

## **DISAPPOINTMENT**

### **A real trouble to many young people**

By the Editor of the Friendly Companion, January 1996

I once met a man named Harold Bartart. As a young man he had been engaged to my mother's beautiful younger sister. She died – in the terrible 'flu epidemic of the 1920s. Harold was left broken-hearted. It must have been thirty years after this that I met him – he was still broken-hearted. A gentleman, prosperous (every-thing he touched had "turned to gold"), benevolent, he had never settled down, and said he never would. This man had had a most dreadful disappointment, and he had never been able to cope with it.

Young people, especially, often have disappointments – a failed exam; sickness; failure to get work; a broken friendship; the lack of a friend – these things can be crippling, and many boys and girls do not know how to cope.

Let us be clear. There will be disappointments. This is the result of the Fall and the entering of sin into the world. (There were no disappointments in the Garden of Eden before the Fall.)

We do need to beware, though, what we regard as disappointments. Some are just like spoiled children. It may be a birthday – and they are disappointed because they get the wrong presents, or the birthday tea is not what they wanted, or something is the wrong color, or the sun does not shine! **Really this is not disappointment; this is discontent.** It is the attitude of the world.

If we are born again of the Spirit of God, and under His teaching, then we shall have disappointments. God will see to it that we are completely disappointed with ourselves and completely disappointed with the world. We have to learn that the world can never satisfy. It will always disappoint.

"These can never satisfy;  
Give me Christ, or else I die."

I have often noticed that if the Lord blesses a young person, that young person often comes almost immediately into a disappointment. This is to try their religion, and to crucify them to the world.

Everyone has a natural tendency one way or the other meeting disappointment – either to try to shrug it off, or to sink under it. Both are wrong. (The apostle gives clear teaching on this: Hebrews 12:5.)

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**Let us try to see how we should seek to cope  
with some real disappointment we may have.**

1. It is not the end. How often when these things come home, we feel it is the end. But this is not so – and especially with a young person. Often the end of a thing is better than the beginning.

*A heart-broken boy once wrote to John Newton; his fiancée had broken the engagement. Before coming to weightier matters John Newton replied: " – There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out; and – If one won't, another will, or what's the use of the market?"*

2. Often God has designed something better. *"God having provided some better thing." "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second."*

Usually it is in looking back that this is realized; at the time it cannot be seen. But many a person in after years has been grateful to the Lord for overturning his plans and giving him something better.

3. We believe that all things are appointed. As the old minister said, "If only we believed what we do believe!"

There is much teaching in the "cross-handed blessing" of Joseph's sons (Genesis 48:1-20). Joseph was displeased because it all seemed opposite to what he thought, and he cried out, *"Not so, my father,"* only to receive the reply from old Jacob, *"I know it, my son, I know it."*

Do you know the poem:

"Disappointment? His appointment –  
Change one letter, then I see  
That the thwarting of my purpose  
Is God's better plan for me."

4. We believe that *"all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."* Not singly, but together. I understand

that some of the best medicines are made up of ingredients which, taken singly, would kill you.

We cannot always see it; we certainly do not always feel it; but "we know that all things work together for good .... "

5. Seek grace to submit. God makes no mistakes. *"It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good."*

"It is the Lord, enthroned in  
light,  
Whose claims are all divine,  
Who has an undisputed right,  
To govern me and mine."

6. Ask why?

a. It may be a reproof. Is there something wrong in my life? Is this why God is disappointing me?

b. Am I setting my mind too much on earthly things? Or on one particular object?

c. Am I disappointing other people? Some people are very careless in their behavior

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and without thinking are constantly disappointing others: failing to keep appointments,  
breaking promises, letting others down.

d. Is this disappointment to overturn wrong plans in my life? We pray for God's leading

and divine direction – and His overturning of wrong plans in our lives is part of this  
gracious work.

e. The question of disappointments is all part of the great mystery of unanswered prayer.

We pray – yet are disappointed. This is a vast theme – and too large for this article –

but two things the Lord mentions:

*"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."*

*"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me?"*

7. In Scripture we read of various people who were disappointed. How did they cope with

it? Take three.

**Moses** – How disappointed he was when forbidden to enter the promised land! But God in a sense gave him something better; He personally showed him the whole of that goodly land. "Better to view the land in the immediate presence of the Lord," comments an old writer, "than to enter it without God." And, of course, Moses was taken to heaven instead.

**David** – At the end of his life David was very disappointed – with his family (Amnon, Absalom), with his friends (Jonathan, Ahithophel – one tragically dead, the other a traitor), but especially with himself. How did he cope? As God gave him believing views of the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and his own personal interest in it.

**Paul** – How he prayed for his thorn in the flesh to be removed! God disappointed him, but gave him something better. "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*"

**8.** Christ does not disappoint. Christ satisfies. And He satisfies eternally in heaven. "I shall  
be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

I hope all of you are familiar with Warburton's Mercies (Mercies of a Covenant God, by John Warburton). Old John, in his honest, graphic way, gives a dramatic account of a dreadful disappointment he received (1964 Reiner edition, pages 89 to 92). He longed to become pastor at Pole Moor, but another minister was asked. John Warburton was beside himself, so much so that he said he would have pulled God from His throne and stamped Him under his feet. But the Lord sweetly whispered, "*What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter,*" and the disappointment was so graciously sanctified that the poor man received one of the greatest blessings in his life, and could see that all was right.