, and evermore characterize our whole conduct.—David Livingstone.

"He stands best who kneels most."