

GOD'S PRECIOUS JEWELS

by FREDERICK LARDENT

Author of

“The Hidden Meaning of Bible Colours”

“An Instrument of Ten Strings” etc.

Foreword.

God compares His people to quite a variety of earthly objects which serve to lend a lively interest to various truths. He likens them to trees, as the tall palm and the stately cedar; and to lovely flowers, as the lily and the rose. Again they are likened to stars and the light of the sun. Likewise to doves, to portray their spirit of innocence; also to gentle lambs and even to lions to show courage and boldness. Eagles, too, are mentioned to picture far-sightedness and heavenly dwelling places.

When God compares His people to jewels, the similitude becomes worthy of special consideration. Their preciousness, value and beauty make them most apt in their symbolism. Goodly gems have been appropriately termed the “blossoms of the rock” and the “flowers of the caves and torrent-beds.” Their diverse properties well picture the many excellent qualities and characteristics of the Church of the Firstborn.

My brother has sought, in a very beautiful and effective way, to uncover many glorious truths embodied under this figure. A consideration of this sublime theme has deepened my desire to attain unto all that the gracious Heavenly Father desires to see in me. It is my hearty-felt wish that this worthy publication may be scattered far and wide, and stir similarly the hearts of all the precious Sons of Zion.

Yours by Divine Grace,
Joseph C Lardent.

CHAPTER ONE

“They shall be Mine.”



THE jewellers of the East have been among the *greatest* travellers of the world. They have journeyed even to the remotest lands to secure, if possible, the finest stones, It has sometimes happened that they have come across a gem so valuable and costly, that they have sold all their possessions to secure it.

Our Master used this to illustrate a great truth. He said that “the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matt. 13:45,46) The analogy becomes remarkable in the light of the Divine purposes. Before Jesus came to earth, He beheld the world a desolate region on account of sin. He reviewed, however the possibilities.

While the image of God in man had become blurred, He foreknew the results under wise treatment. From crude flinty material, the human race might again reflect the manifold beauties of the light and love of their Maker which were lost in Adam. In due course the Father opened up to His mental vision “the pearl of great price,” in other words, the elect! Chosen from men and women, there were some capable, under given circumstances, of more expressly reflecting the loveliness of the Divine character. Impelled with these thoughts, our Master emptied Himself of His pre-human glory and became a perfect being according to the flesh, and this He “gave for the life of the world” (John 6:51).

At His resurrection He had the value with which He could purchase the “field” and all that it contained. His first request was for His church. “He appeared in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24).

“The Bride of the Lamb.”

The apostle uses the picture of the marriage tie to bear upon this teaching. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it: that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish. This is a great mystery: I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:25-32).

The writer of a well-known hymn tells of this sublime relationship, thus—

*The Church's one Foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord.
She is His new creation,
By water and the Word.
From Heaven He came and sought her.
To be His holy bride.
With His own blood He bought her.
And for her life He died.*

“They shall be Mine.”

The great Creator of the universe and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is intensely interested in His elect.

“For the LORD hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it” (Psalm 132:13,14). For well-nigh two thousand years He has been watching and waiting for His precious jewels. He declares: “Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God” (Isaiah 62:3). The prospective heirs, in turn, become fully aware of the great love of the Father, and prophetically their words, are as follows: “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” (Isaiah 61:10).

The prophet speaks of a time when this precious jewel class will be all gathered together in one. That this time is fast approaching there can be no doubt, for there are hundreds of prophecies co-ordinating in fulfilment. Harken to the voice of the Lord; “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Mal. 3:16, 17).

The word “jewels” in this text is from the Hebrew *segullah*, elsewhere translated “peculiar” or “special treasure.” Here is another passage where the word recurs : “ Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My commandments, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure (*segullah*) unto Me above all people for all the earth is Mine.” (Exodus 19:5).

History reveals that the children of Israel did not hearken unto the voice of the Lord. Their wayward tendencies became more and more pronounced. In the course of time the Messiah came among them, who “spake as never man spake.” Nevertheless, He was despised, rejected and ultimately crucified as a malefactor. Thus Israel clearly demonstrated that, as a people, they had neither the faith nor inclination to become the special-treasure of the Lord. For this reason God turned to the Gentiles “to take out of them a people for His name.” (Acts 15:14). Thus the redeemed have arisen “out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation,” for the Lord is no respecter of person, nationality or sex, but He is of character. The character attainments of His chosen, through the power of God, become superb, wonderful and glorious! For this reason they are spoken of as jewels.



The Breastplate of Judgment.

To lend a pleasing emphasis to the symbolism, the Lord commanded twelve different precious stones, embedded in gold, to form the breastplate of the High Priest of Israel (Exodus 28). It covered the heart to betoken the love and affectionate trust that Jesus, our great High Priest, possesses for His followers.

There is a little mystery attached to this breastplate. In some way, as yet unknown, it expressed the judgment of God. This is indicated by the words, “And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and Thummim (lights and perfections), and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart when he goeth in before the Lord and, and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually.” (Exodus 28:30). The suggestion of something supernatural is borne out by an incident in the life of King Saul. He one time sought the counsel of a witch at Endor, because “the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” (1 Sam. 28:6).

Thus the future judgment of saints was foreshadowed. Arrayed in light and perfection, the symbolic jewels will, as members of the Royal Priesthood, judge the whole world of mankind. “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” (1 Cor. 6:2). This judgment was early foretold through the mouth of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who declared that “the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds.” (Jude 14, 15).

Some fear the judgment day as though it were an unending catastrophe! Read, however, the joyous song of David, which comes floating down the stream of time in sweet melody: “Let the heavens be glad, and let the fields rejoice and all that is therein. Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because He cometh to judge the earth. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever. (1 Chron. 16:31-33). The judgment day, therefore, is a time to be desired. “For thus saith the Lord of hosts; yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory” (Hag. 2:7,8).

CHAPTER TWO.

The Ruby.

JEWELS not only represent the elect of God, but they serve to remind us of the basic teachings of the Bible. This is borne out by a consideration of the first stone of the Breastplate of Judgment, which is mentioned in Exodus 28:17 under the term of Sardius. The margin renders this Ruby, which is evidently a better rendering. The original word is *odem*, which means blood-red, and the letters are similar to that of Adam, which signifies “taken out of red earth.” This physical make-up is corroborated by science, which proves that the human body is composed of the elements of earth and air. Thus we observe the solemn truth of the sentence passed upon our first parent; “In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen. 3:19).

An Amazing Symbolism.

An analysis of the ruby reveals the astonishing discovery that it is red earth or clay in crystallised form. Its very colouring matter is the same as that which gives blood its hue, namely, oxide of iron. For this reason the ruby has been called “petrified blood.” The test of a perfect ruby is when it compares most favourably to the fresh blood of a pigeon dropped upon a sheet of white paper.

With these facts before us, what an amazing symbolism is indicated by this precious gem! Adam was the bright jewel of all natural creation, but on account of sin, he gradually lost his glory and lustre. Then, Jesus came to take the sinner’s place. His blood was precious because He knew no sin and, in virtue of His great sacrifice, He becomes the world’s High Priest (Heb. 5:1). In this sense, therefore, Jesus Christ is a jewel so exceedingly precious that it is destined to attract the attention of every eye. This is suggested in Rev. 4:3. “And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone (ruby): and there was a rainbow about the throne in sight like unto an emerald.”

The preciousness of the blood of Jesus is likewise suggested by the intrinsic value of the ruby itself. For instance, a stone of sixteen grains is worth 400 guineas (\$2,000). The most brilliant diamond of like weight would cost about half that sum.

Reuben.

There is still another important feature relative to this first jewel of the breastplate. Upon it was engraved the name of Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob. Among the Hebrews the eldest son was, in the absence of the father, the representative of the family. To him would all the household look for guidance and judgment. Thus again Jesus the Anointed is brought definitely to mind as the representative of the Heavenly Father and “the beginning of the creation of God.” (Rev. 3:14). To Him will all mankind look for guidance and judgment when “the government will be upon His shoulders.” (Isaiah 9:6,7).

Imitation Rubies.

Rubies can be so cleverly imitated by artificial methods that they bear a great similarity to real stones. The microscope, however, reveals in the manufactured article the presence of bubbles and striæ. This reminds us of our Master’s warning of “false Christs who shall deceive many.” (Matt. 24:5). The Lord grants His true followers the power of perception through the Holy Spirit of truth; thus they can discern the character “of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26).

There are many gems upon this earth which have strange histories attached to them. It would not surprise us if these have not been overruled by the Most High to teach some great lesson. For instance, there is a valuable ruby in the crown of English royalty valued at £10,000. In the seventeenth century some robbers, led by a certain Colonel Blood, determined to steal it. They actually overpowered the guard of the jewel-room in the Tower of London and seized the crown. The thieves were overtaken at Tower Hill, where a soldier wrenched the crown from the grasp of Blood. Then a strange thing happened – some stones, including the valuable ruby – fell into the mire and were lost. Not even a diligent search could discover the whereabouts of this most precious gem. Some days later, however, it was found by an old woman who was sweeping the crossing.

This brings to mind our Ruby – the precious blood of Jesus – which we must guard with jealous care. We need to be fortified by a growing appreciation, love and esteem of truths which center around the Ransom Sacrifice, particularly those concerning our vital union with the Lord. We are warned of the serious consequences of “treading under foot the Son of God.” (Heb. 10:29)

CHAPTER THREE.

Stones of fair Colours.

REFERRING to His future spiritual new Jerusalem, the Lord has stated, “Behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires” (Isaiah 54:11). The differing stones of the Breastplate indicate that pleasing variation existing among the members of the little flock. Variations are apparent everywhere in creation. Even the designs noted in snowflakes, when magnified, reveal a marvelous difference one to another, though all are perfect in geometrical arrangement. This lends an unending charm and interest to the universe, and portrays the mind of the Omnipotent illumined with sublime greatness and grandeur. “All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord !” (Psalm 145).

The differing stones are due to differing materials and processes of formation. The elect are not all called upon to pass through precisely the same experiences. It is a trial of faith, but those trials vary according to the make-up of the individual. Nevertheless there is a relationship which the apostle likens to the members of a human body (1 Cor. 12). They co-ordinate, and are perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Following the ruby, there are other stones as follows:-

Topaz.

There is no reason to think otherwise, but that the Topaz has been correctly named as the second in the Breastplate. The finest oriental gems remind one of the sun. Strabo describes it as transparent and shining with a golden light. Ruskin speaks of it as “symbolic of the sun, like a strong man running his race rejoicing, standing between light and darkness and representing all good work.” Its symbolism is heightened as we learn that the topaz is strongly electrical in its nature, whether created by heat or by friction. This distinguishes it from other stones bearing a similar appearance.

With our attention turned to the sun, we fleetingly remember the sun-worshippers who looked to the object rather than the living and intelligent Source of creation. While fully admitting the marvelous potentialities of the burning orb, and realising that, if the earth was suddenly deprived of its influence, everything breathing would cease to exist, yet we view it merely in the light of symbolism – “Our God is a sun and shield, the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psa. 84:11).

The intrinsic magnetic powers of the topaz suggest the attraction which God's precious jewels possess for Himself.

Even among the jewel class there are some who more expressly manifest an intense desire to be like Him (1 John 3:2). In the words of the beautiful hymn they sing fervently and prayerfully —

*Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
I know no night when Thou art near.
O! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes.*

Carbuncle.

The third stone of the Breastplate was the Carbuncle. This is noted for its deep purplish-red colour mingled with scarlet. The word carbuncle signifies "burning coal," given on account of its fiery appearance! The Hebrew word *Bareketh* means "flashing," and is derived from *barak*, "lightning." Its Greek equivalent is *keraunos*, which means "thunder stone." It is positively electric by friction, and affects the magnetic needle.

From its general description it brings to mind the fiery judgment of the Lord, which burns against all injustice and unrighteousness: "The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice; hail-stones and coals of fire – He shot out lightnings and discomfited them." (Psalm 18:13, 14).

God is tender, gracious and merciful! His loving-kindness is a precious thing to experience! If – how much is implied by that little word! – one is pursuing an evil course, then soon or late, He will meet with the fiery indignation of the Most High – for "our God is a consuming fire." (Heb.12:29).

Our glorified Lord Jesus, the Representative of the Father, is in possession of the same disposition. He is the "Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth make war. His eyes are a flame of fire." (Rev.19:11,12). The saints of God partake of this same spirit. In evidence, we recall Peter, James and John, whom our Lord called Boanerges, meaning "The sons of thunder." Under the direction of their Captain they will bring to ashes those things which are in the way of the glorious kingdom of peace. This means the complete overthrow of sin and all unrighteousness.

Emerald.

The fourth stone was the Emerald, the beautiful grass-green of which is well known. It was at one time supposed that the colour was due to a mineral oxide, but an authority gives, as his conviction, that it is produced by an organic substance termed *Chlorophyll*. In support of this thought, the stone loses its colour when subjected to heat, while those tinted by mineral oxides remain unaffected. The remarkable thing is that Chlorophyll is the life-giving green sap of plants, and for this reason it becomes a striking emblem of eternal life. The emerald is indeed a wonderful symbol, for, unlike the green leaf which fades through time and exposure, it tenaciously holds its life-giving product in possession.

Our Master said, "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself." (John 5:26). Graciously He promises life to all who put their faith in Him. Hence the rainbow surrounding the glorified Redeemer is "in sight like unto an emerald." (Rev. 4:3). God's precious jewels are promised life inherent. Divine Nature! Stupendously great will be their reward (2 Peter 1:4). For this reason the emerald was placed among the jewels as a symbolism to encourage and stimulate the Lord's own.

It is recorded that there is now in the Vatican an emerald bearing the presumed true likeness of our Lord. We are informed that it was engraved by the order of Pontius Pilate, who presented it to Tiberius Caesar.

If this be so, then this jewel becomes a most appropriate emblem of our Lord's present nature of immortality.

The story is told that the Czar of Russia gave his wife on her birthday, November 26th, 1887, a necklace of forty large emeralds. For nine months his agents had been secretly traveling over the whole continent seeking the most precious of stones. When the Czarina received it she danced around the room with supreme delight. It was indeed a royal present, and a worthy one where love desires to be ever green!

What a day of rejoicing it will be when the King of the Universe will present to His dear Son and Heir, His jewels. That will also be the birthday of birthdays for the "Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven." (Heb. 12:23).

Sapphire.

The Sapphire, with its beautiful sky blue colour, was the fifth stone. The Hebrew *sappir* makes its identity certain, for almost every language has a similar word to describe it. Its hardness is equal to that of a ruby, and nearly approaches that of a diamond. It has always been considered valuable, and was most highly prized by the ancient inhabitants of the East.

The heavenly blue of the sapphire reminds us of God and the unchanging laws which govern the universe. The eternal safety of all things depend upon Divine faithfulness in maintaining those vast and intricate movements. The sapphire, therefore becomes an emblem of faithfulness. "Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds," "Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens" (Psalm 36:5; 89:2).

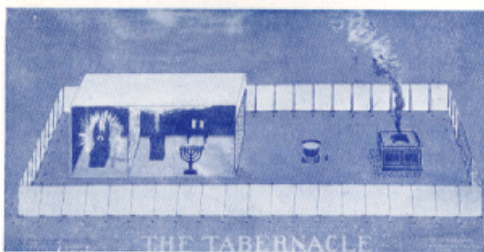
For this reason blue has a very prominent place in sacred colours. The high priest had a blue robe underneath his ephod, and the breastplate was fixed by a blue lace (Exodus 28:28,31). When the sacred furnishings of the tabernacle were moved, they were covered with a cloth of blue to remind the Israelites of their need of faithfully fulfilling the Divine requirements with respect to these. (Num. 4:5-12).

The sky-blue of the sapphire amply illustrates this same truth. "Behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires." Hence, "faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24). The faithfulness of the glorified Christ is beautifully portrayed in Ezekiel 1:26. "And above the firmament was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and the likeness as the appearance of a Man upon it."

The sapphire of the Breastplate indicates the faithfulness of God's precious jewels in the performance of their vows of sacrifice. It also suggests some who particularly shine in their one desire to be true to God, who is worthy of the first place in all things. Thus "blue meets blue," — in other words, God's own faithfulness inspires a similar faithfulness in the souls of His beloved.

CHAPTER FOUR

"His Truth shall be thy shield."



IT is remarkable how responsive to reasoning are the sacred types and symbols. They corroborate so beautifully the plain teachings of God's Word. This we especially observe with regard to the jewels on the breastplate of the High

Priest. They testify of the elect, whose preparation has been secretly progressing during two millenniums. Extracted from the "dark seams of earth" they, after being shaped, polished and beautified, will scintillate the wisdom, power and loving-kindness of the glorious Omnipotent throughout the ages of eternity. True the words of the poet —

*"Deep in unfathomable mines of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs, and works His sovereign will."*

Crystal-Beryl.

We now come to the sixth stone of the Breastplate; *yahalom*, the crystal which has been translated diamond in the Authorised Version. While a true diamond is likewise transparent, yet there is a marked difference in the two substances, The modern diamond is of organic origin, while the crystal here indicated is a mineral, and was one time largely used in the manufacture of optical lenses.

The ancients supposed the transparent rock crystal to be ice, which had been congealed through intense cold. To lend emphasis to this supposition, the mineral has been found in the clefts of granite rock which rise to sharp peaks above the snow-line in the Alps. So clear, so ice-like, were these prismatic crystals that they seemed fair enough to be considered frozen water. Howbeit, while it may well serve as a goodly reminder of water, yet its actual substance is silica or flint.

The word used in the New Testament, which stands for the same substance, is Beryl, one of the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. The true Beryl was a pale greenish-blue colour, and is composed of silica, with the addition of colouring matter. This resembles sea water while the white rock crystal takes after the pure water from a brook.

In Rev 15:2 the saints are depicted “standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.” This pictures a possession of lucid truths which make them happy and confident in the love of God at this awe-inspiring time. Our Lord Jesus is truth personified, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” For a striking symbolism we go to the wilderness of Sin, where the Israelites wandered forty years. We read of One “who brought forth water out of the rock of flint.” (Deut. 8:15). Modern research testifies that many of these rocks were composed of the same materials as the Rock Crystal under examination, and which formed one of the jewels of the Breastplate. St. Paul makes mention of the wilderness experience thus: “They drank of the spiritual Rock that went with them, which Rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:4.). Thus is brought to light a stone which represents truth. The jewel class are made pure, holy and strong though this very means.

Ligure.

The seventh stone was the Ligure, (Hebrew, *leshem*,) which appears to be the jacinth of the New Testament (Rev. 21:20). Commentators vary so much with regard to its colour, – red, blue, orange, purple, etc., that we must look for other tokens to denote its symbolic meaning.

It is distinguished from other gems on account of its possession of a strong double refraction after the order of the tourmaline. The optical properties of such crystals are of exceptional interest. A single ray of light is split up into two rays. If, for instance, the stone is placed on a single line, it will appear as two distinct lines. Thus the jewel class have their blessings doubled because they have pursued a righteous course under adverse circumstances.

The world of mankind will have their portion in the earth. A glorious portion indeed, for they will live for ever in perfect peace, health and happiness. The Little Flock will not only have peace, life and happiness, but they will be like God and possess immortality. Words are inadequate to express the inheritance awaiting the Church – “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

Agate.

The eighth stone was the Agate (Heb. *shebo*). The stone is capable of a high and beautiful polish, and it is for this reason that it is so largely used for ornamentation. It is composed of sand, which has been subjected to the strange fierce heats of subterranean fires. During its formation, gases, chemicals and vapours enter into the substance, which result in agates of goodly variety and colour. There is the Moss Agate, Tree Agate, and Stair Agate, besides those which are striped, banded and cloudy. Originally they were found by the River Achates in the volcanic region of Sicily. The word *Accho* means “heated sand.”

Issachar's name appeared in the stone, and it is significant to note that Moses alludes to the tribe as "treasures hid in the sand," which so aptly fits the production of the agate (Deut. 33:19).

The jewels all tell their story, and this one speaks of "treasures hid in earthen vessels." (2 Cor. 4:7). It brings to light strange and extraordinary fiery experiences, which changes "sand into gems" of real worth. The world of mankind are likened to the "sand by the sea shore" (Gen. 22:17). They themselves will not be called upon to undergo what the saints have undergone during their preparation for eternal life. The saints lose their identity as human beings in order to dwell with God. No wonder they are spoken of as jewels. They have endured much, and great is their reward in heaven.

Amethyst.

The ninth atomic of the Breastplate is agreed by all as being the correctly named Amethyst. It has a beautiful violet colour due to a minute proportion of oxide of manganese. Violet or purple is a symbol of royalty. The colour is due to a mixture of blue and red, which means faithful unto death. When mocked by the soldiers, our Master was clad in the purple robe. He alone proved His worthiness as King of earth! Likewise the Royal Priesthood all share in that privilege. The message to each and all is "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

The Greek word for amethyst is *amethystos*, which means "not to intoxicate." The ancients believed that wine from an amethyst cup would not inebriate. The stone is the colour of wine and memory goes back to the Last Supper, when our Master passed the cup of wine to His disciples, saying, "Drink ye all of it." That cup represents the cup of experience, the cup of sorrow, the cup of joy, which each follower of our blessed Lord must drink. It is a cup which does not cause one to lose their senses as intoxication suggests, but it brings the spirit of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7). This precious stone in the Breastplate indicates the honoured title and office of royalty from the overcomer (1 Pet. 2:29).

Chrysolite.

The tenth stone has been mistranslated Beryl in the authorised version. The word comes from *Tarshish*, which most ancient historians translate Chrysolite. The word literally means gold-stone. It is transparent, and when cut and polished, reminds one of a yellow diamond.

Gold represents things Divine, and the additional thought of transparency suggests an understanding of spiritual truths resulting in Heavenly Wisdom. This is wonderfully borne out in several of the visions observed by the prophet Ezekiel. Cherubic forms surrounded by wheels – wheels within wheels, in appearance like unto a chrysolite (Ezek. 1:16; 10:9). The wisdom from above is always manifold in character. It takes in all things and works harmoniously like the wheels of an intricate watch. (Eph. 3:10,11. Diag.).

It will be noted that there is a similarity between the topaz and chrysolite in appearance. The distinguishing difference, as before indicated, is the electrical energy of the topaz. Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, as revealed in the Scriptures, bear striking relationship. One is impossible without the other (1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:22, 23; James 3:17). Divine Love has this difference; it is warm, fervent and extremely pleasant in its drawing power. It is the sum-total of God's character – "For God is love." This is aptly illustrated by the inherent electrical energy of the topaz. Divine Wisdom, on the other hand, is calm and reflective. It must needs take all things into consideration, and will even govern love's warm affection – "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way" (Prov. 8:22). How marvellously appropriate to portray this by the tranquil Chrysolite, which compares so well in appearance with the Topaz.

Onyx.

The eleventh stone was the Onyx. There were also a pair which adorned the shoulders of the High Priest (Exodus 28:9-14). The onyx is a striped stone which may be white, black and red. The ruddy variety is usually termed the sardonyx, owing to its appearance of flesh and blood. It has always been much valued for cameo engravings. The layers appear like separate stones, though actually and absolutely they are one.

They represent the basic truths which, while distinct from each other, are nevertheless inseparable. Wonderfully, therefore, does the onyx proclaim the taking away of the sin of the world (black) through the blood of Christ (red). Thus all peoples of the earth will become pure, holy and righteous, as shown by the emblem of white, (Rev. 20:11,12). Thus God's precious jewels will have the privilege of restoring mankind to original perfection (Rev. 21:20; Psalm 145).

CHAPTER FIVE.

The Diamond.

THE Diamond always presents a fascinating study. When symmetrically cut and polished, it is transformed into a gem which is at once beautiful, valuable and lasting. Its property of exquisitely reflecting and refracting light into its rainbow colours captivates immediate attention and commands wonder and admiration.

The extraordinary thing about this amazing gem is noted in the fact that it is derived from pure carbon. In other words, a diamond is a piece of crystallized charcoal! It is just like the great Creator to take hold of quite simple materials and to fashion them into articles of supreme worth and enduring splendour. His own precious jewels – His elect – were chosen from degraded humanity. He has visited the pit of sin, and offered some His highest and best! Even the pure and holy angels marvel at God's way of working (1 Peter 1:12; Psalm 40:1-3). Still more amazing is the knowledge that He has not drawn the so-called elite of the earth, but His outstretched arm has beckoned mainly those who have been considered of little worth in human eyes. The apostle calls them the "are nots" that will eventually bring to naught the things that are, that no flesh should have any reason for boasting in his sublime presence (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

Strength and Beauty.

The origin of the diamond, therefore, is from soft black and grimy soot, which, in the Divine laboratory, becomes practically the hardest of known crystals. True to the picture, the Lord's own have been born in regions of darkness and despair, but, under the power of infinite grace, they are transformed into beings of strength and beauty. "Strength and beauty are in Thy sanctuary" (Psalm 96:6). These characteristics come gradually into existence during their earthly career, after having received the Holy Spirit of truth. So strong and decisive become the dispositions of the Lord's true people, that they need to be ever on their guard against imparting unnecessary pain. The beauties of meekness, patience and kindness inclines them to wield the "sword of the Spirit" only in love.

It has been well said that "it takes a diamond to cut a diamond." Even diamond dust is necessary to polish the gem, thus we perceive the immense value implied by fellowship of kindred minds. To the teachable and faithful such fellowship is of the utmost importance for growth in grace and in knowledge.

Ofttimes fellowship is extremely pleasant, but sometimes it may be otherwise, for diamond-like characters prove a great test to those who have not this worth of quality. Fellowship of the Lord's people has consequently been one of constant changes and upheavals from Pentecost even until this hour.

All who resent the cutting and polishing processes, and who become offended, peevish, morose or bitter, give evidence that their characters are not jewel-like, if we have reason to affirm that we belong to the Lord, we will surely give heed to the apostle's exhortation as follows; "Let us consider one another to incite unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much more as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:24, 25).

The Kohinoor.

There are gems which are gems of renown because of their history and value, and the Kohinoor is one of these. It may be traced back to 56 B.C. What stories it could tell were it a living subject! For instance, rather than give it up, Shah Rokh endured many horrible tortures, including the putting out of his eyes.

It was at one time in the possession of the Mohammed Shah. When Nadir Shah conquered Delhi, he ordered Mohammed to give up everything he possessed. The latter, however, concealed the diamond in the folds of his turban, but one of the women of the harem betrayed his secret. Nadir Shah adopted a novel stratagem to obtain it. He ordered a grand festival, at which the two rulers swore love and friendship to each other. At its close, Nadir declared that they must exchange turbans to cement this friendship, and, without giving poor Mohammed a moment to consider, Nadir snatched off his turban and exchanged it for his own. Quietly, within his own abode, Nadir removed the gem from the folds, and exclaimed with supreme delight "Koh-i-Noor," meaning "Mountain of Light," a name which has been maintained to this day.

The Emperor of the Universe likewise treasures His special gems, to whom a new name will be granted. (Isaiah 62:2, 3; Rev. 2:17).

Cutting and Polishing.

The ancients never realised the wonderful possibilities of their jewels. Fearing to reduce their size, they sacrificed brilliance for bulk. Nowadays a gem undergoes very drastic treatment in order that it may be enhanced in symmetry, beauty and refractive power. To this end there is no hesitation to cut away two thirds or more of the original stone. The celebrated Pitt diamond, for instance, was reduced from 410 carats to 136. This cost £5,000 and took two years to accomplish.

The Kohinoor originally weighed nearly 800 carats, and was reduced to 280. When the province of Punjaub was annexed, it became the property of the English, and it was delivered to Queen Victoria in 1850. Its appearance was then somewhat disappointing, for it had been badly cut. Prince Albert sought the advice of Sir David Brewster as to the best manner of reshaping it. The result was that eleven Amsterdam workmen became engaged in the work, and in due course it was reduced to 107 carats, but its beauty was so greatly enhanced that its value went up enormously. It is (*in 1930s*) now worth at least £100,000. It found its place in a bracelet, which was worn by the Queen on State occasions.

Thus it is with the Lord's precious jewels, their value does not so much depend upon their prominence, but upon their beauty,— the beauties of holiness,— and this means a patient, laborious and costly cutting, shaping and polishing. Only God is able to view in advance the ultimate design of each and all. He knows precisely the experiences which are necessary. The part of the consecrated believer is to submit to Divine providences, without murmuring or expressions of discontent, thanking Him always in anticipation that the ultimate design will be according to his sovereign will.

“Whom He loveth He Chasteneth.”

Sometimes, the experiences of the Lord’s people appear drastic and almost incompatible with human reasoning.

We are safeguarded with the knowledge that it is “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

When John Bunyan was sent to prison there flashed upon his spiritual vision the words, “He knew that for envy they had delivered Him.” (Matt 27:18.) Thus the Lord overrules the envy, malice and pride in other hearts to produce the fruits of the Spirit in His beloved. In Bunyan’s case his soul burned within him as he became conscious of the Lord’s saving grace. Behind prison doors, he produced works which have attracted the attention of tens of thousands to this day. It mattered little if others corrected his grammar; his soul was alight with the Holy Spirit, and that was sufficient for the Divine purposes.

The same experience applies to that persecuted and much maligned woman, Madame Guyon. Illuminated with the gift from on high, she could endure all things through Him who strengthened her. Hear her song during one period of captivity;—

*“A little bird I am,
Shut from the fields of air;
And in my cage I sit and sing,
To Him Who placed me there.
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleases Thee!”*

*Oh, it is good to soar
Through bolts and bars above,
To Him Whose purpose I adore,
Whose providence I love;
And in Thy mighty Will to find
The joy and freedom of the mind.*

*My cage confines me round,
Abroad I cannot fly;
But though my wing is closely bound,
My heart’s at liberty,
My prison walls cannot control
The flight and freedom of the soul.”*

The Diamond Point.

One astonishing feature of the diamond is that it may be ground to a point of infinitesimal fineness. Mr. J. R. Farrants, one time President of the Microscopical Society, had executed upon a piece of glass the Lord’s Prayer. The writing done by a diamond was so small that the whole of it resembled a dot made by a fine pen. It needed a very delicate machine to accomplish this and a very powerful microscope to distinguish the writing. Were the whole of the New Testament written in this manner, then the space occupied would be about the size of a small thumbnail. Thus God’s precious jewels will comprehend things great and small – inconceivably small! Recall for instance, the minute formations which make up organisms. Think of the marvel of the human structure! Millions and millions of impressions stored in a small space. These will all be precisely duplicated by the Royal Family in due course. The saints of the Most High will possess the kingdom! (Dan. 7:27).

The Jasper?

Commentators have concluded that the jasper of the Bible could not be the same which is now commonly called by this title.

The modern jasper is represented by an impure variety of quartz, which may be in colour – dark green, brown, yellow, blue or black. Light does not penetrate this variety, whilst that mentioned in the Bible is transparent. Indeed, from the standpoint of its description, it is evident that the diamond is indicated.

Note the words in the Book of Revelation; “Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife; and he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev. 21:9-11).

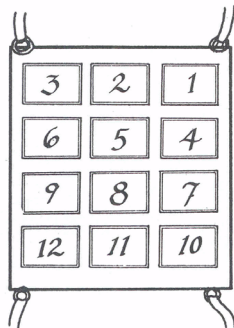
Such a description illuminates also Rev. 4:3, already quoted, for as a diamond scintillates so gloriously the prismatic colours, so the glorified Redeemer upon His throne, sheds abroad the varied beauties expressed in the Divine character. “For God is love,” and it has been well expressed that, as “every lovely hue is light, so every grace is love.” Now, the jasper, or rather the diamond, was the last stone depicted in the Breastplate, this as though picturing the glorious consummate desire of the Omnipotent, which desire will be amply fulfilled through the offices of the Royal Priesthood. The last shall be first, and so this last stone becomes the first foundation- stone of the city, the New Jerusalem, when the Bride will be complete (Rev. 21:19). Truly marvelous is the mind of God!





Traditional representation of Aaron's breastplate. The Bible does not record the order of the names to be inscribed on the stones, so that identification of a tribe with a certain stone is guesswork.

1. Ruby
2. Topaz
3. Carbuncle
4. Turquoise
5. Sapphire
6. Emerald



7. Jacinth
8. Agate
9. Amethyst
10. Beryl
11. Onyx
12. Jasper

