

THE JEWELS IN THE CUP.

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THERE was a fine touch of poetry as well as of Christian philosophy in the cheerful words of a young servant of Christ who was near his last hour. "When I have the most pain in my body," said he, "I have the most peace in my soul. I do not doubt but that there is love in the bottom of the cup, though it is terribly bitter in the mouth." It was at the bottom of the cup that God had placed the precious blessing; and it was needful that he drink the whole bitter draught in order to reach it.

"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink of it?" This was the submissive utterance of the Man of Sorrows in Getsemane. Thousands of His followers have faltered out the same words through their tears, when a heart-breaking trial was trying their faith to the utmost. But the "sweet breath of Jesus has been on the cup," and made it more palatable. And the lips that tasted the draught of sorrow have uttered such prayers as they had not made, and could not make in seasons of prosperity.

The richest jewels of grace often lie at the bottom of sorrow's cup. Jesus could not push from Him the bitter agony of Calvary: redemption was at the bottom of that cup. He could not save Himself and yet save a guilty world of sinners. Either He must drink the cup of suffering, or we must drink "the wine of the wrath of God."

Looking down into the draught of sorrow which God mingles often for His children, what precious jewels glisten in the depths! Promises are there, sparkling like pearls:—"As thy day, so shall thy strength be." "Whom I love, I chasten." "My grace is sufficient for thee." What afflicted child of God would fling from him a cup which contains such priceless gifts as these?

Graces sparkle too in the goblet of grief which Divine love mingles for those who are to become more "perfect through suffering." How lustrous shines the grace of Patience! I used to go occasionally, and read the Bible to an invalid who had been tortured for forty years with excruciating pains; and her sweet words of submission were the *commentary*. I used to go home ashamed of my own impatience under paltry vexations. She never asked God to take her cup of suffering from her: in it were her jewels,—patience, meekness, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Experience of the love of Jesus is another of the pearls dropped into the draught which is mingled for His chosen ones. Christ has His *choice* ones. Dr. Arnot says that the true meaning of the text "Many are called, but few are chosen," is this, "many are called Christians, but only a few are *choice*." Only a portion of all the flock are "called and *choice*," and faithful." This is certainly a truth, whether it be the true meaning of the Bible text or not.

These *choice* Christians are often chosen for the affliction, and become more choice and excellent through the regimen of severe trial. There is an experience of the love of Jesus which they gain in their hours of bereavement, or poverty, or hardships, which they never could have acquired in any other way. The "love in the bottom of the cup" was only to be reached by drinking the sorrows which held the jewel. The school of suffering graduates rare scholars. To the disciples in that school it is often given to "know the love of Jesus which passeth knowledge." Suffering Christian! be not in haste to quit the Master's school; thou art waiting for the *High School* of Heaven. Push not away peevishly thy cup of sorrow; for the sparkling diamond of Christ's love for thee is in the draught He gives thee to drink.—*Thoughts for Heart and Life*.

CLINGING TO JESUS.—I carried my little boy, sick and weary, one night over a back-way to a neighbour's house, where we were to take tea, and I had him climb on a chair and get on my back; then his mother threw a shawl over him, so that he was completely covered up, and I started out. The ground was covered with ice, and you may be sure I walked very carefully—I had that boy on my back, and I said to him, as I walked slowly along in the darkness, "My son, are you not afraid?" "No, papa." "Why are you not afraid?" "Because you have got me." Said I, "My precious boy, all this dark life hold on to Jesus, and He will hold on to you; cling to Him." He said, "Yes, papa, I'll try."

SLIPPERY PLACES.

IT appears that in New York, the week ending March 11th, was unprecedentedly cold, and as a consequence the streets were simply like sheets of ice. In his usual impulsive and telling style, Dr. Talmage, in his "Christian at Work," thus "improves the occasion":—

Last Sabbath night, in this latitude, we had an opportunity of finding out what the old Bible writers meant by slippery places. In these warmer climates they may never have seen a sheet of frozen rain covering the earth, as we on the occasion aforesaid saw; but they might have had a general idea of it. As the audiences that night adjourned, some went flat down, some fell headforemost, some gracefully sat down; but the more part struck out indefinitely, and swung round, and slipped about, and caught after things. We never saw such a spectacle. Neither sliding or skating seems appropriate on your way from church, but there was nothing else to do. Walking was abolished. Elders, deacons, and clergymen, after singing the doxology, took to field sports. We saw one good man, of undoubted sobriety, getting down into the gutter as though he intended to stay there. A modest woman, without introduction, threw her arms around a lamp-post as though it were a friend from whom she had been parted for fifteen years. A sedate and inoffensive man went round like an unmanageable ship at sea, and ran the boom of his umbrella into a lady's head-rigging. Tides of travel from different churches met each other, unable to stop: Presbyterians and Methodists, Baptists and Pedobaptists, who had been quarrelling for some time, suddenly and convulsively embracing each other. It seemed to us incongruous that so many people should have taken their prayer-books along with them when they went anti-sliding. As we went creeping along home, holding to iron fences, and balancing ourselves against door-steps, and listening to the thump, and crash, and sprawl, and scabble and emphatic exclamations of unfortunate pedestrians on all sides, we fell to moralising. We thought how easy it is to sit in church and sing "Rock of Ages," and preach about duty and heaven, not realising there is a cold, slippery world waiting for us outside. The tug and strain and self-poising comes after the doxology. First the benediction, then the ice. That is the reason so many who pray, and sing and preach splendidly go down as soon as they get out of doors. They imagine it is going to be Antiuch and Mount Pisgah and Coronation all the way. The reason that so many good men fall, is because they do not take heed to their steps. David seems to feel his feet going from under him on an uneven cake of ice, when he cries out, "My steps had well nigh slipped."

But alas for those who have nothing to hold on to as they pass on their way! Their feet will slide in due time. The pond of sin is smoothly frozen over, and they venture on it only to fall through; and the litany to be chanted over their demise, as most appropriate, is Psalm lxxiii. 18: "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places; Thou castedst them down into destruction."

We noticed, however, on the icy night spoken of, that many who slipped did not fall. There was some one's arm to take hold of just in time to prevent a serious casualty. Because a Christian makes a bad slip do not conclude that he has fallen. Laying hold of an arm omnipotent, he may recover himself and get safely through. But it is a fortunate thing, if Christians must fall at all, that they fall on their way home, as was the case with hundreds of people on the glazed pavements of last Sabbath night.

I have seen a plant with tendrils fitted to seize on any object within its reach, that, lying prostrate on the ground, had its leaves and flowers all soiled with mud, and its arms twined, and twisted, and tangled into each other—like a rope of many strands; and near by was another of the same species, with its arms flung lovingly around a tall and friendly tree, whose stem they held in close embrace, while they lent it, in return for its support, a robe of great leaves spangled all with flowers. Lying basely in its own embraces, the first was an image of selfishness; but in that which clothed and adorned the object to which it fondly clung, and from which no storm could tear its arms, I saw the love which, queen of the graces, "suffereth long, and is kind; seeketh not her own; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."—*Dr. Guthrie*.